

# Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Division of San Pablo City Through the Lens of School Heads and Teachers of Children with Special Needs

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## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the perceived understanding and level of involvement of school heads and teachers regarding Inclusive Education in the Division of San Pablo City for the school year 2024–2025. A total of 86 participants, composed of 43 school heads and 43 inclusive education teachers from 33 public elementary and 10 secondary schools, were involved in the research.

Using a mixed-methods approach, data were gathered through a customized survey from school heads and inclusive education teachers. Qualitative data were examined using open coding and grounded theory methodology, and the findings were subsequently validated quantitatively through a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Findings revealed that both school heads and teachers demonstrated strong support for the implementation of inclusive education, reflecting a shared understanding and commitment to inclusive practices. Despite these positive attitudes, several challenges were identified, including limited access to professional training, inadequate resources, and the lack of standardized assessment tools. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions in teacher development, infrastructure enhancement, and strengthened community and stakeholder support to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Education; Implementation; Special Needs*

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## 1. Introduction

Inclusive Education (IE) aims to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with special needs. Despite strong legal mandates in the Philippines such as RA 11650 and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, the implementation of inclusive practices remains inconsistent at the school level. In the Division of San Pablo City, although 43 schools receive Special Education (SPED) support funds, the extent to which school heads and teachers understand and implement IE varies significantly. The lack of a clear, unified perception and involvement among these key stakeholders hampers the consistent application of inclusive principles in the classroom.

Studies have shown that one of the primary challenges in implementing Inclusive Education is the limited training and preparedness of teachers and school leaders (Muega, 2016; Llanos, 2024). Kilag (2024) pointed out that, despite the presence of strong legal frameworks, there are major gaps in resource allocation,

infrastructure, and stakeholder involvement. Manalo (2024) also highlighted the uneven adoption of inclusive teaching strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), indicating a need for stronger leadership and continuous professional development. Furthermore, Nuñez et al. (2021) noted that while teachers often hold positive attitudes towards inclusion, these are insufficient without adequate training and systemic support.

This study aims to assess the perceived understanding and level of involvement of school heads and teachers in implementing Inclusive Education in San Pablo City. By analyzing their knowledge, attitudes, and practices, the research will identify strengths and gaps in local implementation. The findings will inform actionable recommendations for school leaders, policymakers, and education supervisors to enhance professional development, allocate resources effectively, and create a more inclusive educational environment for Children with Special Needs (CSN). Ultimately, the study supports the goal of aligning local practices with national policies and international standards on inclusive education.

## 2. Methods

This study used a mixed methods research design to explore the implementation of Inclusive Education in the Division of San Pablo City for the school year 2024 to 2025. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allowed for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the topic. The quantitative part involved a structured survey to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to Inclusive Education. The qualitative part included open-ended questions to gather insights into the perceptions and challenges faced by educators.

The study was conducted in 33 public elementary and 10 public secondary schools that received special education support funds and had learners tagged with special needs in the Department of Education's Learner Information System. Participants included 43 school heads, and 43 inclusive education teachers selected through convenience sampling, focusing on those with direct experience in inclusive practices. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire based on relevant laws, Department of Education policies, and previous studies. It was reviewed and validated by experts from the local Schools Division and faculty from a teacher education institution. The tool included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

Data were collected between April to May 2025, with proper permission from authorities and informed consent from participants. The questionnaires were administered either in person or online, depending on participant availability.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. To examine whether there are significant differences in knowledge and involvement between the two groups (school heads and teachers), One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized. This statistical test helped determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of IE between the groups, as well as any differences in the level of involvement in inclusive practices.

The study assumed that participants responded honestly and had adequate experience with Inclusive Education. Ethical standards such as consent, confidentiality, and participant welfare were strictly followed. Overall, the chosen methodology provided a clear understanding of current inclusive practices and challenges in San Pablo City, offering insights that may help inform future improvements in policy and practice.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education

**Table 1. Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education Among School Heads and Teachers of Children with Special Needs in Terms of Knowledge**

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Composite	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
I understand the concept of inclusive education.	3.86	SA	3.77	SA	3.82	SA
I am aware of the rights of children with special needs to inclusive education.	3.88	SA	3.74	SA	3.81	SA
I know the goals of inclusive education in the K–12 curriculum.	3.84	SA	3.74	SA	3.79	SA
I can identify the different types of disabilities that require special attention in school.	3.12	A	3.33	A	3.23	A
I know how inclusive education differs from special education.	3.53	SA	3.67	SA	3.60	SA
I am familiar with laws and policies supporting inclusive education (e.g., RA 10533, RA 11650).	3.28	A	3.44	A	3.36	A
I know the role of general education teachers in inclusive classrooms.	3.58	SA	3.53	SA	3.56	SA
I understand the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents, and school heads.	3.86	SA	3.84	SA	3.85	SA
I know how inclusive education promotes diversity and equity.	3.79	SA	3.81	SA	3.80	SA
I know the available services and programs for children with special needs in our school.	3.56	SA	3.51	SA	3.54	SA
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 – Strong Agree (SA) 2.51 – 3.50 – Agree (A) 1.91 – 2.50 – Disagree 1.00 – 1.90 – Strongly Disagree

School heads and inclusive classroom teachers strongly agree that they understand the importance of collaboration among teachers, parents and school heads with highest mean of 3.85. This connotes that the respondents support the idea that inclusive education can be strengthened through teamwork and open communication among stakeholders. This supports the study conducted by Tombogon et al. (2017) which emphasized that Pangasinan Division II prioritizes a range of activities that engage both mainstream and special education students, alongside professional development programs for regular and special education teachers. These efforts are complemented by initiatives involving parents, stakeholders, and the wider community to ensure inclusive education is fully embraced and successfully implemented. As a result of these collaborative efforts, inclusive education has shown a positive impact on learners, strengthened parental support, and increased community-wide awareness.

On the other hand, indicator 4 yielded the lowest mean of 3.23 interpreted as “Agree”. This means that while respondents generally acknowledge they have some understanding of different disabilities, their confidence or level of knowledge in this area is relatively lower compared to other indicators. This suggests a need for further training or capacity-building to help school heads and teachers more accurately and confidently identify and support students with various types of disabilities. Similarly, Muega (2016) emphasized that one of the main challenges in inclusive education is the lack of teacher training. He noted that effective training is only possible when schools are equipped with adequate resources to properly prepare teachers for inclusive teaching.

When participants were asked to describe their understanding of Inclusive Education and its importance for learners with special needs, five key themes emerged. These were: providing equal access and opportunities for all learners, including students with disabilities in regular classrooms, promoting a sense of belonging and acceptance while reducing stigma, recognizing the need for more guidance, training, and expert support, and teaching with compassion and responsiveness to individual learner needs. The findings imply that while educators value inclusive education and recognize its importance, there is a clear need for continued professional development, expert support, and systemic efforts to create more responsive and supportive learning environments for all learners.

**Table 2. Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education Among School Heads and Teachers of Children with Special Needs in Terms of Attitudes**

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Composite	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
1. I believe that children with special needs can learn alongside their peers in regular classes.	3.53	SA	3.60	SA	3.57	SA
2. I support the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom settings.	3.42	A	3.56	SA	3.49	A
3. I feel confident in helping children with diverse learning needs.	3.44	A	3.53	SA	3.49	A
4. I believe inclusive education benefits all learners.	3.63	SA	3.72	SA	3.68	SA
5. I believe teachers need additional training to effectively teach in inclusive classrooms.	3.86	SA	3.95	SA	3.91	SA
6. I believe that inclusive education requires collaboration between families and schools.	3.84	SA	3.98	SA	3.91	SA
7. I believe students without disabilities also gain positive values from inclusive education.	3.72	SA	3.84	SA	3.78	SA
8. I feel comfortable working with or supporting children with special needs.	3.58	SA	3.67	SA	3.63	SA
9. I believe inclusive education promotes empathy and respect among students.	3.79	SA	3.88	SA	3.84	SA
10. I am willing to participate in programs or training on inclusive education.	3.74	SA	3.84	SA	3.79	SA
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 – Strong Agree (SA) 2.51 – 3.50 – Agree (A) 1.91 – 2.50 – Disagree 1.00 – 1.90 – Strongly Disagree

Table 2 reveals that both school heads and teachers exhibit a “Strongly Agree” attitude toward inclusive education with mean of 3.66 (school heads), 3.76 (teachers) and 3.71 (overall). This indicates a highly positive disposition toward the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstreams classrooms.

Strong agreement is especially noted on statement 5 and 6 which emphasized that they believe teachers need additional training to effectively teach in inclusive classrooms and that inclusive education requires collaboration between families and schools. This implies that respondents strongly believe in two important aspects: teachers need additional training to effectively manage inclusive classrooms, and close collaboration between families and schools is essential for the success of inclusive education. Relatively, the study by Macabenta et al. (2023) concluded that inclusive education demands ongoing teacher training and consistent support through instructional tools and services. It recommends that schools provide diverse training modules and seminars for general education teachers to meet inclusive education standards, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among the local education committee, parents, teachers, and school staff.

Statement 1 “I support the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom settings” and Statement 2 “I support the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom settings” both were rated least by the respondents interpreted as “Agree” (3.49). This only proves that although respondents generally agree with the inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom settings, their level of support is not as strong compared to other statements. The relatively low rating of 3.49 suggests that while there is agreement, it may be accompanied by some reservations or uncertainty about fully embracing inclusive practices. On the contrary, Cagas (2023) highlighted the commitment of Kapitan Tomas Monteverde Sr. Central Elementary School SPED Center in cultivating an inclusive environment that encourages high expectations, full participation, and support across various areas. The impressive scores across all assessed aspects indicate a comprehensive and effective approach to inclusive education, establishing a strong foundation for the continued success of inclusive practices at the school.

When asked about their personal views on including children with special needs in regular classrooms, school heads and teachers expressed five main themes: strong support for inclusion if proper support systems are in place; the need for teacher assistants and additional training; conditional support depending on the

severity or number of learners with special needs; recognition that inclusion fosters empathy, patience, and understanding among peers; and concerns about lack of training and school readiness. These findings highlight the importance of adequate training and support to ensure effective and confident implementation of inclusive education.

**Table 3. Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education Among School Heads and Teachers of Children with Special Needs in Terms of Practices**

Indicators	School Heads		Teachers		Composite	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
1. Teachers in our school adjust teaching strategies for learners with special needs.	3.58	SA	3.67	SA	3.63	SA
2. The school provides learning materials suited to students with special needs.	3.49	A	3.60	SA	3.55	SA
3. Collaboration between teachers and parents is encouraged to support inclusive education.	3.74	SA	3.86	SA	3.80	SA
4. The school ensures physical accessibility for students with disabilities.	3.58	SA	3.60	SA	3.59	SA
5. There are programs or activities promoting awareness and inclusion.	3.60	SA	3.63	SA	3.62	SA
6. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented and monitored.	3.30	A	3.30	A	3.30	A
7. Regular assessments are conducted to evaluate inclusive education efforts.	3.33	A	3.40	A	3.37	A
8. Teachers and school heads participate in inclusive education training.	3.65	SA	3.74	SA	3.70	SA
9. Peer support among students is encouraged in inclusive classrooms.	3.70	SA	3.77	SA	3.74	SA
10. The school promotes respect for learners with diverse needs.	3.74	SA	3.88	SA	3.81	SA
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 – Strong Agree (SA) 2.51 – 3.50 – Agree (A) 1.91 – 2.50 – Disagree 1.00 – 1.90 – Strongly Disagree

As shown in Table 3, both school heads and teachers *Strongly Agree* on the implementation of inclusive education practices with an overall mean of 3.61. This indicates that inclusive practices are generally in place and positively perceived in schools. In a related study, Salcedo (2023) noted that the respondents viewed school practices such as Child Find, curriculum modification, assessment, program options, and parental involvement as being implemented to a moderate extent.

Indicator 10 which suggests that the school promotes respect for learners with diverse needs, garnered the highest rating (3.81), which means that the respondents strongly agree that the school actively fosters an environment of respect for learners with diverse needs. Furthermore, promoting respect and acceptance is a well-practiced and clearly observed value within the school community. Likewise, Catolico (2023) emphasized in his study that the school administration exhibits a strong dedication to inclusive education, clearly articulating its mission, vision, and strategic goals. The initiatives are effectively prioritized, backed by appropriate funding, and managed by cross-functional project teams. Overall, the school demonstrates a solid foundation for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Likewise, the statement that the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented and monitored were rated as the least, still *Agree* (3.30). It may be due to the fact that there may be inconsistencies or challenges in fully executing and tracking IEPs, indicating a need for improvement in this aspect of inclusive education. Relatively, In the study conducted by Lebeco (2023), the respondents strongly believed that within inclusive education classrooms, parents consistently receive both graded and non-graded reports on their children's progress. They also perceived special education teachers as highly competent in developing Individualized Education Programs tailored to each student's needs. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted the active involvement of parents in decision-making concerning the progress of their children in special education. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school leaders and teachers prioritize monitoring the implementation of inclusive education and invest in continuous capacity-building efforts.

When asked to describe actual practices or strategies supporting inclusive education for children with

special needs, six themes emerged: differentiated instruction and individualized learning materials; inclusion in mainstream activities with equal participation; staff development and capacity building; coordination and communication with families; provision of material and physical support for students with disabilities; and engagement of the community and stakeholders. These practices demonstrate a holistic approach to inclusion, emphasizing the need for tailored teaching, collaboration, resources, and community involvement to effectively support learners with special needs.

**Table 4. Summary of Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education Among School Heads and Teachers of Children with Special Needs**

	School Heads		Teachers		Composite	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
1. Knowledge	3.63	SA	3.64	SA	3.63	SA
2. Attitudes	3.66	SA	3.76	SA	3.71	SA
3. Practices	3.57	SA	3.65	SA	3.61	SA
<b>Over-all</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.51 – 4.00 – Strong Agree (SA) 2.51 – 3.50 – Agree (A) 1.91 – 2.50 – Disagree 1.00 – 1.90 – Strongly Disagree

Table 4 presents the summary for the perceived understanding of the respondents on the level of implementation of inclusive education. Respondents assessed their level of understanding on implementation of inclusive education as *Strongly Agree* (3.65). This proves that school heads and inclusive classroom teachers possess strong knowledge and highly favourable attitudes towards inclusive education. These suggests that they are open and very much willing to implement inclusive practices in their respective schools. Relatively, the study conducted by Catolico (2023) found that inclusive education was implemented at a high level among the respondents, influenced by various challenging factors, which were evaluated using the theory of change. In the long term, the implementation of inclusive education is expected to yield significant societal benefits, including upholding every student's right to education, fostering social integration, reducing discrimination, promoting equality, and ultimately contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society.

The data revealed that both school heads and teachers rated their understanding on the level of implementation of inclusive education as *Strongly Agree* with an overall means of 3.62 and 3.68 respectively. This result may denote that there is a well-established foundation of inclusive education in terms of awareness and support. As highlighted by Panoy (2023), respondents perceived public elementary school teachers as well-prepared to implement inclusive education, particularly in areas such as classroom instruction, curriculum content, assessment, evaluation, and monitoring. Additionally, respondents believed that parental involvement in inclusive education was strong, especially in Home-Based Management and decision-making processes. Panoy also emphasized that the respondents recognized a high level of readiness in fostering an inclusive culture, designing curricula for all learners, and facilitating inclusive learning experiences. It is also supported by the study conducted by Salcedo (2023) who reported that the respondents perceived school practices—such as Child Find, curriculum modification, assessment, program options, and parental involvement—as being moderately implemented. Teachers in the Ambray District also indicated that they moderately experience challenges related to instructional materials, curriculum programs, and human resources. Despite these barriers, the schools were found to strongly demonstrate inclusive practices, particularly in terms of learner participation, initiative, involvement, and the enrollment of students with special educational needs.

It can be gleaned in the table that among the three areas of the perceived understanding on the level of inclusive education implementation, attitudes got the highest mean described as *Strong Agree* (3.71) which would indicate that all respondents are highly open, positive and willing to embrace and implement inclusive education in their schools or communities. Hence, they have a strong personal commitment and belief in in the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity in education. As highlighted in the study by Muega (2016), there was no evident resistance from the participants toward the practice of inclusive education in the

Philippines. It appears that there are no compelling arguments strong enough to hinder the growth and advancement of inclusive education both in the country and worldwide.

Likewise, the respondents rated Practices as the least, still described as *Strongly Agree* (3.61). This may connote that despite strong knowledge and attitudes, schools may still face challenges in translating inclusive ideals into consistent and structured practices. Therefore, schools may focus on strengthening practical application through targeted training, adequate resources and systematic monitoring of inclusive practices. Relatively, the study conducted by San Juan (2021) revealed that the participating schools were still in the early stages of implementing Inclusive Education. Although certain initiatives had been introduced to support inclusion, these were relatively limited in scope. As a result, the study proposed an Inclusive Education framework that includes essential components such as clear policies and guidelines, proper identification and assessment of learners with special educational needs (LSEN), appropriate placement, stakeholder collaboration, continuous professional development for staff, active parental involvement, school-based strategies, curriculum and assessment adaptations, provision of resources and facilities, and the promotion of a supportive learning environment to ensure effective implementation of inclusive practices.

### 3.2 Significant Difference in the Perceived Understanding of Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education

**Table 5. Significant Difference in the Assessment of the Respondents in the Perceived Understanding of the Level of Implementation of Inclusive Education in Terms of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Between School Heads and Inclusive Classroom Teachers**

Variables	Mean	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Teachers' Perception	3.65	0.5515	.0499	There is no significant difference; $H_0$ is accepted
School Heads' Perception	3.62			

*\*Significant level  $p < 0.05$*

Table 5 showed the significant difference in the assessment of the respondents in the perceived understanding of the level of implementation of inclusive education in terms of knowledge, attitudes and practices between school heads and inclusive classroom teachers.

The results revealed that teachers had a mean perception score of 3.65, while school heads had a mean score of 3.62. The computed F-value was 0.5515 with an associated p-value of 0.499.

Given that the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups. In other words, both teachers and school heads share a relatively similar view regarding the issue being assessed.

Hence, both teachers and school heads demonstrate a shared perspective when it comes to implementing inclusive education. Such alignment in perceptions may contribute positively to the successful implementation of school programs or initiatives for inclusive education, as both groups are likely to support common goals and strategies. With perception alignment already in place, efforts may now be directed more effectively toward action-oriented interventions rather than bridging perceptual gaps.



### 3.3 How IE is Viewed and Implemented in the Division of San Pablo City

**Table 6. Strengths and Challenges Observed in the Implementation of Inclusive Education**

Theme	Actual Quote
<b>Strengths</b>	
Willingness and Acceptance of Inclusive Education	School Head A said, "Acceptance of teachers on its necessity."
	School Head G noted, "The strength is that the division has the heart and willing to implement the IE."
	Teacher 1 remarked, "Willingness of teachers to support inclusive education."
Inclusive Education Leads to More creative and Reflective Teaching	Teacher 7 stated, "Nabibigyan ng pagkakataon ang lahat na magkaroon ng maayos na edukasyon." ( <i>"Everyone is given the opportunity to have a proper education."</i> )
	Teacher 6 emphasized, "Inclusive education pushes teachers to be more creative, flexible, and reflective in their teaching practices."
	School Head D shared, "Teachers adapt lesson plans to meet diverse learning styles and needs. This includes varying the content, process, and product..."
<b>Challenges</b>	
Lack of Teacher Training and Specialization	School Head F said, "One of the challenges is the teachers must have training to handle CSN."
	School Head H emphasized, "The SDO is engaged in IE, however, providing one teacher to handle all LSENs is a big challenge."
	Teacher 2 observed, "It is challenging for us teachers without proper training on how to handle students with special needs."
	Teacher 4 said, "Inclusive education program should be intensified among all schools... training for all teachers on inclusive education should be conducted ASAP."
Classroom Management and Large Class Sizes	School Head A reflected, "While classroom management deters its progress."
	Teacher 1 said, "It's time-consuming too."
	Teacher 3 stated, "Class sizes matter."
Lack of Additional Support Staff and Resources	School Head G emphasized, "Providing one teacher to handle all LSENs is a big challenge."
	Teacher 5 said, "The lack of allocated teacher to cater all those learners with special needs or manifestations."
Bullying and Lack of Social Awareness	Teacher 6 shared, "Minsan may mga studyante na nambubully." ( <i>"Sometimes there are students who bully others."</i> )
	School Head C added, "Mas maipaanawa ang kahalagahan ng edukasyon." ( <i>"To better understand the importance of education."</i> )
Lack of Standardized Assessment and Identification	School Head E stated, "Lack of assessment for learners to easily identify their status."
	Teacher 3 said, "Need more orientation to the school head and teachers."

Table 6 reflects the strengths and challenges observed by participants in the implementation of Inclusive Education. Two themes for strengths and five themes for challenges emerged. For the strengths, the first theme is *Willingness and Acceptance of Inclusive Education*, and the second one is *Inclusive Education leads to a More Creative and Reflective Teaching*. This is supported by the sample quote of School Head A when she said that "Acceptance of teachers on its necessity" and Teacher 6 when he emphasized that "Inclusive education pushes teachers to be more creative, flexible and reflective in their teaching practices" respectively.

The first theme for challenges was *Lack of Teacher Training and Specialization*. It is supported by the quote of School Head F when she said, "One of the challenges is the teachers must have training to handle



CSN.”

The second theme was *Classroom Management and Large Class Sizes*. This is supported by Teacher 3 when he stated, “Class size matters.”

The third theme was *Lack of Additional Support Staff and Resources*. This was supported by the sample quote of School Head G when she emphasized, “Providing one teacher to handle all LSENs is a big challenge.

The fourth theme was *Bullying and Lack of Social Awareness*. It is supported by the quote of Teacher 6 when she shared, “Minsan may mga estudyante na nambubully.” (“Sometimes there are students who bully others.”)

The fifth theme was *Lack of Standardized assessment and Identification*. School Head E stated, “Lack of assessment for learners to easily identify their status.”

Based on the themes gathered, school heads and teachers are motivated and believe in the philosophy of inclusive education. However, real progress is hindered by the lack of structured support, training and resources. Relatively, one of the main challenges of inclusive education is the need for appropriate infrastructure and facilities. A supportive learning environment, which includes strong collaboration between teachers and students as well as active parental involvement is also essential for fostering effective inclusion. These factors are crucial in ensuring that inclusive education can be successfully implemented and sustained (Qian, 2023). Furthermore, Pingle et al. (2015) revealed that that it is possible to raise awareness of inclusive education among preservice teachers. The responsibility for training teachers in this area rests with preservice teacher education programs. Given the current educational demands, it is essential that preservice teachers develop the confidence, competence, and skills necessary to effectively manage inclusive classroom settings.

**Table 7. Support Given by School/Community to Children with Special Needs**

Theme	Actual Quote
Inclusive Education and Equal Opportunities	School Head A said, “They are accepted and given opportunity to learn and join school programs.”  School Head H shared, “Same opportunities and equal treatment given to them.”  Teacher 3 stated, “Nabibigyan ng pagkakataon ang lahat sa larangan ng edukasyon.” (“Everyone is given the opportunity in the field of education.”)
Individualized and Adaptive Teaching Strategies	Teacher 5 remarked “Itinuturing sila na regular na estudyante para hindi sila ma-isolate.” (“They are treated as regular students so that they won’t be isolated.”) School Head D said, “Accepting learners with manifestation and adjust the teaching strategies based on their needs.”  Teacher 4 stated “Sinisigurado ang pagkatuto sa pamamagitan ng pag-dedesenyo ng mga learning materials para sa kanila.” (“Learning is ensured by designing learning materials specifically for them.”)
Parental Involvement and Professional Support	Teacher 6 shared “Tinatanggap ang mga mag-aaral na may espesyal needs at tinuturuan sa abot ng makakaya.” (“Students with special needs are accepted and taught to the best of our ability.”) School Head E said, “Talk immediately to parents and help them understand the learner’s situation and request them to secure assistance from developmental Pedia for proper intervention.”
Guidance and Counselling Support	School Head F stated, “Others are recommended to PPP.” School Head G said, “Guidance and counselling are advised.”
Peer Interaction and Social Inclusion	Teacher 1 added “It is best supported from our school head, teachers, and community.” School Head B emphasized, “Children with special needs learn alongside their peers in inclusive classrooms.”  School Head C stated, “Students are often paired with classmates for academic and social support.”

Table 7 shows the responses of the participants on the Support Given by School/Community to Children with Special Needs. Five themes were developed. These comprised Inclusive Education and Equal Opportunities, Individualized and Adaptive Teaching Strategies, Parental Involvement and Professional Support, Guidance and Counselling Support and Peer Interaction and Social Inclusion.

The first theme was *Inclusive Education and Equal Opportunities*. It is supported by School Head A when she said, "They are accepted and given opportunity to learn and join school programs."

The second theme developed was *Individualized and Adaptive Teaching Strategies*. It is supported by Teacher 4 when she stated, "Sinisigurado and Pagkatuto sa pamamagitan ng pagdedesenyo ng mga learning materials para sa kanila." ("*Learning is ensured by designing learning materials specifically for them.*")

The third theme that emerged was *Parental Involvement and Professional Support*. This was supported when School Head H said, "Talk immediately to parents and help them understand the learner's situation and request them to secure assistance from developmental Pedia for proper intervention."

On the other hand, the fourth theme was *Guidance and Counselling Support*. As what Teacher 1 added, "It is best supported from our school head, teachers and community."

*Peer Interaction and Social Inclusion* was the fifth theme. This is supported by School Head B when he emphasized, "Children with special needs learn alongside their peers in inclusive classrooms."

This only proves that school heads and teachers shared a common vision of supporting children with special needs through inclusive education, adaptive teaching, professional and parental collaboration, guidance services, and peer integration. These strategies aim to provide equal learning opportunities, foster a sense of belonging, and support the academic and emotional growth of CSN. Similarly, Walsh (2017) has identified several effective teaching strategies for supporting the academic success of students with special needs. These include providing one-on-one support, encouraging active participation and collaboration among all students, maintaining a consistent classroom structure, and regularly collaborating with fellow educators to brainstorm and develop new teaching strategies. These approaches help create an inclusive learning environment that supports the diverse needs of students.

As shown in Table 8, six themes emerged as the recommendation to strengthen Inclusive Education. These comprised of (1) Capacity Building and Teacher Training, (2) Diagnostic and Assessment Support, (3) Infrastructure and Accessibility, (4) Teacher and Student Resource Allocation, (5) Inclusive Culture and Awareness Programs and (6) Focused Instruction and Student-Centered Learning.

The first theme was Capacity Building and Teacher Training. School Head C and Teacher 2 emphasized, "Design trainings to school head and teachers," "In terms of improvement, teachers must have training in order to handle effectively our CSN."

The second theme developed was *Diagnostic and Assessment Support*. It is supported by School Head A when he said, "Support on the diagnosis with listed manifestations in order to give proper attention."

The third theme was *Infrastructure and Accessibility*. Teacher A said, "Improve classroom environment for all learners, including better ventilation, lighting and access to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning resources."

*Teacher and Student Resource Allocation* was the fourth theme. It was supported by School Head D when she said, "Support/provide the needs of the teachers and those children."

The fifth theme was *Inclusive Culture and Awareness Programs*. This was supportive by Teacher 3 when she stated, "Conduct awareness campaigns, school-wide inclusion programs, and empathy-building activities to promote a positive and inclusive school culture."

The sixth theme was *Focused Instruction and Student-Centered Learning*. This was supported by the quote of Teacher 4 when she said, "Nakatuon ang pansin sa pagtuturo at sikaping maabot ng bawat isang mag-aaral ang bawat himaymay ng kaalaman." ("*Focus is given to teaching and striving to help each student grasp every bit of knowledge.*")

**Table 8. Recommendations to Strengthen Inclusive Education**

Theme	Actual Quote
Capacity Building and Teacher Training	<p>School Head C said, <i>"Design trainings to school head and teachers."</i></p> <p>School Head G stated, <i>"More training on adapting transition curriculum."</i></p> <p>Teacher 2 emphasized, <i>"In terms of improvement, teachers must have training in order to handle effectively our CSN."</i></p> <p>Teacher 6 added, <i>"Karagdagang pagsasanay sa mga guro ng hahawak sa mga batang may espesyal na pangangailangan."</i> ("Additional training for teachers who will handle children with special needs.")</p> <p>Teacher 8 stated <i>"Magkaroon ng mga guro ng sanay sa ganang larangan ng pagtuturo."</i> ("To have teachers who are trained in that specific field of teaching.")</p>
Diagnostic and Assessment Support	<p>School Head A said, <i>"Support on the diagnosis with listed manifestations in order to give proper attention."</i></p> <p>School Head F remarked, <i>"Provide an assessment or free consultation to those learners with manifestation."</i></p>
Infrastructure and Accessibility	<p>School Head H emphasized, <i>"Have developmental pedia where we can recommend parents to seek help for free."</i></p> <p>School Head E stated, <i>"Ensuring that schools are physically accessible is fundamental. This includes constructing ramps, accessible restrooms, and providing assistive technologies."</i></p>
Teacher and Student Resource Allocation	<p>Teacher 5 said, <i>"Improved classroom environment for all learners, including better ventilation, lighting, and access to 21st-century learning resources."</i></p> <p>School Head B remarked, <i>"Plan the allocation of teachers."</i></p>
Inclusive Culture and Awareness Programs	<p>School Head D said. <i>"Support/provide the needs of the teachers and these children."</i></p> <p>School Head G said, <i>"Holistic training approach should be considered for the awareness of all the stakeholders."</i></p>
Focused Instruction and Student-Centered Learning	<p>Teacher 3 stated <i>"Conduct awareness campaigns, school-wide inclusion programs, and empathy-building activities to promote a positive and inclusive school culture."</i></p> <p>Teacher 4 said. <i>"Nakatuon ang pansin sa pagtuturo at sikap ng mag-aaral ng bawat himaymay ng kaalaman."</i> ("Focus is given to teaching and striving to help each student grasp every bit of knowledge.")</p> <p>Teacher 7 noted, <i>"Proper training and implementation."</i></p>

Therefore, based on the themes gathered, participants collectively recommended strengthening inclusive education through: Specialized training for teachers and school heads, Accessible diagnostic and assessment services, improved physical infrastructure and learning environments, better resource and teacher allocation, Awareness and empathy-building programs and Learner-centered, responsive instruction. In the same way, the study conducted by Javier (2023) revealed several key findings. Both school administrators and teacher respondents rated the challenges in implementing the inclusive education program as being to a high extent. However, aspects such as teacher training programs, instructional materials, and financial resources were perceived as presenting only a moderate level of challenge. Additionally, the study found no significant difference between the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the extent of challenges in implementing the program. This includes areas such as teaching competencies related to evaluating and monitoring strategies, classroom management, teacher training, availability of facilities, instructional materials, financial support, and teacher workload.

## Conclusion

In view of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The perceived understanding of level of implementation of Inclusive Education (IE) among school heads and teachers of Children with Special Needs (CSN) in the Division of San Pablo City, in terms of Knowledge, Attitudes; and Practices are all “Strongly Agree.”

Likewise, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the perceived understanding of level of implementation of Inclusive Education between school heads and inclusive classroom teachers in the Division of San Pablo City is supported. The responses of the two groups of respondents are the same.

The implementation of inclusive education in the Division of San Pablo City, as perceived by school heads and teachers of children with special needs, reflects a strong commitment and positive attitude toward inclusivity. Thematic analysis revealed two key strengths: the willingness and acceptance of inclusive education, and its role in fostering more creative and reflective teaching practices. However, the study also identified significant challenges, including insufficient teacher training and specialization, difficulties in classroom management due to large class sizes, limited support staff and resources, issues related to bullying and social awareness, and the absence of standardized assessment tools.

Support from schools and the community was evident through five key themes: promoting equal opportunities, applying individualized teaching strategies, encouraging parental and professional involvement, providing guidance and counseling, and fostering peer interaction and social inclusion. To further strengthen inclusive education, participants recommended focused efforts in six areas: enhanced capacity building and teacher training, improved diagnostic and assessment services, better infrastructure and accessibility, adequate resource allocation, the promotion of an inclusive culture, and the adoption of student-centered teaching approaches.

These findings highlight the importance of sustained professional development, systemic support, and community engagement in advancing inclusive education and ensuring that children with special needs receive equitable and effective learning experiences.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. Provide regular and specialized training programs for teachers and school heads focused on inclusive education strategies, classroom management, and handling diverse learner needs.
2. Develop and implement standardized tools for early identification, assessment, and support planning for children with special needs.
3. Upgrade school facilities to ensure accessibility for all learners, including ramps, assistive technologies, and inclusive classroom environments.
4. Allocate more support staff such as teacher aides, special education specialists, and guidance counselors, along with adequate instructional materials tailored for diverse learners.
5. Conduct awareness campaigns and community programs to promote acceptance, reduce stigma, and build empathy among students, parents, and stakeholders.
6. Strengthen partnerships with parents and local organizations to provide holistic support for children with special needs both inside and outside the classroom.

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