Revitalizing the program for learners with special educational needs in the promotion of inclusive education in a distance learning environment

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the effect of school practices and implementation barriers in sustaining inclusion realities. Furthermore, this attempted to determine if there is a significant relationship between the program of the learners with special educational needs and promoting inclusive education. Using a descriptive correlational study method, it involved 102 public elementary school teachers from 10 schools in the Ambray District, during the academic year 2021-2022. Self-made questionnaire was employed to measure the data about the organizational effectiveness of Ambray District in terms of school practices, implementation barriers and inclusion realities and teachers which undergone internal and external validation through the help of the panel of examiners and group of teachers. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between the school practices and implementation barriers and inclusion realities. However, it is clear to note based on the given results that inclusion realities have a significant correlation to school practices and the implementation barriers. Inclusion realities can truly be determined by the kind of practices exhibited by the school heads.

Keywords: Programs for learners with special educational needs; school practices; implementation barriers; and inclusion realities.

1. Introduction

In the World Declaration on Education states that all citizens have a fundamental right to education, which is protected by both national and international laws. Every child has the right to education, regardless of their situation or circumstances, as stated plainly in the global education for all initiative. Every person including the child, adolescent, and adult, shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. Inclusive education is a process of considering and reacting to the unique needs of all learners by boosting participation in learning and minimizing exclusion from education.

Department of Education Order No. 72, s. 2009, states that the importance of ensuring that children with special needs receive appropriate schooling in a normal or inclusive context was emphasized. With the help of school personnel, parents, and the community, inclusive education emphasizes the principle of accepting all children regardless of race, size, shape, color, disability, or ability.

The school encourages students to study in a variety of ways in order to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Blended learning has replaced face-to-face classroom management. These concerns are addressed through modular remote learning, which allows more flexible and inclusive access to education. Asynchronous mode allows students to work at their own pace and requires them to complete evaluations on a regular basis, all while providing a learning experience that isn't reliant on face-to-face interaction with the teacher and their peers.

The school uses Google Classrooms for organizing and disseminating instructions and homework to the students. It also makes grading and returning work to students simple, and it can be accessed from a computer or a phone. The school gives the students the quality education they need and deserve to study and improve, whether it's via live Zoom, pre-recorded videos, or detailed Power Points posted in the class stream. However, because lessons are inaccessible to some students, potential students and teachers who do not have access to

these technologies are unable to fully participate. However, there are obstacles to overcome. Some students who do not have stable internet access or access to technology find it difficult to engage in digital learning.

The school sees to it that every facet is well taken care of through proper channeling and making innovations and adjustments based on the results of surveys, evaluations, and feedback. Once learners with special educational needs (LSENs) are enrolled in school, interventions begin to ensure learning takes place.

2. Literature Review

2.1 On School Practices

According to Schuelka (2018), a rigid, centralized curriculum with no opportunity for adjustment or change does not encourage inclusive education in schools. Curriculum modification, alternate means of evaluation, and enabling instructors and learners to own the content and learning outcomes are all things that ministries of education and other national educational policy groups can affect. According to the research, participation, involvement, and depth of academic results, as well as the range of ways in which a pupil might attain these educational results, will make it easier to execute inclusive education. Learning modifications for each unique student can be quite effective.

As stated in DepEd order no. 44 s. 2021, all teachers must contextualize and modify curriculum materials based on the learners' learning pace, competence, desire, and situation. They should also create a variety of resources to give students more learning possibilities. To properly understand the lessons, LWDs may require additional visual representations or tactile materials. Learning resources (LRs) include large-print, Braille, and audio-based or digital materials; as well as audio-visual materials incorporating sign language indications; are examples of learning resources (LRs).

2.2 On Implementation Barriers

McLeskey et al. (2017) mentioned family participation, specialized resources, and teacher training and assistance. Schools must have support systems. Ongoing funding and mentoring are a high-leverage approach that is likely to improve inclusiveness. Parents are not supportive of parental engagement, particularly in rural schools, where parents believe that it is solely the role of the school to educate their children.

According to Fareo, (2020) Children with special needs have different talents than students in general, curriculum modification is critical. It is vital to provide supportive resources in the implementation of the curriculum for students with special needs. Inclusive schools did not adequately carry out the duties and components of school management; schools were in serious need of inclusive education guidance. Teachers' understanding of inclusive education was limited. It is not easy to implement inclusive education; various aspects, such as resources, special assistant instructors, legislation, and a supportive community.

2.3 On Inclusion Realities

DepEd order no. 44 s. 2021 provided a better environment for all learners to collaborate, regardless of their issues or differences, and sought to make schools inclusive; this shall ensure that students with disabilities are included in mainstream or general education classes. This can be accomplished through identifying, accepting, and respecting differences in order to guarantee that all types of students learn together in a welcoming environment. Initial and ongoing inclusion is likely to generate the best results. Inclusion must begin in primary school and continue throughout the basic education curriculum.

Benigno et al. (2018) clearly stated that students' equal access to education is linked with the critical role schools play in establishing a sense of common belonging to a welcoming network of individuals. Many people today consider student engagement to be an important part of inclusion, even though phrases like integration, involvement, and social inclusion are seldom articulated explicitly. Nonetheless, features connected to these fundamental notions are regarded as significant in most of the research on the issue, including concepts like group participation, peer interactions, accepted perception, and closer ties.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The figure above explains how the research flows. The independent variable box shows the Program for Learners with Special Educational Needs in terms of childfind, curriculum modification, assessment, program option and parental involvement. Also, this includes the implementation barriers as to instructional materials, curriculum program and human resources. In addition, dependent variables encompass the inclusion realities that covers the learner's participation, involvement, and schools' initiative and enrolment of Learners with Special Educational Needs.
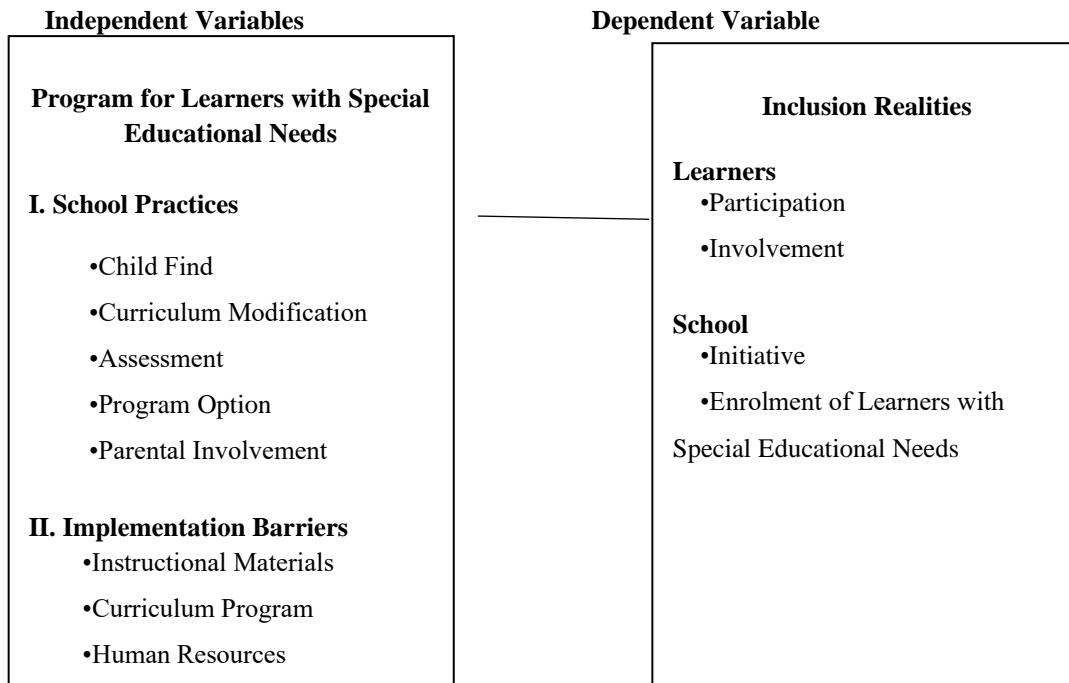
Independent Variables

Program for Learners with Special Educational Needs

I. School Practices

- •Child Find
- •Curriculum Modification
- •Assessment
- •Program Option
- •Parental Involvement

II. Implementation Barriers
- •Instructional Materials
- •Curriculum Program
- •Human Resources

Dependent Variable

Inclusion Realities

Learners
- •Participation
- •Involvement

School
- •Initiative
- •Enrolment of Learners with

Special Educational Needs

Figure 1: Research Paradigm

3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were posited in the study:

H1.There is no significant relationship between the program of the learners with special educational needs and promoting inclusive education.

H2.Program of the learners with special educational needs is not significantly related to promote inclusive education.

4. Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive correlational study method. This is a type of study in which information is collected without making any changes to the subject of the study. However, there are several different types of descriptive correlational methods that each perform research in a slightly different way. The descriptive design will be utilized in this investigation, with questionnaires as the main tool in gathering data used to assess the implementation of inclusive education at schools in the Ambray District. The researcher asked for permission from the Office of the District Supervisor for the conduct of the study. The assistance of the school principals was requested to ensure the success of the distribution of the research instrument. Then, the researcher retrieved the instrument immediately after the respondent answered the questionnaire. The data

gathered was organized, tabulated, and treated statistically for analysis and interpretation of each result. After the approval of the title and as part of the preparation of the questionnaires and formulation of questions. The researcher secured written permission to conduct the study from the District Supervisor. The researcher discussed with the school head the details and procedures of the study. Upon approval, the questionnaires were distributed and administered by the researcher to the respondents. Then the questionnaire will be properly and completely answered by the teachers and they will retrieve the copies for the researcher to have reliable and valid results.

5. Result

5.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Table 1 Test of correlation between inclusive realities and Programs for Learners with Special Educational Needs as to school practices

Program for learners with special educational needs		Inclusion Realities			
		Participation	Initiative	Involvement	Enrolment of Learners with special educational needs
School Practices	Child Find	.650**	.556**	.456**	.605**
	Curriculum Modification	.621**	.686**	.601**	.757**
	Assessment	.608**	.695**	.522**	.659**
	Program Option	.547**	.491**	.423**	.590**
	Parental Involvement	.691**	.572**	.571**	.564**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This implies that the school's practices influenced inclusion realities. This is because the way inclusion was implemented and coordinated with the teachers and other stakeholders played a vital role in their being accepted into the community. How the school managers direct and supervise the concerned personnel and how the inclusion is implemented affects how the organization operates and yields a good result. The ability of the school managers in executing school practices in the Ambray District is effective based on how they are implemented and delegated to the teachers while achieving inclusion realities.

Table 2 Test of correlation between inclusive realities Programs for Learners with Special Educational Needs as to implementation barriers

Program for learners with special educational needs		Inclusion Realities			
		Participation	Initiative	Involvement	Enrolment of Learners with special educational needs
Implementation Barriers	Instructional Materials	.616**	.656**	.507**	.676**
	Curriculum Program	.690**	.715**	.618**	.784**
	Human Resources	.554**	.668**	.652**	.720**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The respondent's perception of inclusion realities, such as participation, initiative, involvement and enrolment of learners with special educational needs, is positively, highly, and significantly correlated to implementation barrier in terms of instructional materials, curriculum program and human resources, as revealed by Pearson r correlation analysis.

Table 3 Revitalize program for learners with special educational needs Partial Inclusion with Resource Room

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
General Education (**Receiving teachers**) - Academics (English, Math, Science, Filipino, AP, EPP, ESP and MAPEH)			Reading enhancement program Developmental and Individualize instruction program Behavior management program (**SPED Teacher**)	Modification and Accommodation to be done to the learners with special educational needs (**Receiving teacher and SPED teacher**)

The researcher wants to focus in the program option of the learners with special educational needs (LSEN's). The propose revitalize program is Partial Inclusion with Resource Room. Based on the experienced of the researcher year 2018-2019 it was very effective when there is an assistance of the SPED teacher in the learning process of the learner with special educational needs. The receiving teacher can easily give assessment to the learner's base on what their needs. And the SPED teacher assesses the development of the LSENs too and give proper intervention to their special needs.

6. Discussion

Inclusive educational systems improve the efficiency and effectiveness for all students and help to end discrimination. Schools provide a setting for a child's initial engagement with the environment outside of their parents' home, allowing for the formation of socialization and interactions. When students of various skills and experience interact, communicate, and educate collaboratively, respect and empathy increase. Exclusion of normally minority groups is perpetuated by teaching that ignores and separates them. Public involvement, work, and everyday activities become more inclusive as education becomes more accessible. Instructional materials, curriculum program and human resources are the factors needed to achieve inclusive education. Proper selection of instructional materials, curriculum program and human resources played a vital role in the process that is why the schools in Ambray District conducted seminar provided by the Department of Education. The Department of Education (DepEd) releases a new DepEd order no.44 s.2021 for learners with special educational need to truly promote inclusive education in the Philippines.

7. Conclusion

The findings revealed that school teachers in Ambray District's public elementary schools have experienced school practices, implementation barriers, and inclusion realities and "strongly agree" to all the indicative statements.

1.The respondents perceived the school practices as moderately practiced as to Child Find, Curriculum Modification, Assessment, Program Option and Parental Involvement.

2.The implementation barrier as to Instructional Materials, Curriculum Program and Human Resources are perceived to be moderately experienced by the teachers in Ambray District.

3.The schools have highly manifested the inclusion realities as to Participation, Initiative, Involvement, Enrolment of Learners with Special Educational Needs.

4.There is a significant relationship between program of the learners with special educational needs and promoting inclusive education.

The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the programs of learners with special educational needs and inclusive education is not supported by evidence and therefore not sustained in the findings of the study.

8. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. This study recommends that the Ambray School District conduct a School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) session for all teachers to provide them with crucial data about educational practices and resources, to enable them to have an awareness and insight of their roles and functions, and to build their capabilities in curriculum components of special education programs and inclusive education.

2. It is also suggested that teachers receive technical assistance in the form of training, workshops, tutoring, and mentorship programs on how to implement a program for students with special educational needs and to promote inclusive education, all of which should be done in accordance with relevant laws, regulations, standards, and issuances to refresh their awareness about the benefits of diversity and inclusion.

3. The curriculum should be reviewed to accommodate the requirements of learners with special educational needs.

4. Collaboration among the local community education committee, parents, teachers, and the school in addressing the concerns of inclusive education at the school level is recommended.

5. Future researchers may perform a more in-depth investigation into the program for students with special educational needs and the promotion of inclusive education to determine the usefulness of the proposed plan in reducing challenges with inclusive education implementation.

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