

Awareness Level and Training Needs of Teachers Toward Inclusive Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the level of awareness and training needs of teachers toward inclusive education. Respondents of this study were 62 randomly selected teachers of JPES and JNCHS. Statistical tools employed were mean, standard deviation, t-test, analysis of variance, and Pearson's *r*. The level of awareness of teachers toward inclusive education was high as an entire group and when grouped according to sex, educational affiliation, and years of teaching experience. Baccalaureate graduates showed only minimal awareness compared to respondents with units for a master's or doctorate. No significant differences in the level of awareness were noted across other categories of variables. Generally, the training needs of teachers on concepts, identifying needs/difficulty of students and their causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies were average. A moderately high training need was found among elementary school teachers while an average among high school teachers. Low training needs were found for teachers taking up a doctorate. Elementary and secondary teachers differ significantly in their training needs in different aspects of inclusive education. There was no correlation between the level of awareness and training needs of teachers toward inclusive education on concepts, identifying needs/difficulty of students and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies.

Keywords: Awareness level, inclusive education, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children and young people regardless of any perceived social, emotional, cultural, intellectual, or linguistic difference or disability (Florian et al., 2010).

Several mainstream educators view the philosophy of inclusive education as an exciting challenge, the stresses associated with its introduction being seen as life-sustaining, enjoyable, and beneficial. On the other hand, it has been noted that the experience of being an inclusive educator is challenging enough to cause teachers to become physiologically and psychologically stressed. Inclusion

was an impossible obstacle for some teachers; however, others have seen it as an opportunity for personal and professional growth while contributing to the dynamic field of education. The attitudes of educators toward the inclusion of students with disabilities are multidimensional and complex. Positive attitudes are considered to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms, while negative attitudes support low achievement and poor acceptance of students with disabilities into mainstream settings (Subban, 2005).

It is often argued that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with such students in inclusive classrooms. Schools often exclude or refuse to include certain students because teachers do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to teach them. This sense of being unqualified or not prepared to teach all students in inclusive classrooms raises questions about what constitutes 'necessary knowledge and skills', and different views about what classroom teachers need to know and how they might be prepared to work in inclusive classrooms (Florian et. al.,2010).

Three models were propagated many years ago for inclusive schools: first, according to the study of Stayton & McCollum (2002), the additional model required adding special education curriculum to general teacher courses or changing already-existing courses found in educational program. It is distinguished by the addition of content that focuses mostly on the traits of pupils with unique requirements, as well as pedagogical and environmental tactics to incorporate these kids into the general schooling inside the classroom. Despite the inclusion of special education material, reports state that it is insufficient to train educators on accommodating children with impairments in the regular classroom.

Second, the infusion model is distinguished by faculty members from general and special education fields working together in teams to teach oversight of practical training. Teachers from both fields contribute to the special and general education curriculum on current courses under the presumption that general education teachers can meet the different needs of their students (Jelas, 2010).

Third, the unifying model was first proposed by Pugach (1992) advocated in favor of integrating teacher preparation. Programs that were historically created to divide the training of general (mainstream) teachers from teachers in special education. To put it simply, the integration of general and special education is justified. In order for educators to collaborate for the benefit of all students, professional development programs need to be combined (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996).

In the Department of Education, Special Education Classes have been established in a few schools to cater to learners with learning disabilities or special needs. However, not all of these kinds of learners have the opportunity to be accommodated considering factors like distance and financial capacity. Thus, a wide range of learning differences and disabilities across many dimensions is increasingly faced by basic education teachers, and most of them lack knowledge and the skills to handle them effectively.

This study focused on the assessment of the awareness level and training needs of teachers towards inclusive education as an entire group and when the respondents were grouped according to sex, educational affiliation, years of teaching experience, and educational qualification. Moreover, it investigated the relationship between the level of awareness and training needs on inclusive education. The results of the study will serve as an initial assessment of teachers for programs/training that will enhance their knowledge and skills in dealing with students, particularly in public elementary and secondary levels in Poblacion, Janiuay, Iloilo.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the 62 faculty members of Janiuay Pilot Elementary School and Janiuay National Comprehensive High School, Janiuay, Iloilo, Philippines selected through random sampling.

Sources of data

A questionnaire and rating scale adopted from Palomo (2014), which was validated by experts, was used in this study. The questionnaire aimed to identify the level of awareness and training needs of the teachers toward inclusive education, enabling them to effectively work with diverse students.

The questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part I solicited personal information, specifically sex, educational affiliation, length of teaching experience, and educational attainment. Part II was made up of two parts also (A and B). Part A consisted of 20 items to determine the respondents' level of awareness about inclusive education (awareness is the consciousness or attentiveness of an individual over something present on account of memory). This was to verify how the teacher was aware of knowledge previously learned that consciously influences/guides him/her in the conduct of their lesson or activity. To rate

the statements, the faculty members were asked to encircle the number that corresponded to their personal experiences.

Rating scale:

5	Very high awareness	Has a superior level of awareness and is fully integrating and practicing the concept in the classroom.
4	High awareness	Has a basic awareness of inclusive education and needs to follow up on training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.
3	Moderate awareness	Has a minimal awareness to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.
2	Low awareness	Has limited awareness of the concept/information, having been just introduced but not fully understood.
1	No awareness	Has no awareness of or never encountered the information, idea, and concept of inclusive education.

Part II-B was made up of a 20-item survey on respondents' training needs on concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment toward inclusive education. This section sought to find out in which areas the teacher would need more knowledge, skills, and disposition for successful teaching in inclusive education. The respondents were asked to read carefully each item and consider honestly their capability as a teacher.

The survey questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale. The respondents indicated the level of training needs from 1-5 where five was the highest.

5	Very high	The respondent needs an introductory course, basic training, and intensive follow-up training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.
4	Moderately high	The respondent needs basic awareness training and intensive follow-up training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.
3	Average	The respondent needs minimal training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.
2	Low	The respondent can independently apply and integrate the knowledge in the classroom.
1	Very Low	The respondent needs little training to level up his/her knowledge and ability.

Administration and Fielding of Instrument to the Respondents

Approval of the Principal of the Elementary/High School to administer the questionnaire was sought. Respondents were given a brief instruction before answering the instrument. After answering, instruments were gathered, tabulated, and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Statistical Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used for descriptive statistics and t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson's r for inferential statistics set at 0.05 level of significance. For interpretation of the level of awareness, the following scale and description were used:

Scale	Description
4.21-5.00	Very Much Aware
3.41-4.20	Highly Aware
2.61-3.40	Aware
1.81-2.60	Moderately Aware
1.00-1.80	Unaware

For the level of training needs, the following scale and description were used:

Scale	Description
4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	Moderately High
2.61-3.40	Average
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

RESULTS

A. Level of Awareness of Teachers Toward Inclusive Education

The results revealed that as an entire group, the respondents were highly aware of inclusive education. Regardless of teaching affiliation and years of teaching experience, all respondents were highly aware. When grouped as to educational attainment, only baccalaureate degree respondents were aware while the rest were highly aware of inclusive education. Data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Level of Awareness of Teachers toward Inclusive Education

Categories	N	Sd	Mean	Description
Entire Group	62	.500	3.68	Highly aware
Sex				
Male	11	.537	3.90	Highly Aware
Female	51	.484	3.63	Highly Aware
Teaching Affiliation				
Elementary	26	.433	3.73	Highly Aware
High School	36	.546	3.64	Highly Aware
Years of Teaching Experience				
Less than 10 years	26	.550	3.72	Highly Aware
More than 10 years and more	36	.467	3.65	Highly Aware
Educational Attainment				
Baccalaureate Grad.	17	.522	3.36	Aware
With units in Master's Degree	33	.507	3.71	Highly Aware
Master's Degree	10	.415	3.70	Highly Aware
With units in a Doctorate	2	8.02	3.58	Highly Aware
Doctorate Holder	0			

Table 2
t-Test Results of the Mean Difference in the Level of Awareness toward Inclusive Education when Respondents are Grouped according to Sex, Teaching Affiliation, and Years of Teaching.

Categories	Mean	df	t-value	2-tailed probability	Statistical
Sex					
Male	3.91	60	1.687	.097	Not significant
Female	3.63				
Teaching Affiliation					
Elementary	3.74				
High School	3.64	60	.759	.451	Not significant
Years of Teaching Experience					
Less than 10 years	3.72	60	.502	.618	Not significant
10 years and above	3.65				

p>.05 level of significance

Table 3

ANOVA Result of the Mean Difference in the Level of Awareness when Grouped as to Educational Attainment

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean sum of square	f-value	2-tailed probability	Statistical Decision
Between groups	.106	3	.035	.134	.939	Not significant
Within groups	15.191	58	.262			
Total	15.296	61				

$p > .05$ level significance

There was no significant difference in the awareness of teachers toward inclusive education when the respondents were classified according to sex, teaching affiliation, years of teaching experience and educational qualification. Data is shown in Tables 2 and 3.

B. Training Needs of Teachers toward Inclusive Education

Based on the results, as an entire group and when classified according to sex and educational attainment, the respondents had average training needs on concepts of inclusive education. When grouped according to teaching affiliation, elementary teachers had moderately high training needs while secondary faculty had average training needs on concepts. For faculty members who had less than 10 years of teaching experience, they had average training needs while those who had 10 years and above teaching experience had moderately high training needs.

Table 4

Training Needs of Teachers on Concepts about Inclusive Education

	Mean	SD	Description
Entire Group	3.3097	.72941	Average
Sex			
Male	3.2000	.67528	Average
Female	3.3333	.74476	Average
Teaching Affiliation			
Elementary	3.6846	.56334	Moderately High
Secondary	3.0389	.72162	Average
Years of Teaching Experience			
Less than 10 years	3.1769	.73827	Average
10 years and above	3.4058	.71791	Moderately High

	Mean	SD	Description
Educational Attainment			
Baccalaureate graduate	3.2941	.60049	Average
With units in a Master's Degree	3.3364	.70071	Average
Masters Degree	2.9800	.40497	Average
With units in a Doctorate	3.0000	1.6976	Average

As to identifying needs/difficulty of students and its causes in an inclusive classroom, respondents as an entire group, and when classified according to sex and years of teaching experience, had average training needs. However, elementary respondents had moderately high training needs while secondary teachers had an average. As to educational attainment, baccalaureate graduates, with units in a master's degree, and master's degree holders had average training needs and those with units in a doctorate degree had low training needs.

Table 5

Training Needs of Teachers in Identifying Learning Needs/Difficulty of Students and Its Causes in an Inclusive Classroom

	Mean	SD	Interpretations
Entire Group	3.3161	.50900	Average
Sex			
Male	3.2364	.62494	Average
Female	3.3333	.48607	Average
Teaching Affiliation			
Elementary	3.5462	.38182	Moderately High
Secondary	3.1500	.52888	Average
Years of teaching experience			
Less than 10 years	3.2538	.41783	Average
10 years and above	3.3611	.56734	Average
Educational attainment			
Baccalaureate graduate	3.3176	.45858	Average
With units in Master's Degree	3.3636	.54648	Average
Master's Degree	3.3000	.23570	Average
With units in a Doctorate	2.6000	1.13137	Low

In terms of instructional strategies and approaches, as an entire group and when grouped as to sex, and years of teaching experience, respondents had average training needs. When grouped as to teaching affiliation, elementary teachers had moderately high training needs while high school teachers had an average. As to educational qualification, only teachers with units in a doctorate had low training needs while the rest of the respondents had average training needs.

Table 6
Training Needs of Teachers on Instructional Strategies and Approaches Employed in Inclusive Education

	Mean	SD	Interpretations
Entire Group	3.3032	.63011	Average
Sex			
Male	3.2909	.62494	Average
Female	3.3333	.48607	Average
Teaching Affiliation			
Elementary	3.6231	.51014	Moderately High
Secondary	3.0722	.61254	Average
Years of Teaching Experience			
Less than 10 years	3.3000	.64560	Average
10 years and above	3.3056	.62790	Average
Educational Attainment			
Baccalaureate graduate	3.3756	.56072	Average
With units in Master's Degree	3.3636	.68744	Average
Master's Degree	3.1600	.46952	Average
With units in a Doctorate	2.6000	.84853	Low

In terms of assessment strategies, respondents as an entire group and when classified as to sex, and years of teaching experience had average training needs. When grouped according to teaching affiliation, elementary teachers had moderately high training needs while secondary teachers had average training needs. As to educational attainment, baccalaureate graduates, with units in a master's degree and or a master's degree had average training needs, while those with units in a doctorate had low training needs.

Table 7

Training Needs of Teachers about Different Assessment Strategies Employed in Inclusive Education

	Mean	SD	Interpretations
Entire Group	3.3290	.66589	Average
Sex			
Male	3.2182	.83165	Average
Female	3.3529	.63193	Average
Teaching Affiliation			
Elementary	3.6383	.52465	Moderately High
Secondary	3.1056	.67356	Average
Years of teaching experience			
Less than 10 years	3.3154	.62782	Average
10 years and above	3.3389	.70073	Average
Educational attainment			
Baccalaureate graduate	3.3647	.51105	Average
With units in Master's Degree	3.3382	.60775	Average
Master's Degree	3.1800	.66966	Average
With units in a Doctorate	2.3000	.42426	Low

There was significant difference in the training needs of teachers in terms of concept, identifying needs/difficulty of students and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches and assessment strategies when the respondents were grouped according to teaching affiliation. Data are shown in Tables 8- 15.

Table 8

t-Test Results of the Mean Difference in the Training Needs of Teachers on Concepts about Inclusive Education when Grouped according to Sex, Teaching Affiliation, and Years of Teaching Experience

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Sex				
Male	-.547	60	.587	Not significant
Female				
Teaching Affiliation				
Elementary	3.800	60	.000	Significant
Secondary				

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Years of teaching experience				
Less than 10 years	-1.223	60	.226	Not significant
10 years and above				

Table 9

ANOVA Result of the Training Needs of Teachers on Concepts about Inclusive Education when Grouped according to Educational Qualification

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	f-value	Sig. 2-tailed	Statistical decision
Between groups	1.812	3	1.144	.339	Not significant
Within groups	30.642	58			

Table 10

t-Test Results of the Mean Difference in the Training Needs of Teachers in Identifying Learning Needs/Difficulty of Students and Its Causes in an Inclusive Classroom when Grouped according to Sex, Teaching Affiliation, and Years of Teaching Experience

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Sex				
Male	-.547	60	.587	Not significant
Female				
Teaching Affiliation				
Elementary	3.800	60	.000	Significant
Secondary				
Years of teaching experience				
Less than 10 years	-1.223	60	.226	Not significant
10 years and above				

Table 11

Anova Result of the Training Needs of Teachers in Identifying Learning Needs/Difficulty of Students and Its Causes in an Inclusive Classroom when Grouped according to Educational Qualification

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	f-value	Sig. 2-tailed	Statistical decision
Between groups	1.812	3	1.144	.339	Not significant
Within groups	30.642	58			

Table 12

t-Test Results of the Mean Difference in the Training Needs of Teachers on Instructional Strategies and Approaches Employed in Inclusive Education when Grouped according to Sex, Teaching Affiliation, and Years of Teaching Experience

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Sex				
Male	-.071	60	.944	Not significant
Female				
Teaching Affiliation				
Elementary	3.741	60	.000	Significant
Secondary				
Years of Teaching Experience				
Less than 10 years	-.034	60	.973	Not significant
10 years and above				

Table 13

Anova Result of the Training Needs of Teachers on Instructional Strategies and Approaches Employed in Inclusive Education when Grouped according to Educational Qualification

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	f-value	Sig. 2-tailed	Statistical decision
Between groups	1.362	3	1.152	.336	Not significant
Within groups	22.857	58			

Table 14

t-Test Result of the Mean Difference in the Training Needs of Teachers on Different Assessment Strategies Employed in Inclusive Education when Grouped According to Sex, Teaching Affiliation and Years of Teaching Experience

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Sex				
Male	-.606	60	.547	Not significant
Female				
Teaching Affiliation				
Elementary	3.362	60	.001	Significant
Secondary				

	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Statistical decision
Years of Teaching Experience				
Less than 10 years	-.036	60	.892	Not significant
10 years and above				

Table 15

Anova Result of the Training Needs of Teachers on Different Assessment Strategies Employed in Inclusive Education when Grouped as To Educational Qualification

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	f-value	Sig. 2-tailed	Statistical decision
Between groups	2.624	3	2.077	.113	not significant
Within groups	24.424	58			

There was no correlation between the level of awareness and the training needs of teachers toward inclusive education in terms of concept, identifying needs/difficulty of students and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches and assessment strategies.

Table 16

Relationship Between the Level of Awareness and Training Needs of the Teachers towards Inclusive Education

	r-value	2-tailed probability	Statistical decision
A. Awareness			
Training needs (concepts)	.151	.241	Not significant
B. Awareness			
Training needs (identifying needs and causes)	.244	.056	Not significant
C. Awareness			
Training needs (instructional strategies & approaches)	.140	.277	Not significant
D. Awareness			
Training needs in assessment	.243	.057	Not significant

DISCUSSION

The level of awareness of teachers toward inclusive education among teachers as an entire group and when grouped according to categories of variables, was high except for baccalaureate degree holders who were moderately aware. This implies that the respondents had a basic awareness of inclusive education, however they needed a follow up training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom. Baccalaureate degree holders had minimal awareness to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom,

There was no significant difference in the level of awareness of the respondents when grouped according to sex, teaching affiliation, length of teaching experience and educational attainment. This means that regardless of the differences of these factors, they had the same level of awareness.

The training needs of respondents about concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies of inclusive education as an entire group and when grouped as to sex was average. This means that the respondents needed minimal training to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.

When grouped as to teaching affiliation, the training needs of secondary teachers was average while elementary teachers had moderately high training needs. This means that they needed a basic awareness training and intensive follow up on concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies.

When they were grouped as to years of teaching experience, teachers whose teaching experience was 10 years and above, needed an awareness training and intensive follow up especially in the concepts of inclusive education. In other aspects they only need minimal training. For teachers who were less than 10 years in service, they only needed minimal training in all of the aspects of inclusive education in order to integrate the concept in the classroom.

When they were grouped based on their educational attainment, those with a baccalaureate degree, with units in a master's degree or a master's degree, and with units in a doctorate, had minimal training needs on concepts of inclusive education. Respondents with units in a doctorate had low training needs in identifying learning needs/difficulty, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies in inclusive education. This means that they can independently apply and integrate the knowledge in the classroom whereas respondents who were baccalaureate graduates, with units in a master's degree

or a master's degree, needed minimal training on these aspects to be able to integrate the concept in the classroom.

There was a significant difference on the training needs of respondents on concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies when the respondents were grouped according to educational affiliation. This means that elementary and secondary teachers significantly differ in their training needs on the different aspects of inclusive education.

There was no significant correlation between level of awareness and training needs in different aspects of inclusive education.

CONCLUSIONS

Level of awareness of teachers toward inclusive education was high and needed to follow up on training to apply the concepts in the classroom.

Secondary teachers needed minimal training in different aspects of inclusive education, but basic awareness training and follow up is needed mostly by elementary teachers. However, little training was needed by those who were taking a doctorate.

Although the level of awareness of teachers toward inclusive education was high, they still recognized the need for training on concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies in inclusive education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should be receptive to student diversity to employ appropriate strategies and assessment techniques.

Inclusion of inclusive education in the teacher induction program or in-service training is necessary to enhance their knowledge and skills in handling diverse/differently abled students.

Furthermore, a basic training on concepts, identifying learning needs/difficulty and its causes, instructional strategies and approaches, and assessment strategies in inclusive education is deemed necessary.

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