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Inclusive Education: Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools

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Abstract

The achievement of inclusive education has been shown to be dependent on providing equal education for children with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in regular schools. This study is research intended to find out how effective inclusive education is for students with disabilities as far as their academic, social, and emotional needs are concerned, and what factors enable effective inclusion to take place. Furthermore, this study examined the influence of teacher competency, support services provision, infrastructural accessibility, and inclusion practices on the learning outcomes of students with disabilities. Quantitative research methodology was adopted, and data were collected using a questionnaire from 250 teachers, head teachers of regular schools, special education teachers, and special needs assistants at regular schools. Data analysis was made by using descriptive, correlation, and multiple regression statistics analysis to evaluate the relationships between variables of this research, in which reliability and validity were examined. Social participation revealed a higher level with a mean score of 4.21 (M=4.21) than other variables. Classroom Inclusion Practice got the second highest level with a mean score of 4.18 (M=4.18), followed by teacher competency (M=4.12), Emotional Well-being (M=4.09), Academic Performance (M=4.05), Provision of Support services (M=3.95), and infrastructural accessibility (M=3.81). The result from regression analysis indicated that classroom inclusion practices accounted for the most significant effects on successful inclusion education programs ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.001$), then teacher competency ($\beta=0.38$, $p<0.001$), provision of support services ($\beta=0.29$, $p<0.001$), and infrastructural accessibility ($\beta=0.22$, $p<0.01$). These are all the characteristics that should be included for the success

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of inclusive education for children with disabilities. By improving all the factors above, academic performance, social participation, and emotional well-being for children with disabilities can be successfully realized.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Students with Disabilities, Mainstream Schools, Teacher Competency, Educational Equity.

Introduction

Inclusive education has become a key component of contemporary education systems that provides Inclusion of children with and without disabilities into normal schools to provide a proper education (Graham, 2020; Kinsella, 2020). International policy documents such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals advocate for a learning environment in which inclusion, diversity, and participation exist (Rahim, 2025). Through the application of the notion of inclusive education, it is expected that students will have not only improved academic outcomes but also positive attributes like kindness, collaboration, and tolerance. In spite of efforts towards promoting inclusive education, its implementation remains a challenging issue owing to infrastructure limitations, inadequately trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, and societal prejudice (Karim, 2023; Kamran et al., 2023).

This study sought to answer the question of the effectiveness of including students with disabilities in regular schools. It also sought to answer which factor or factors could have influenced the success of inclusive practice, and which factor(s) acted as a hindrance to this inclusion phenomenon. In addition to a list of benefits linked to inclusion in available literature, there are fewer empirical findings related to the part of institutional readiness, teacher traits, and other factors on students with disabilities' academic, social, and emotional well-being in normal schools.

In view of the above arguments, the hypothesis of this research states that a normal school having a favorable atmosphere to embrace the presence of students with disabilities, supportive mechanisms, and competent teachers would likely facilitate positive academic, social, and emotional well-being outcomes among special needs students.

A distinctive contribution of this study is its extensive analysis and fact-based recommendations on how to implement inclusive practice, thus benefiting policymakers, teacher preparation, and the support of inclusive programs.

This study intends to systematically examine the effectiveness of inclusive practice in dealing with academic, social, and emotional well-being needs among students with disabilities in normal schools. Introduction, including problem statement, its objectives, research gap, hypothesis, and the expected contributions of the study are stated in section 1. Relevant literature of the study that addresses prior related research focusing on inclusive practice, readiness, leadership, and other school-related factors is systematically synthesized and analyzed in section 2. Research methodology, which includes research design (quantitative), sampling techniques, data collection method, and data analysis performed in the study, is detailed in section 3. Descriptives and regression analyses of the data were presented in Section 4.

Literature Review

The notion of inclusive education is of paramount importance and is getting so much importance, as it is believed to give quality education to disabled students within normal classroom environments. Inclusive education is now believed to serve the purposes of social inclusion, learning success, and learning opportunity equality, and the learning environment in the school can develop inclusively due to the existence of such goals (Graham, 2020). As inclusion in schools can only be achieved with favorable implementation, schools have to formulate organizational structures and strategies that permit all students to study inclusively (Kinsella, 2020).

Evidence-based approaches are called upon to enhance the effectiveness of the inclusion of disabled students into normal classes. Some of the effective practices that serve to enhance inclusion are differentiated instruction, collaboration, individualization, and the availability of learning materials (Aftab et al., 2024; Karim, 2023). Attitude and perceptions of teachers about inclusion are crucial in determining whether inclusion is successful. The more positive teachers perceive inclusion, the more they are flexible in changing their teaching methods in order to include disabled students (Kamran et al., 2023; Ginja & Chen, 2023).

The inclusion of teachers' professional development and training in special/inclusive education has increasingly played important roles in fostering inclusive education at schools. Trained teachers of special/inclusive education have better self-confidence, competence, and performance than others in inclusive classrooms (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021; Ginja

& Chen, 2023). Additionally, teachers often report needing more support from the institution, including resources and training (Chow et al., 2024; Paseka & Schwab, 2020).

Leadership has an important part to play in establishing an inclusive culture and inclusion policies. Good leadership can promote effective provision of support and resources to teachers and therefore can further enhance collaboration, which will make disabled students learn (DeMatthews et al., 2020). Comprehensive adoption of a whole-school approach is to improve all of the features concerning inclusive education (Shutaleva et al., 2023; Kenny et al., 2023).

Furthermore, both parental participation and community involvement should be taken as indispensable factors for successful results of inclusion processes. First and foremost, it is with positive perceptions of inclusive pedagogy and the provision of an adequate educational environment that positive partnership relationships are formed between families and schools. Secondly, the body of evidence relating to sustainability strongly supports that to succeed in the implementation of inclusive pedagogy, we must achieve a certain level of commitment to sustainable inclusive practice and infrastructure development.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the design research principles for a quantitative design would be utilized in order to evaluate how well inclusive education practices can offer students with special needs the right academic, social, and emotional support in a regular school setting. Descriptive and explanatory designs would be used to test for a relationship between inclusive practices and good outcomes for students.

Study Population and Sample

The subjects for the study were 250 respondents of teachers, school administrators, special educators, and other school personnel of the mainstream school with an inclusion program. The sampling procedure to be employed was the stratified random sampling procedure.

Data Collection Instrument

The instrument for data collection will be the structured questionnaire to assess a few aspects of inclusive education, which include teacher preparedness, learning resources and materials, organizational support, classroom inclusion practice, student outcomes, measured through demographic items and a Likert scale of answers from strongly agree to strongly disagree; the instrument would be tested for validity and reliability before use.

Data Collection Procedure

All participants will be given questionnaires, both online and offline. All participants will be informed of the purpose and goals of the study, and that their responses will be kept confidential, and they are free to leave at any time.

Variables of the Study

Independent variables to be considered include the teacher's competency, presence of supporting services, access to school facilities, and inclusion within the classroom. Inclusive education is expected to add to the efficiency of inclusive education (as an independent variable). Independent variable-effective inclusion in the classroom will be assessed using achievement levels, children's social well-being, and emotional stability.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected would be analyzed using the statistical software. Analysis of data would involve a description of data using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Moreover, inferential statistical procedures will be applied to establish relationships among various variables and to examine the hypotheses developed. These procedures consist of correlation and multiple regression analysis. In both tests, the significance level is set at 0.05.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the questionnaire has been tested with the help of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Content validity has been identified with expert examination, while construct validity has been established with factor analysis.

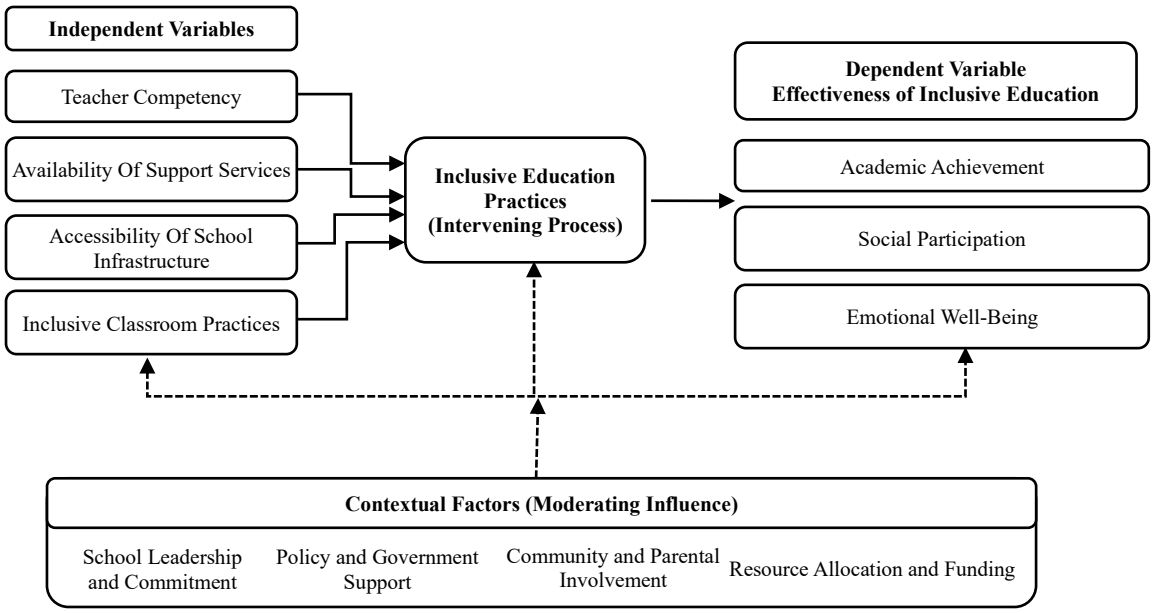


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework for Inclusive Education in Mainstream Schools

In this fig. 1 shows the theoretical framework of this research. It reflects the effect of teacher competency, support services, access to school infrastructure, and inclusive classroom practices on the effectiveness of inclusive education.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Overall, there were 250 subjects included in the study, who were teachers, principals, special educators, and other school staff who work in mainstream schools where the philosophy of inclusive education is used. From analyzing the respondents' profiles, one can infer that there is a wide range of educational professionals involved in the study, which gives us the complete picture of all issues relating to inclusive education.

Descriptive statistics for the main variables included in the study can be shown as follows in table 1 below: One can conclude that the mean value is highest for inclusive classroom practices (4.18) and social participation (4.21). At the same time, infrastructure accessibility has the lowest mean value (3.81).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Inclusive Education Factors

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teacher Competency	4.12	0.68
Support Services Availability	3.95	0.72
Infrastructure Accessibility	3.81	0.77
Inclusive Classroom Practices	4.18	0.63
Academic Achievement	4.05	0.69
Social Participation	4.21	0.61
Emotional Well-being	4.09	0.65

Analysis of Inclusive Education Factors

Through the results, we found out that the teachers' attitude and competence toward inclusive education are positive enough. The aspects have provided good outcomes where they are adequate to support services and an accessible environment of learning for students with disabilities. Teachers, administrators, and support personnel have worked together.

Correlation Between Inclusive Practices and Students' Performance

Correlation and regression tests were run to assess the relationship between inclusive classroom environment indicators and student performance measures. We found that teachers' competency, support services provision,

availability of assistive devices, and classroom accessibility and inclusive environment were positively related to the academic performance of students as well as students' social and well-being.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Inclusive Education Effectiveness

Independent Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Teacher Competency	0.38	6.45	<0.001
Support Services Availability	0.29	5.12	<0.001
Infrastructure Accessibility	0.22	4.37	<0.01
Inclusive Classroom Practices	0.41	7.18	<0.001

This table 2 presents the regression results examining the influence of independent variables on inclusive education effectiveness. Inclusive classroom practices exhibited the strongest positive effect (β = 0.41), followed by teacher competency (β = 0.38). All variables were statistically significant, indicating their substantial contribution to positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

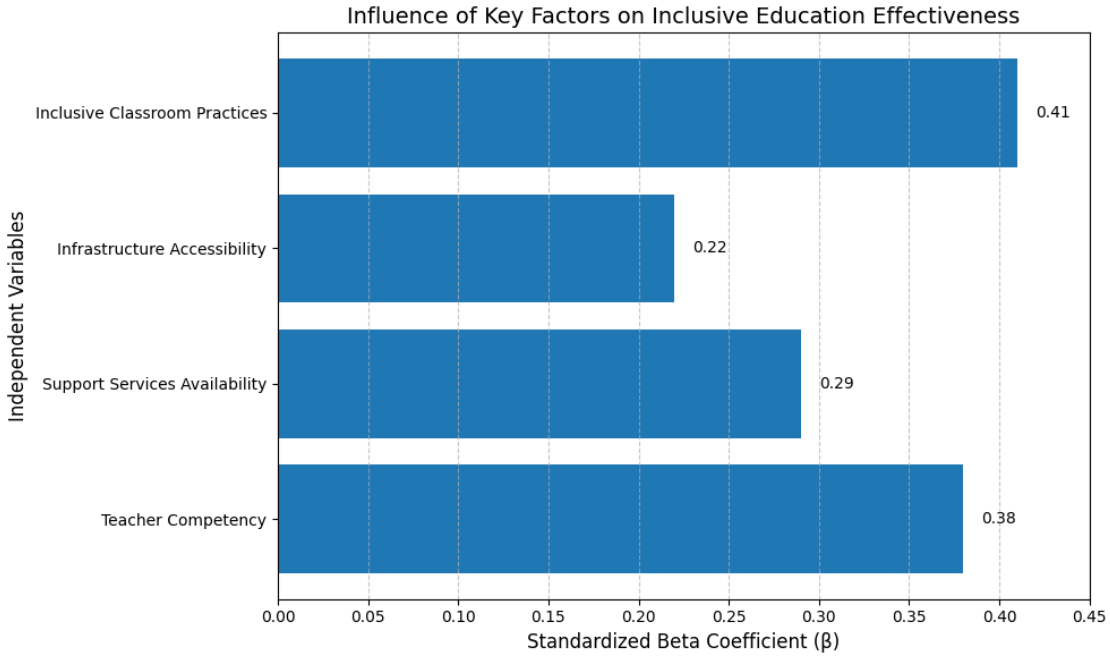


Fig. 2: Influence of Key Factors on Inclusive Education Effectiveness

In this fig. 2 displays the standardized beta coefficients resulting from the regression analysis. Inclusive classroom practices have been found to significantly impact the effectiveness of inclusive education (β = 0.41), followed by teacher competency (β = 0.38), availability of support services (β = 0.29), and accessibility of infrastructure (β = 0.22). Therefore, classroom inclusion and teacher preparation have proven essential to ensuring positive educational experiences for disabled children.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis stated that schools that implement a higher concentration of inclusion (provide support services, collaborate with high-performing teachers, etc.) will demonstrate higher social, emotional, and academic outcomes for special needs children. As evidenced by the analyses, the coefficients for the predictors all had a positive relationship with inclusive effectiveness, significance at p<.05.

Discussion

The results of the present research indicate that inclusive education practices have an important role to play in meeting a multitude of academic, social, and emotional needs of the children with special needs. From the descriptive statistics, inclusive practices yielded M = 4.18, participation and social interaction, M = 4.21, teacher competency, M= 4.12, and academic progress, M= 4.05. However, infrastructure accessibility got the lowest score, M = 3.81. From the regression statistics, inclusive practices appeared as the variable that has the greatest contribution to effective inclusive

education, with $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$, teacher competency $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$, availability of support services $\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$, and infrastructure accessibility $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$. It implies that quality teaching, teacher competency, and supportive institutional provisions have a greater impact on the effective implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive teaching practice is expected to provide an accepting and supportive learning context and full support for disabled students in schools. In addition, the school environment, not only in terms of structural aspects, but also culture, needs to include both access and inclusion. The previous findings have several implications. Training and support for teachers need to be reinforced; infrastructural elements may also be improved, and better outcomes could be realized. The likely benefits are: greater equity in education; reintegration of students with disabilities; and positive influences on the welfare of students. On the other hand, there are several limitations to the present study. One of the limitations of the current research is that the data collected were based on self-reported data and thus may be influenced by the participants' bias. Because of the cross-sectional nature of the study, it is not possible to infer causality between variables. Thus, generalizing the result may also be a problem. A longitudinal study and a larger sample are suggested for future research so that more conclusive results can be drawn.

Conclusion

In this study, we sought to determine what factors affected the learning, social, and emotional development of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. While inclusive education has received more support from policymakers lately, limitations like teacher preparedness, resource systems, and infrastructure impediments have hindered its effective implementation. This study aims to identify factors that shape inclusive education effectiveness and the effects these factors have on learning performance. Inclusive classroom practices (Mean=4.18) and social participation (Mean=4.21) received the highest means for the variables tested as important factors contributing to inclusive education effectiveness. From the regression analysis, it was found that inclusive classroom practices have the highest element impacting inclusive education effectiveness ($\beta=0.41$), followed by teacher competency ($\beta=0.38$), availability of supports ($\beta=0.29$), and accessibility of infrastructure ($\beta=0.22$). All factors showed high positive correlations with the learning outcomes, thus corroborating the hypothesis of this study. The lesson that the study taught us is that an inclusive educational system could hardly be created unless many elements are taken into consideration, such as competent teachers, good school settings, supporting facilities, and functioning support services; educators and policymakers must consider effective practices and strategies for enhancing educational equity. Ultimately, a welcoming school atmosphere will better enhance the learning performance of all children, no matter whether they have a disability.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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