

## CONCEPTS AND ISSUES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BY THE TEACHERS AT FRANCISCO ORINGO SR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *This study determined the perception of the teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School on the concepts and issues of inclusive education which served as the basis in formulating an intervention plan. Using descriptive and quantitative methods, thirty six respondents were asked to fill out a three-part questionnaire that determined their socio-demographic profiles (age, gender, educational attainment, number of years in teaching, number of years in teaching students with disabilities, and seminars/trainings attended related to special education), level of implementation of the inclusive education in teaching, relationship between the respondents' identified profiles and their perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching, and challenges faced by the teachers in inclusive education. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data that were gathered. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level. Descriptive statistics including rank, frequencies, and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. For the level of implementation on inclusive education, weighted mean was used. For challenges faced in an inclusive class, each item was tallied separately. Hence, only frequencies and percentages were used. On the relationship of profile and perception, the Chi-Square test was used. Results revealed that the respondents generally **agreed** with the statements related to inclusive education, with 12 of the 20 statements on the positive side. It also revealed that there was **no significant** relationship in each of the six demographic profiles identified and the perception of the respondents on the concepts and issues on inclusive education in teaching. Finally, **some challenges** in inclusive education were revealed. It includes lack of special education teachers, facilities for special care, special education classes and appropriate resources.*

**Keywords:** Special education, inclusive education, experimental research, General Santos City, Philippines

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## **Introduction**

Although there are different viewpoints, inclusion is a philosophy that implies the complete acceptance of a student with a disability in a regular class. Many academics and professionals have argued that inclusion is necessary in a modern classroom setting. Foreman and Arthur-Kelly (2008) described inclusion as an effective way to promote an inclusive, welcoming, non-discriminatory, and open education for each student.

Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom. This was one of the bases in passing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a law in the United States in 2004. The law requires that the student be placed in the least restrictive environment, or LRE, and has high priority on the student's participation in the general education curriculum, alongside students without special needs (Rosenberg, Westling, & McLeskey, 2008).

Inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms has stimulated great debate in education (Algozzine, et.al, 2012). Some researches revealed the benefits of an inclusive classroom setting for students with disabilities. The percentage of students making comparable or greater than average academic progress when compared to students without disabilities indicates a pattern in favor of inclusive settings (Waldron, N., et al, 2004). In contrary, Siperstein, et al., 2007 said that studies have shown that even though students are being placed in the same classroom, their opinions and social interactions outside of the classroom has not changed.

Teachers also have varied perceptions on inclusive education. Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) revealed that there is willingness on the part of 61% of classroom teachers to work in an inclusion classroom, but the teachers campaigned for appropriate preparation and resources to know how to work with students who had severe or moderate disabilities.

In a study conducted by Newton, N., et al., 2014 on the perception of teachers in Bahamas on special education, the results were mixed. At the primary level, 60% of the teachers demonstrated negative attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education within primary schools. In contrary, teachers at the high school level demonstrated moderately positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Both special and general education teachers are required to "fundamentally shift" their roles in an inclusive school" (Dukes & Dukes, 2005). These teachers need to work together to create the best possible setting, not only for the special education student, but also for all the students in the classroom.

Among the problems faced by general education teachers in an inclusive classroom is confusion. Many educators asked questions about the responsibilities of those who taught in inclusion classrooms and expressed feelings of concern for what was best for all students (Pugach & Winn, 2011). Teachers generally lacked confidence as they attempted to include students with disabilities into classes. There is no progress if there are challenges encountered and this leads to a negative attitude of teachers towards the program. (Thawala, S., 2015).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education is the implementing arm of all programs related to special education. “In line with the Department’s thrust in providing quality and inclusive basic education for all, the Department of Education (DepEd) continues to provide the necessary educational interventions for learners with certain exceptionalities through its Special Education (Sped) program. To date, DepEd has recognized a total of 648 Sped Centers and regular schools offering the program—471 of which are catering to elementary students and 177 are catering to High School students (Lacson, M., 2017 <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/128141>).

The Special Education program of the Department of Education provides a holistic approach in catering to the needs of various learners with exceptionalities to address their individual needs.

Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School adheres to the idea of inclusive education as a government school under the umbrella of the Department of Education. The school also adheres to the mission of the Department of Education which is to have Filipinos who passionately love their country and whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to building the nation. The Department is also mandated to formulate, implement, and coordinate policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal basic education in all elementary and secondary education institutions, including alternative learning systems, encompassing special education.

Given these reasons, it was imperative to take a closer look at the teachers of Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School, and determine their perception on the concepts and issues on inclusive education. Furthermore, the teachers were asked to provide information on the most common challenges they face while teaching in an inclusive classroom setting. The results of the study were then used as a basis in determining an intervention program.

### **Problem Statement**

1. What are the demographic profiles of the teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School in terms of:
  - 1.1 age
  - 1.2 gender
  - 1.3 educational attainment
  - 1.4 Number of years in teaching
  - 1.5 Number of years in teaching students with disabilities
  - 1.6 Seminars/trainings attended related to special education
2. As perceived by the respondents, what is the level of implementation of the inclusive education in teaching?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ identified profiles and their perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching?
4. What are the challenges faced by the teachers in inclusive education?
5. Based on the findings, what intervention plan could be proposed?

## **Literature review**

Inclusive Education. The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) defines inclusion as “a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend.”

In the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), inclusion is seen as an ideal, something for schools to aspire to and move towards. Inclusion in education is defined as valuing all students and staff equally, increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools, restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality, reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students not only those with impairments or those who are categorized as 'having special educational needs', fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities and recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

In special education contexts, inclusion means that approaches to teaching, leadership and school organization will have to be re-conceptualized. Although there are different viewpoints, inclusion is a philosophy that implies the complete acceptance of a student with a disability in a regular class. Inclusion as an educational concept negates special education as a segregated placement. Furthermore, education is seen as inclusive insofar as it minimizes selection. To defend this ambition, authors often draw on unquestionably important social values such as solidarity, equality, social justice or democracy (Haug, 1998).

### **Inclusion versus Mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming was an effort to return students in special education classrooms to general education classrooms. Most people assumed that formerly mainstreamed students would be able to generally keep up and fit in. Some people also argued for moving, or “mainstreaming,” the assistance and support that students had received in separate classrooms to general education classrooms. But for the most part, such specially designed assistance and support stayed in separate classrooms. Integration first focused on moving students from separate schools to local schools. Usually, they moved to spend most of their time in separate special education classrooms. When this move didn't result in more frequent interactions between students with and without disabilities, or much difference in learning, integration advocates sought to move students with disabilities into general education classrooms. But just getting to be in a general education classroom was not sufficient to ensure and improve students' learning. Teachers needed to arrange their teaching to meet the needs of each student. Schools of the future need to ensure that each student receives the individual attention, learning accommodations, and supports that will result in meaningful learning to high standards of achievement. In fact, our schools need to be inclusive schools, using inclusive schooling practice (National Institute for Urban School Improvement, 2000).

The integration movement strongly advocated the placement of children in the ‘least restrictive environment’ but with no expectation that every pupil with special needs would be functionally integrated. In other words, children would be integrated in a manner and to an extent appropriate to their needs and circumstances. Integration was seen as an assimilationist process, viewing a full mainstream placement as depending on whether the child can assimilate to a largely unchanged school environment (Thomas, 1997).

Functional integration is the most advanced level and relates most closely to concepts of inclusion, nevertheless integration as a generic term conveys a sense that pupils must adapt to school, with no assumption that the school will adapt to accommodate a greater diversity of pupils (Mittler, 2000). The principles of integration as shown in the Education Act 1981 continued to inform practice through the eighties and led to the development of LEA policies on integration (Gibson and Blandford, 2005).

The concept of need is insufficient on its own for meeting special needs in education and a discourse of equal opportunities and rights, with an emphasis on entitlement, provides a more effective basis for policy and practice. It was suggested that the 'need' remains deficit based and still reflects an individualistic approach to difficulties and handicaps which also clouds issues of values, power and function (Roaf and Bines, 1989).

### **Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusion**

Attitudes are an important area to study because they influence so much of our personal lives. Attitudes include desires, convictions, feelings, opinions, views, beliefs, hopes, judgments and sentiments. It is thus important to consider attitudes because human behavior and actions are influenced by attitudes – attitudes are seen as the cause and behavior as the consequence (Mushoriwa 1998). Thus teachers' attitudes may affect the way they perceive, value, judge, interact with and teach children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Research suggests that teachers' attitudes are the key to successful inclusion, based on the assumption that successful implementation of any inclusion policy is largely dependent on educators being positive about it. Shade and Stewart (2001) note that in America the intention is to place the responsibility for educating all students on the general classroom teacher, and to do that requires major changes in teachers' attitudes and expectations.

Furthermore, Tait and Purdie (2000) argue that if teachers do not develop positive attitudes towards people with disabilities during their training, these attitudes will be difficult to change and inclusive schooling will be more difficult to achieve. Murphy (1996) also suggests that if teachers emerge from initial teacher training programs without a positive attitude to inclusion, their attitudes would be difficult to change, particularly if they are exposed to "information-based courses rather than greater contact with disabled people on an interpersonal level". Short and Martin (2005) suggest that the acknowledgement of the connection between educators' attitudes and the success or failure of an inclusionary program is significant. They also argue that although the beliefs of educators play a major role in the success or failure of inclusion, a major concern of educators is the time element, particularly where there is no team teaching or collaboration.

Campbell et al (2003) surveyed 274 trainee teachers in Australia at the beginning and end of a one-semester unit on human development and education, which combined formal instruction with structured fieldwork experiences. They found that by the end of the semester, students had significantly less discomfort, sympathy, uncertainty, fear and vulnerability, and significantly greater capacity to cope. Booth and Ainscow (1998) contend that in any study of inclusive education it is necessary for the researcher to specify the type of special educational needs because teacher attitudes have been found to vary with the type of disability and the extent of institutional adaptations required to accommodate the students.

Mushoriwa (2001) studied the attitudes of primary school teachers in Harare towards the inclusion of blind children in regular classes. Four hundred teachers were 54 involved in the study, which found that the teachers had a negative attitude towards the inclusion of blind children. The research suggested that although a blind child may be included physically, s/he may remain socially and academically excluded because of the attitudes of the teachers. Hastings and Oakford (2003) summarize previous research on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Children with less severe special educational needs, who are less demanding in terms of teachers' input, are generally viewed more positively in terms of inclusion than children with severe disabilities. Typically children with intellectual disabilities or emotional or behavioral problems are rated less positively by samples of teachers and student teachers (Avramidis et al, 2000).

Another study by Vaughn et al (1996) examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion. The majority of these teachers, who were not currently participating in inclusive programs, had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate teacher preparation (Avramidis et al, 2000).

Studies where teachers had active experience of inclusion produced contradictory findings. Villa et al (1996) found results which favored the inclusion of children with SEN in ordinary schools. The researchers found that teacher commitment often emerges at the end of the implementation cycle, after they have mastered the professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programs. Similar findings were reported by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) who studied the impact of inclusion over a three-year period in the state of Michigan. Their study showed that teachers' confidence to teach children with SEN increased in line with their experience. Reynolds (2001) argues that this makes two demands of education: "First, the education system itself must involve inclusive practices and ensure equality of opportunity; secondly schools must promote the kind of pupils who believe in and are capable of participating in inclusive societies, and this involves education for inclusion

### **Challenges Faced in Inclusive Classrooms**

Some challenges were identified in an inclusive class based on various studies conducted. According to Hadebe (1993), the instructional demands of meeting the academic and behavioral needs of students with learning disabilities create a burden that decreases the teachers' ability to meet the academic and the social needs of other normal students. In the same vein, Polloway, Parton and Serna, (2008), note that students with special needs often require services and instructional support services because they are not dealing well with traditional methods and materials. This may have the implication that, giving the extra supports and services to students with learning disabilities in the mainstream classes impinges on the progress of the average and above average in those classes.

According to Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2006), teachers must be very adept at instructional management if they are to create better learning opportunities in the class. Frederickson and Cline (2003), purport that competence in the classroom events are organized to enable or disable their participation. This is a call for teachers to give equal opportunities to all the students in their classes as well as using instructional methods that address the diverse needs of the said students. Teachers should use instructional methods that strengthen and compensate for deficits in perception comprehension, memory and retrieval. Remediation of the problems of learning

in disabled children is a highly specialized subject area which demands specific Knowledge and skills from practitioners (Schaik 2000).

### Methodology

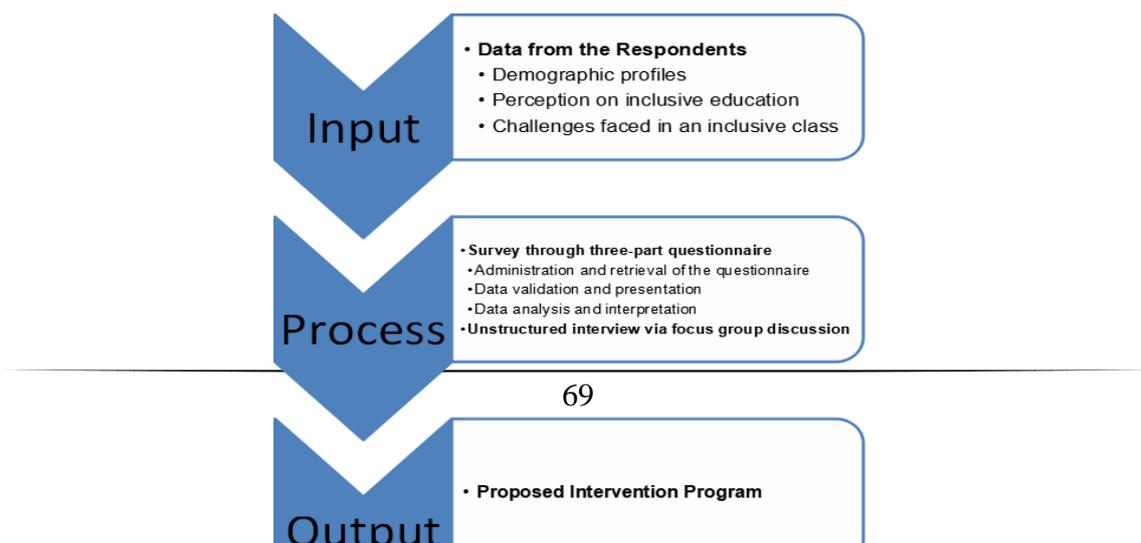
This study used quantitative research method which is a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings. Since the present study was concerned with the perception of the respondents on inclusive education and the challenges faced, the descriptive method of research was the most appropriate method to use. This method answered the questions who, what, where, when, and how.

The research flow followed the input-process-output (IPO) continuum, which served as the structure and guide for the direction of the study.

The inputs of this study included the demographic profiles, perception on the concepts and issues on inclusive education and the challenges faced in teaching an inclusive class based on the responses of the teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School. These inputs were obtained using a three-part questionnaire and the results were supplemented through unstructured interviews, via focus group discussion.

The process included assessment or evaluation of the perception on inclusive education and the challenges faced in an inclusive class. It covered the administration of the questionnaire, validating the data, presenting the data including the statistical treatment thereof, and analyses and interpretation of the data.

Outputs of this study included recommendations and measures from the respondents on dealing with the specified challenges for possible adoption and implementation. The research flow is presented in a diagram below.



### **Environment**

The locale of this study is Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School located at Oringo Subdivision, Barangay City Heights, General Santos City, Philippines. It is a public institution established 1991 by Adela C. Anfone. The school started out as a small public school serving only about 200 students and with four teachers. At that time, the school was only had one section each from Grades 4 to 6. Over the years, the school grew and currently has 1,218 students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 (Male = 593, Female = 625). According to DO 26. S. 1997 entitled the Institutionalization of SPED Programs in All Schools which is in support of the implementation of the Republic Act 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons), public school in the Philippines need to provide services and accommodate students with special needs. Furthermore, the Department Order states that the institutionalization aims to provide access to basic education among children with special needs, namely, the gifted/talented, the mentally retarded, the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the orthopedically handicapped, the learning disabled, the speech defectives, the children with behavior problems, the autistic children and those with health problems through the formal system and other alternative delivery services in education. As such, it was imperative for Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary Schools to provide services to these students. Since its establishment, the school has catered to students with learning and behavioral disorders. However, the school currently does not have a special education program or a special education center. Students who have special needs may or may not have an official diagnosis from medical experts regarding their condition. Based on their academic performance, the teacher may decide who among the students need to undergo a remediation program. Each teacher has an identified schedule for remediation and will also determine the appropriate supplementary lessons or activities to improve learning.

### **Instruments**

The research instrument used in this study was composed of three parts:

Part 1 featured six questions on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents: age, gender, educational attainment, number of years of teaching experience, number of years teaching students with disabilities, and special education related seminars/conferences.

Part 2 was a modified version of the Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education obtained from Survey of Teacher Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education Within an Urban School District study conducted by Kern E. (2006). The questionnaire is composed of 42 items containing a mixture questions related to teachers' perceptions on inclusive educations, factors affecting inclusive education and the current status of inclusive education in the respondents'

corresponding workplaces. Of these 42 items, only 20 most pertinent questions that could determine the respondents' perceptions on inclusive education were included.

Part 3 was a modified version of Section B- Challenges Facing Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education based on the study conducted by Khoaeane, T. (2012), entitled The Challenges Facing Teachers with Regard to the Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Maseru District of Lesotho.

For the focus group discussion, a set of seven (7) questions were asked to the respondents. The questions were meant to extract more information from the respondents on their perception on the implementation of inclusive education and the explanation on the specific challenges they faced.

### **Validity of the Instruments**

Since the questionnaire was composed of standard instruments that have been consistently found to be valid and reliable, further validation and reliability testing was not necessary.

### **Procedures for Data Gathering**

Upon the finalization of the research instruments, the researcher sought for permission from the Principal of Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School to conduct the study with the teachers as the respondents. When permission was granted, the questionnaires were personally administered to all the respondents. Respondents were guaranteed confidentiality of information. The researcher retrieved the questionnaires as soon as respondents have completed their response.

For the focus group discussion, the researcher set one session that included a representative of every level from Kindergarten to Grade 6. The location of the focus group discussion was the Faculty Room at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School. The researcher facilitated the discussion using the seven (7) validated questions.

### **Scoring Procedure**

Data obtained through the questionnaire was scored and described according to the following:

Perception on Inclusive Education. All twenty (20) components of this part of the questionnaire were separately scored. Weighted means were obtained and the perception on inclusive education were determined and interpreted using the following scale:

<u>Weighted Mean</u>	<u>Verbal Description</u>
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
3.41 – 4.20	Agree (A)
2.61 – 3.40	Neither agree nor disagree (N))
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree (D)
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly disagree (SD)

Challenges in Inclusive class. There are ten (10) items in this section. The respondents checked if they agree that they are facing the said challenge in their current job.

### **Sampling**

For the survey questionnaire, all the teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School who served as the respondents were asked to answer and all of them returned the said questionnaire.

For the focus group discussion which provided supplementary information, the convenience sampling method was used to determine the respondents for this discussion. Convenience sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study (Dudovskiy, J., 2018). Seven (7) respondents were asked to join.

## Results

**Table 1: Summary on the Test of Significant Relationship**

Test of Significant Relationship Between Respondents' Perception on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Teaching	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Computed $\chi^2$ Value (Average)		Critical $\chi^2$ Value	Decision	Remarks
Respondents' Age	0.05	28	21.39	<	41.34	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant
Respondents' Gender	0.05	4	3.34	<	9.39	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant
Respondents' Educational Attainment	0.05	8	6.08	<	15.51	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant
Respondents' Number of Years in Teaching	0.05	44	36.24	<	55.76	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant
Respondents' Number of Years in Teaching Students with Disabilities	0.05	36	27.24	<	43.77	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant
Respondents' Seminars or Trainings Attended Related to Special Education	0.05	4	2.85	<	9.49	Accept $H_0$	Insignificant

The table summarizes the test of significant relationship between respondents' identified socio-demographic profile and to their perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching. From the results reflected in Table 15, the respondents' age, gender, educational

attainment, numbers of years in teaching, numbers of years in teaching students with disabilities and seminars or trainings attended related to special education have no significant relationship on the respondents' perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching. The average computed values are all lesser than the set critical values. This leads to the acceptance of null hypothesis.

Although the study did not reveal significant differences in the perception of the respondents on inclusive education based on their demographic profiles, it is important to note that their positive attitude towards this philosophy is a key towards successful implementation. Based on the researches of Savage and Erten (2015), Stewart (2001) and Tait and Purdie (2000), teachers' positive attitude has an impact to the success on the implementation of inclusive education. Indeed, many experts suggest that the success of inclusion depends on the knowledge, instructional skills, and in particular on the attitudes and beliefs of general education teachers toward the integration of students with disabilities (Cook, 2001; Friend & Bursick, 2006) Boyle, C. et al (2013) took it further by concluding that it is essential that teaching staff are involved in the implementation of the inclusion policy at school, local authority, and arguably also governmental level, if the policy is to be properly accepted and thus implemented effectively throughout schools.

Al-Zyoudi (2006) argued that a different factor could have an impact on the views of the teachers. His study revealed that a greater willingness among the participants to include students with certain types of disabilities such as physical disabilities rather than students with mental retardation that affect reading, writing and arithmetic, behavioral problems. In addition to the type of disability, the severity of the disability also seemed to have an influence on acceptance levels. The said results were consistent with other studies (Al-Khateeb, 2002; Forlin et al., 1996, Soodack et al., 1998; Clough and Lindsay, 1991), which Al-Zyoudi, M. also cited.

**Table 2: Challenges Faced by the English Teachers in Inclusive Education**

Rank	Problems Encountered	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Lack of special education teachers	32	21.19	21.19
2	Lack of facilities for special care	30	19.87	41.06
3	Lack of special education classes	27	17.88	58.94
4	Lack of appropriate resources	20	13.25	72.19
5	Inappropriate allocation of learning materials	13	8.61	80.80
6.5	Lack of understanding of inclusive education	9	5.96	86.76
6.5	Inadequate program for teacher's development	9	5.96	92.72

8	Absence of working relationship between parents and school	6	3.97	96.69
9	Lack of communication with parents	4	2.65	99.34
10	Unsupportive school board/school governing council	1	0.66	100.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>151</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Challenges faced by the teachers in inclusive education are presented in Table 16. As to Pareto analysis, the vital few on which they compose eighty percent of the distribution are: lack of special education teachers, lack of facilities for special care, lack of special education classes, lack of appropriate resources and inappropriate allocation of learning materials. Their corresponding frequencies and percentages are 32 or 21.19 percent, 30 or 19.87 percent, 27 or 17.88 percent, 20 or 13.25 percent and 13 or 8.61 percent. On the other hand, the trivial many on which they compose twenty percent of the distribution are: lack of understanding of inclusive education, and inadequate program for teacher's development on which their frequency are the same, 9 or 5.96 percent. Completing the list are absence of working relationship between parents and school, lack of communication with parents and unsupportive school board/school governing council. Their corresponding frequencies and percentages are 6 or 3.97 percent, 4 or 2.65 percent and 1 or 0.66 percent, respectively.

These findings support the argument of Sklaroff (1994) that inclusion efforts fail, it is frequently due to "a lack of appropriate training for teachers in mainstream classrooms, ignorance about inclusion among senior-level administrators, and a general lack of funding for resources and training". If students with disabilities can be served in regular classrooms, then the more expensive special education service costs due to additional personnel, equipment, materials, and classrooms, can be reduced.

Thorpe, A. (2010) also revealed that the teachers reported that teacher assistants, or adult support in the classroom were an essential support in the inclusion of children with special needs. These assistants helped the students in terms of behaviour, and understanding the lessons. Specialist support or Inclusion manager, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, psychologists, behaviour consultant, among others provide additional support for the students in terms of additional programmes such as counselling group, reading recovery, literacy support, speech and language therapy, among others.

The challenge in fourth rank in this study is the lack of appropriate resources. This results is similar with the results of the study conducted by Arrah, R. and Swain, K. (2014) as there was an overwhelming negative response (78.3%) to the question of sufficient resources for working with students with special education needs. The researchers further argued that the results of the study indicated that lack of resources is a great challenge for the teachers. Obiakor and Offor (2011) as cited in the said study, noted that lack of funding, educational philosophy, and high illiteracy rate in Nigeria could be contributing factors to the problems of lack of resources for special education.

Furthermore, Avramidis, E. et al (2000) argued that "as far as the issue of resources is concerned, we do recognise that resources are essential; successful inclusion depends on resources, both human and material, but also on their successful implementation. Simply more people or more computers are not enough; rather, how the resources are being utilised is of

importance and this issue has to be addressed in the school level within a whole-school policy and at the LEA level through a reorganisation of the support services.”

On the issues of lack of understanding of inclusive education, Mngo and Mngo (2018) stated that literature on special education and the treatment persons with disabilities in Cameroon indicate that the negative attitudes toward the concept of education could also be attributed to factors such as cultures, norms, and traditions of Cameroon. The Cameroonian cultures, for the most part, see the bringing up and education of children with disabilities as the responsibility of the parent. This belief explains why the local cultures in Cameroon are both helpful and harmful to the condition of persons with disabilities.

To further determine how the respondents felt about the challenges faced in inclusive education, a focus group discussion was conducted.

### **Summary**

This study evaluated the inclusive education practices and the challenges faced by the teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School for School Year 2018-2019 as a basis in formulating an intervention plan.

Specifically, this study determined the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, their perception on the level of implementation of the inclusive education in teaching, the relationship between the respondents’ identified profiles and their perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching, and the challenges faced by the teachers in inclusive education.

Three null hypotheses were tested in this study: respondents have negative perceptions on the level of implementation of the inclusive education in teaching, there is no relationship between the respondents’ identified profiles and their perception on the implementation of inclusive education, and the respondents have not experienced any challenges in teaching in an inclusive class.

Furthermore, the study employed the descriptive and quantitative research methods. The respondents of the study were thirty-six (36) teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School, South District, Division of General Santos City. Moreover, the researcher utilized a three-part questionnaire as instrument in data gathering. Data gathered from the questionnaire were then tallied and analyzed through the assistance of a statistician. Descriptive and inferential statistics were generated to help interpret the gathered data.

### **Findings**

The following are the findings of the study:

#### **1. Profile of the Respondents**

The respondents were between mostly 36 years old and above, composed almost entirely of females, mostly are college graduates or with Masters’ units, taught for around 9 years and above, more than half with at least a year of teaching experience to students with disabilities, and mostly without special education related training or seminar.

#### **2. Level of implementation of the inclusive education in teaching as to respondents’ perception**

The respondents generally agreed with the statements related to inclusive education, with 12 of the 20 statements on the positive side.

### 3. Relationship between socio-demographic profile and perception on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching

There was no significant relationship in each of the six socio-demographic profiles identified and the perception of the respondents on the implementation of inclusive education in teaching.

### 4. Challenges faced in inclusive education

The respondents identified some challenges in the implementation of inclusive education, which includes, but not limited to, the lack of special education teachers, facilities for special care, special education classes and appropriate resources.

## **Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing findings the following conclusions are advanced:

1. Teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School generally agreed with the level of implementation of inclusive education in teaching.
2. There is no significant relationship in any of the identified profiles with the respondents' perception on the implementation of inclusive education.
3. There are challenges in the implementation of inclusive education that need to be addressed.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The Department of Education along with the administrators of Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School should provide facilities and supplies necessary to help the teachers deal with students who have special needs in an inclusive class. It also includes training and seminars to help boost their knowledge on teaching strategies and classroom management as it pertains to inclusive education.
2. The teachers at Francisco Oringo Sr. Elementary School should encourage an environment where they share knowledge with each other, especially those who have experiences in special education, to help those who are without experience. It could be through seminars, open forums and meetings.
3. The school principal should consider adopting and implementing the proposed intervention program to help the teachers be more effective in helping students with special needs cope up in an inclusive classroom.
4. Future researchers should consider including the perception of parents on inclusive education, or even the students with disabilities themselves to determine their preferences in learning. Other researches could also compare the perception of teachers from different schools within the Division of General Santos City.

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