Teachers' Capacity and School Readiness in Special Needs Education (SNED)

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Abstract : Special education teachers are critical in fostering inclusive education, yet many schools face shortages of qualified professionals. The study explored the challenges of special education teachers. This study investigated the professional profiles of these teachers and the readiness of schools to support special education programs. Findings showed that most SNED teachers held a bachelor's degree and had 6 -10 years of experience, with 80% having attended multiple SNED related trainings. Despite this, school readiness was rated only moderately across key areas: facilities, training and professional development, and curriculum adaptation. The highest teacher satisfaction was with training in managing diverse needs, while the lowest was with infrastructure accessibility. A chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between teaching capacity and school readiness. The study concludes that while teachers show moderate capacity, systemic and institutional changes are needed to improve school readiness for inclusive education**.**

IndexTerms **- Teacher, Special Needs Education**

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite inclusive education policies, the lack of trained staff, inadequate facilities, and insufficient curriculum support highlighted a disconnect between policy and practice. This study was motivated by the researcher's firsthand experience teaching a diverse group of students with special needs in an under-resourced classroom. This study investigated the **teachers' capacity** and the **level of school readiness** in Special Needs Education (SNED) in the Partido District, Camarines Sur, for school year 2024–2025.

Teaching capacity was measured through educational attainment, participation in trainings and seminars, and years of teaching experience. Findings showed that while most SNED teachers held a bachelor's degree (70%) and had 6–10 years of teaching experience (70%), only 30% had pursued graduate studies. Additionally, 80% had attended more than six SNED related trainings, indicating high involvement in professional development. These findings resonate with Wray et al. (2022) and Binammar et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of academic qualifications and professional training in strengthening inclusive teaching practices. However, consistent with Woodcock et al. (2023), the study found that qualifications alone may not sufficiently impact teaching efficacy without sustained support and institutional backing.

School readiness was assessed in terms of **facilities, professional development, and curriculum adaptation**. Results revealed a moderate level of readiness across all dimensions, with professional development receiving the highest weighted mean (3.18), followed by school facilities (3.02) and curriculum adaptation (3.00). Teachers expressed the strongest agreement on receiving training to manage diverse classroom needs (3.7), yet indicated concerns about the lack of physical accessibility in schools for students with disabilities (2.7). These results align with Donohue and Bornman (2015) and the Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018), which emphasize the need for accessible environments and adaptable instructional strategies to support inclusive education. Furthermore, findings echo the views of Guskey (2002), who stressed that professional development must be contextually relevant and institutionally supported to be effective.

The study was anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which views teaching and learning as shaped by interconnected systems such as classroom practices, school infrastructure, and policy environments. It also drew from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), highlighting the need for skilled educators to scaffold learning for students with special needs. The Input-Process-Output (IPO) model guided the research framework, linking teacher capacity (input) to school readiness (process) and intervention strategies (output).

A descriptive-associational research design was used, employing a validated researcher-made questionnaire distributed to ten purposively selected SNED teachers. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, weighted mean) and a chi-square test of independence were used to analyze data. Surprisingly, statistical analysis revealed no significant association between teachers' capacity and school readiness indicators. This finding supports Kraft and Papay (2014) and Liu et al. (2020), who argue that systemic and organizational factors rather than individual qualifications play a more substantial role in improving educational outcomes. This interpretation is also reinforced by Contextual Learning Theory (Hull, 1993), which posits that learning is most effective when situated within real-life conditions and supported by institutional structures.

In conclusion, the study found that although SNED teachers demonstrated moderate qualifications and engagement in professional development, these capacities were not statistically linked to the schools' readiness for inclusive education. Instead, challenges in infrastructure, curriculum flexibility, and systemic support highlight the need for comprehensive reforms. The findings underscore that teacher training and experience alone cannot drive inclusive education without addressing broader institutional barriers. Hence, effective SNED implementation requires a dual focus: empowering teachers through continued academic and professional growth, and transforming school systems to be more responsive, inclusive, and supportive of diverse learner needs.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study determined the association of teachers capacity and school readiness in Special Needs Education (SNED) in Partido District, Division of Camarines Sur, School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, the following questions were answered:

i. What is the level of teachers' capacity in handling learners with special needs in terms of;
   a. Educational Attainment;
   b. Trainings and Seminars Attended; and
   c. Years of Teaching Experience

ii. What is the level of school readiness offering SNED programs in terms of:
   a. School Facilities;
   b. Teachers Training & Professional Development; and
   c. Curriculum Adaptation?

iii. Is there a significant association between the teachers' capacity and level of school readiness in Special Needs Education (SNED)?

iv. What intervention programs may be crafted to enhance the teacher's capacity and level of school readiness to Special Needs Education (SNED)?

1.2 Hypothesis

This study was anchored on the hypothesis that there is a significant association between teachers' capacity and level of school readiness in Special Needs Education (SNED).

1.3 Conceptual framework

This study utilized the Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework with a feedback mechanism to assess the capacity of special education teachers and the readiness of schools in implementing Special Needs Education (SNED). The **input** phase focused on collecting data related to teacher capacity, including educational attainment, training and seminars attended, and years of teaching experience—factors essential for inclusive teaching. The **process** phase examined school readiness through three key components: availability of facilities, relevance of professional development, and effectiveness of curriculum adaptation. These aspects reflect the institutional ability to support inclusive education, drawing from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to emphasize the interplay between learner needs and systemic support. The **output** of the framework was the development of a contextualized intervention program addressing identified gaps in both teacher and school capacities. A built-in **feedback loop** ensures continuous improvement by using findings to refine practices, update training, and guide policy revisions supporting a sustainable approach to inclusive education.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive-associational research design. Ten SNED teachers from selected public schools in Partido District were purposively chosen. Data were collected through a validated researcher-made survey, distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire measured teacher capacity (educational attainment, number of trainings attended, and years of teaching experience) and school readiness (school facilities, professional development, and curriculum adaptation). Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Chi-square test were employed for data analysis
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2.1 Methods Used

This study employed a descriptive-associational research design to determine the relationship between the capacity of SPED teachers and the readiness of schools in implementing Special Needs Education (SNED) in the Partido Area for the school year 2024–2025. The descriptive aspect of the design focused on profiling the respondents based on their educational attainment, trainings and seminars attended, and years of teaching experience. It also assessed the level of school readiness in terms of available facilities, teacher training and professional development opportunities, and curriculum adaptation.

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The study's respondents are the Special Needs Education teachers who handled a larger number of pupils with special needs in 2024-2025 while working in various schools around the Partido Area. This capstone project will use purposive sampling since it will enable the researcher to concentrate on the most pertinent subjects, ensuring that the study offers valuable insights into the particular issue being examined. The study's respondents were SNED teachers who were in charge of a sizable number of children with special needs at a particular school in the Division of Camarines Sur that offers a special education program for the academic year 2024-2025.

2.3 Data Gathering Tools

To collect the necessary data for this study, a **researcher-made survey questionnaire** was utilized as the primary data gathering tool. The questionnaire was carefully constructed based on the research objectives and related literature concerning teacher capacity and school readiness in Special Needs Education (SNED).

2.4 Statistical tools

The study employed various statistical tools to analyze and interpret the data. Frequency counts were used to identify how many respondents shared similar characteristics, such as educational attainment, training attended, and years of experience, helping to describe the profile of SNED teachers. Percentages were applied to show the proportion of respondents in each category, offering a clearer comparative view of teacher preparedness. Weighted mean was utilized to assess the level of school readiness in terms of facilities, training, and curriculum adaptation using a Likert scale, allowing qualitative perceptions to be quantified. Descriptive statistics provided a general overview of the collected data, summarizing teacher capacity and school readiness without inferring causality. Lastly, the Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine if there were significant associations between teacher-related variables and school readiness indicators. This test confirmed whether or not a statistical relationship existed, guiding the formulation of relevant intervention strategies.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In terms of educational attainment, 70% of the respondents held a bachelor's degree, while only 30% had completed a master's degree. This indicates that while the majority of teachers meet the basic qualifications, there remains a limited number who have pursued advanced academic training, which may affect the depth of their expertise in special education. Regarding teaching experience, 70% of the respondents had been in the profession for 6–10 years, 20% had over 10 years of experience, and only 10% had taught for 1–5 years. This suggests that most teachers have developed a considerable level of classroom exposure and competence. Furthermore, in terms of trainings and seminars, 80% had attended more than six SNED related trainings, showing strong participation in professional development. These findings reflect a moderately strong level of teacher capacity; however, the lack of graduate-level credentials indicates the need for continuous academic and professional advancement.

As for the level of school readiness, results showed that schools are moderately prepared to implement inclusive education. The school facilities were rated moderately adequate, with a mean score of 3.02, although accessibility for students with physical disabilities received the lowest mean (2.7), highlighting a critical gap in infrastructure. Teachers' professional development received the highest average score of 3.18, particularly in relation to training for managing diverse classroom needs, indicating a relatively positive perception of training relevance. Curriculum adaptation had a mean score of 3.00, suggesting that while some flexibility and autonomy exist, institutional support for curriculum modification is inconsistent. Overall, the findings point to a moderate level of readiness across the domains of facilities, training, and curriculum.

The chi-square test of independence revealed no significant relationship between teacher capacity (educational attainment, years of experience, training) and school readiness indicators. This outcome suggests that individual teacher qualifications and professional development, while important, do not independently determine a school's readiness for inclusive education. Instead, the findings imply that institutional factors such as leadership support, funding availability, and policy implementation play a more decisive role in influencing school preparedness. These insights underscore the need for a systemic and collaborative approach to inclusive education, one that goes beyond teacher-level improvements and addresses broader structural challenges.

TEACHERS' CAPACITY

Table 1A. Teachers Capacity along Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's Degree	7	70
Master's Degree	3	30
Total	**10**	**100**

Table 1B. Teachers Capacity Along Years in Teaching

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	1	10
6-10 years	7	70
More than 10 years	2	20
Total	**10**	**100**

Table 1C. Teachers Capacity along Number of Training and Seminars related to SNED

Number of Trainings Attended	Frequency	Percentage
4-6	2	20
More than 6	8	80
Total	**10**	**100**

SCHOOL READINESS

TableL2A. Level of Readiness along School Facilities

School Facilities	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
The school provides adequate facilities to support special education.	3.2	Moderately Agree
There are sufficient resources available for special education needs.	3.1	Moderately Agree
I find the classroom space suitable for conducting special education classes.	3.2	Moderately Agree
The school's infrastructure supports accessibility for students with physical disabilities.	2.7	Moderately Agree
I think the facilities help foster a positive learning experience for students with special needs.	2.9	Moderately Agree

Table 2B. Teachers Training and Professional Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Access to sufficient professional development opportunities	3.0	Moderately Agree
Relevance of training programs to current educational challenges	3.3	Strongly Agree
School support for continuous learning and professional growth	3.00	Moderately Agree
Adequate training for managing diverse classroom needs	3.7	Strongly Agree
Focus on professional development in school	2.9	Moderately Agree

Table 2C. Level of School Readiness in Terms of Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum Adaptation	Weighted Mean	Interpretatoin
The curriculum is adaptable to meet the needs of students with special needs.	2.90	Moderately Agree
I feel supported in modifying	2.90	Moderately Agree

curriculum content when necessary.		
Curriculum flexibility is a priority at my school.	3.00	Moderately Agree
I have the autonomy to implement curriculum changes that benefit my students.	3.10	Moderately Agree
Teachers collaborate to enhance curriculum adaptation.	3.10	Moderately Agree

Table 3. Summary of Weighted Means for School Readiness

Dimensions	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Schools Facilities	3.02	Moderately Agree
Training and Professional Development	3.18	Moderately to Strongly Agree
Curriculum Adaptation	3.00	Moderately Agree
Overall School Readiness	**2.95**	**Moderately Agree**

Table 4. CHI-SQUARE TEST OF INDEPENDENCE RESULTS

Teachers' Capacity	School Readiness	x^2 - value	p-value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	School Facilities	0.36	0.54	Not Significant
	Professional Development	0.21	0.64	Not Significant
	Curriculum Adaptation	0.03	0.86	Not Significant
Trainings & Seminars	School Facilities	4.72	0.19	Not Significant
	Professional Development	0.62	0.89	Not Significant
	Curriculum Adaptation	0.03	0.99	Not Significant
Years of teaching Experience	School Facilities	0.60	0.89	Not Significant
	Professional Development	2.34	0.50	Not Significant
	Curriculum Adaptation	0.60	0.89	Not Significant

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Teachers generally possess moderate qualifications and relevant teaching experience, which contribute to their ability to manage learners with special needs. However, the limited number of teachers with advanced degrees suggests a constraint in their capacity to provide highly specialized instruction necessary for inclusive education. In terms of school readiness, results indicate a moderate level of preparedness, with professional development emerging as the most well-supported area. Despite this, significant gaps remain, particularly in the physical accessibility of school facilities and the flexibility of the curriculum to accommodate diverse learner needs. Moreover, statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between teacher capacity and school readiness, underscoring the importance of broader systemic and institutional support. This highlights the need for educational reforms that go beyond enhancing individual teacher qualifications and instead focus on strengthening infrastructure, policy implementation, and administrative backing to ensure successful and sustainable inclusive education practices.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance both teacher capacity and school readiness in implementing Special Needs Education (SNED). First, it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd), local government units (LGUs), and school administrators provide opportunities such as scholarships, part-

time graduate programs, and academic incentives to encourage teachers to pursue advanced degrees. Second, continuous and needs-based professional development should be institutionalized through a training framework that emphasizes practical strategies in inclusive education, such as differentiated instruction, classroom management, and the use of assistive technologies. These training programs should include peer mentoring and provide incentives like CPD points to encourage teacher participation. Third, targeted recruitment and retention strategies must be implemented to attract early-career SNED teachers. These may include signing bonuses, mentorship programs, and adjusted workloads to support new educators.

Furthermore, school infrastructure must be upgraded to meet accessibility standards, particularly in accordance with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. This includes installing ramps, tactile signage, and accessible restrooms to support learners with physical and mobility challenges. In addition, curriculum adaptability should be promoted through institutional guidelines that support flexible teaching strategies and collaborative planning among teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers. To ensure sustainable progress, schools should adopt an inclusive education readiness assessment framework with measurable indicators across capacity, infrastructure, and curriculum. These assessments should be conducted regularly to guide planning and resource allocation. Overall, a holistic, well-funded, and policy-driven approach is necessary to transition schools from moderate readiness to fully inclusive learning environments.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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