



## THE INFLUENCE OF SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP, TEACHER EMPOWERMENT, PERCEPTION, ATTITUDE AND COMMITMENT ON THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES OF SPED TEACHERS

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### Abstract:

This study attempted to investigate the combined influence of Systems Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, Perception, Attitude and Commitment on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in Region XI. A quantitative research design was used in this study. The survey used an adapted questionnaire, which was contextualized to fit in with this research and was subjected to a reliability test called Cronbach Alpha, which had a result of .953 and up. This study also employed multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of Systems Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, Perception, Attitude and Commitment on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers. Questionnaires were administered to the 400 randomly selected teachers using the quota sampling method. Findings show that teacher empowerment, teacher attitude and teacher commitment have a significant influence on inclusive education practices. Further, results revealed that teacher commitment was the strongest predictor of inclusive education practices, followed by teacher empowerment and teacher attitude.

**Keywords:** systems leadership, teacher empowerment, perception, attitude, commitment, inclusive education practices of SPED teachers, Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

Inclusive education practices still need to be more effective in catering to the diverse needs of learners (Abegglen & Hessels, 2018). Teachers practiced inclusive education, but it was limited (Muega, 2016). In Turkey, as teachers practice inclusive education, they need more conceptual clarity on the definition of inclusive education. Most focused on the main philosophy but needed to integrate inclusiveness with instructional practices. Teachers generally need to practice fully inclusive education in the classroom (Yilmaz & Yeganeh, 2021).

Similarly, in Malaysia, teachers disregard perspectives on practising inclusion and inclusive education in educational reformation (Salleh & Woollard, 2021). In India, less attention has been paid to the quality of teaching and learning experiences for children with impairments. Thus, inclusive education has yet to be thoroughly practiced (Singal, 2019). In the Philippines, both in the cities and remote or rural areas, many public schools must be equipped to practice inclusive education (Muega, 2016). The main challenge in implementing inclusive education (IE) is the lack of proper training (Garcia, 2023). To overcome this obstacle and ensure successful inclusive practices, it is crucial to provide adequate professional development opportunities and training programs. Inclusive education practice impacts learning outcomes, especially for girls with disabilities. Failure to fully practice inclusive education endures learning outcomes. It is, therefore, urgent to examine this concern (Carew *et al.*, 2020). In addition, while inclusive education is a global phenomenon, research published in this area was only done by a small number of authors and countries. This urgency and gaps triggered the conduct of the study (Hernández-Torrano *et al.*, 2022).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Systems Leadership

System leadership refers to a shared commitment to improving teaching and learning within and across the organization (Day *et al.*, 2020). This collective commitment to lifting system-wide achievement through improvement in teaching and learning requires careful attention to creating conditions for purposeful and meaningful collaboration between school leaders. It requires an authentic approach to encouraging and enabling the most successful leaders to identify and transfer best practices and mobilize leadership capacity to achieve whole-school improvement (Harris *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, the ability to generate change across a system with particular attention to the importance of system leadership, working in conjunction with school leadership, will ultimately drive school improvement (Pont, 2020). It is considered a more comprehensive resource for school improvement (Gurr & Drysdale, 2018). Successful leaders identify and transfer best practices and support leadership in improving the system through teacher empowerment. The result is improved teaching quality and educational outcomes for all school students. It also requires a collective understanding

of the actions needed and an explicit moral purpose that every school can improve (Hagege, 2023).

Logically, system and school leadership must collaborate (Gurr & Drysdale, 2018). In this regard, leaders of inclusive schools must be committed to equity and giving each learner a positive educational experience. Since inclusive classroom practices are intrinsically and extrinsically linked to better learner outcomes, school leaders substantially impact these practices by empowering teachers (Kilag *et al.*, 2023).

## **2.2 Teacher Empowerment**

Teacher empowerment is in conjunction with the international agreement that teachers play a crucial role in realizing inclusion, as they are primarily responsible for translating the ideals of inclusion into the realities of classroom practice (Andrews *et al.*, 2021). In this reality, leaders must cultivate teachers' belief that they can deal with a wide range of educational needs in the inclusive school setting (DeMatthews *et al.*, 2021). Such beliefs that teachers own in their ability to take the necessary actions to fulfill goals are accounted to the school leader's cultivation of a positive inclusion climate defined by teacher attitude, perception, and commitment.

Research shows that teacher empowerment is one of the main aspects of effective teacher job performance (Ahmed & Malik, 2019), job satisfaction (Wu *et al.*, 2021), more considerable intrinsic motivation (Oberfield, 2016), and students' higher academic achievement (Maniam *et al.*, 2017). It was established that teacher psychological empowerment positively correlates with such organizational behavior as organizational commitment (Mohammad *et al.*, 2022), professional commitment (Lee & Nie, 2014), organizational citizenship behavior (Saleem *et al.*, 2017), and negatively correlates with a turnover intention (Salim *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, teacher psychological empowerment predicts the individual's (cognitive, emotional, and intentional) readiness for change (Celik & Atik, 2020), which is especially important in modern schools.

## **2.3 Teacher Perception towards Inclusive Education**

Teachers' perceptions and attitudes depend on various factors, including qualifications, experience, and teaching experience, and their impacts can determine whether an inclusive process will succeed or fail (Castro *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, an essential inclusion component is the Salamanca Framework for Action (Adigun, 2021), which is incorporated into several African educational policy documents and provides guidance on how teachers can improve the educational process and outcomes for learners with disabilities.

There is growing concern regarding teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and their readiness to integrate learners with disabilities into the mainstream learning environment to teach them alongside their peers without special needs (Daane *et al.*, 2000). Inclusion is most effective when proactive principals create effective co-teaching models (Jurkowski *et al.*, 2023); the perceptions of general and special education teachers must be positive for collaboration to be effective. It is plausible that the quality of

inclusion programs established in schools may suffer from both attitudinal and training factors, leading to a lack of preparation for working with learning disabilities (Ginja & Chen, 2023). Despite teachers' positive perceptions of inclusive education and support for such educational practices, previous studies have shown a negative attitude toward its implementation (Kuyini *et al.*, 2020).

#### **2.4 Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education**

Previous research has already pointed out that higher use of inclusive teaching practices is linked with a more positive attitude by teachers toward inclusive education (Sharma & Sokal, 2016). The majority of teachers express positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special educational needs, implying at the same time the need for appropriate teacher training on the individual needs of students with disabilities (Saloviita, 2020).

It has been concluded that inclusion largely depends on teachers' attitudes toward learners with special education needs, their view of classroom differences, and their willingness to respond positively and effectively to those differences (Heyder *et al.*, 2020). The importance of teacher attitudes actually may seem self-evident. If a teacher does not want a particular child in her classroom, it is difficult to see how any amount of extra resources or training could save the placement from being a failure (Štemberger & Kiswarday, 2018).

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are not strongly associated with any of the demographic variables thus far studied (Rojo-Ramos *et al.*, 2020). In the present study, the teachers' gender and age gave results comparable to most previous studies: female teachers were somewhat more optimistic than male teachers (Avramidis *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, teachers' ages have had either no association with their attitudes towards inclusion (Mónico *et al.*, 2020) or, three times more often, younger teachers have felt slightly more positively towards inclusion than older teachers (Charitaki *et al.*, 2022). About the same number of studies has shown that female teachers think more positively towards inclusion than male teachers (Savolainen *et al.*, 2022). Only two studies conducted with high school teachers found that male teachers felt more positively toward inclusion than female teachers (Saloviita, 2020).

#### **2.5 Commitment of Teachers towards Inclusive Education**

Teacher commitment is a variable often studied by researchers in educational organizations. Teachers' commitment to the school underpins the concept of the views, acceptance, and their attempts to achieve school goals (Essex *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, teachers' commitment to students is related to their involvement and responsibilities in all student learning activities (Shu, 2022). This is in contrast to the concept of teachers' commitment to teaching, which refers to their readiness to provide effective instruction, demonstrate enthusiasm, and allocate extra time to students (Ismael *et al.*, 2022). Finally, teachers' dedication to the profession is regarded as a motivating factor, in which participation in work could improve their professional skills, knowledge,

and teaching abilities (Jusoh *et al.*, 2020). However, as a result, many factors influence teacher commitment, such as school leader leadership, school climate, teacher workload, teacher attitude, and student discipline (Kasa *et al.*, 2020). Successful leaders can increase school teacher engagement (Don *et al.*, 2021). This leadership quality becomes a measure because imperial studies show that wise school leaders can produce committed teachers (Amhag *et al.*, 2019). In addition to school leadership, the school climate significantly impacts teachers' commitment (Saidin *et al.*, 2020).

## **2.6 Inclusive Education Practices**

Inclusive education encompasses various dimensions, including curriculum adaptations, teacher training, support services, and policy frameworks. These are crucial in facilitating inclusive practices and addressing barriers marginalized groups face in accessing education (Neupane, 2020). Understanding these dimensions is essential for the effective implementation of inclusive education. It goes beyond integrating students with disabilities or special needs into regular classrooms and embraces a broader understanding of diversity, including ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, gender, and learning styles (Kart & Kart, 2021). Inclusive education advocates for all students' acceptance and active involvement in mainstream classrooms, with necessary support and accommodations available (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022)

Research has focused on standard schooling for both groups of students and the efficacy of standard education for students with special educational needs (SEN) since the shift from segregated schools for students with and without SEN (Contreras *et al.*, 2020). Due to the diverse characteristics of students, the enablement of participation strongly depends on the design of pedagogical offers and teaching approaches (Ainscow & Messiou, 2018).

Teachers implementing inclusive teaching practices aim to make the inclusion of all students happen. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate whether this demand can be fulfilled from the perspective of the measures' recipients, namely the students. Teachers who embrace inclusive teaching practices can provide a more equitable and inclusive learning environment that benefits all students (Schwab, 2021). However, India is experiencing a significant need for increased resources, enhanced infrastructure, innovative teaching techniques, and a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities. Indonesia's policy implementation concerns have resulted in discriminatory policies. Singapore grapples with cultural and institutional obstacles, standardized assessment outcomes, and teacher training initiatives.

Vietnam continues to struggle with persistent discrimination problems, unequal access to equitable educational opportunities, and disparities in teacher professional development (Arias *et al.*, 2023). In the Philippines, DepEd Order No. 21, issued in 2019, introduced Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program. The guidelines aim to promote inclusive education in the Philippines by giving every Filipino access to a high-quality education rooted in their cultural context. To provide inclusive education,

teachers must involve children with special needs as much as possible within the typical class setup (Nuñez & Rosales, 2021). However, many teachers lack the necessary understanding and training to effectively serve students with special needs, making providing excellent service in inclusive classes challenging. Teachers who assist students with learning difficulties are often perceived as unqualified due to their school's lack of special needs education training (Allam & Martin, 2021).

### **3. Research Objective**

This study focused on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in Region XI, Philippines. Specifically, it sought:

1. To determine the level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in terms of:
  - 1.1 expectations and least risks assumptions,
  - 1.2 general education class membership and full participation,
  - 1.3 instruction and support,
  - 1.4 evaluation and grading, and
  - 1.5 family-school partnerships.
2. To determine the significant influence of Systems Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, Perception, Attitude and Commitment on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in Region XI.

#### **3.1 Hypothesis**

There is no significant influence of Systems Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, Perception, Attitude and Commitment on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in Region XI.

### **4. Methodology**

Quantitative research techniques and multiple regression analysis were utilized in this study to determine the influence of organizational learning capability, public service motivation and relational leadership on organizational commitment. To generate accurate results, the survey questionnaire underwent a reliability test called Cronbach Alpha and was constructed on a 5-point Likert scale rating. Further, in order to fully understand each question statement, the adapted instruments from various studies were contextualized to fit in with the library personnel's organizational setup.

This study was conducted in the Davao Region, formerly called Southern Mindanao. Region XI is located in the Southeastern portion of Mindanao, Philippines, comprising four provinces and one capital city, namely: Davao de Oro, Davao Del Norte, Davao Del Sur, Davao Occidental, Davao Oriental, and Davao City.

This study used a universal or total population sampling method. This method is suitable for this research because of the common characteristics defined by the chosen

population. Though individuals of this population have different ages, gender, and attitudes, they share a certain experience in their jobs. Moreover, this technique is suitable for this study considering that only a few are librarians by profession, and very limited professionals are handling library services.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers

#### 5.1.1 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers According to Expectations and Least Risks Assumptions

Table 1 reveals the level of inclusive education practices of SPED teachers in the dimensions of expectations and least-risk assumptions. The overall mean rating indicated was 4.32, which is described as very high. This implied that the behavior was always demonstrated by the SPED teachers. The results on expectations and least dangerous assumptions reinforced the principle that it is safer for students with disabilities to be supported in a general classroom setting rather than being isolated in a special education environment (Lakkala *et al.*, 2021). This is based on the idea that students with disabilities should have the same opportunities for learning and socialization as their peers without disabilities. This approach promotes an inclusive environment where students feel valued and supported rather than stigmatized or excluded.

The concept of the least dangerous assumption is a principle that highlights the importance of ensuring that the educational practices used for students with special needs cause the least harm to all students, especially in the absence of conclusive data on best practices in special education (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020). This principle emphasizes the need for educators to assume that students should receive their education in a general education setting alongside their peers. This approach encourages a collaborative effort to ensure that every student gets the education they need to thrive.

Also, it is essential to presume that students with special education needs can learn the same curricular content as their peers and that general education teachers can teach students with varying abilities. Research indicates that students with special education needs who participate in inclusive programs can learn an equal, if not greater, amount of academic content compared to those in special education programs (Kart & Kart, 2021).

**Table 1:** Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers According to Expectations and Least Risks Assumptions

Statements	Mean	Description
1. Language regarding the student’s functioning or developmental level is not used; rather, descriptions of the student focus on abilities and needs.	4.36	Very High
2. Annual goals on the student’s IEP reflect content standards from the general education curriculum.	4.37	Very High
3. Predictions are not made that the student will “never” acquire certain knowledge or skills.	4.31	Very High
4. In order to respect privacy, staff discuss the student’s personal care, medical needs, and other sensitive issues out of earshot of other students, and only with those who need to know.	4.30	Very High
5. Students with disabilities work on the same grade level content standards as typical peers with appropriate support.	4.29	Very High
6. Students’ individual discipline and behavior intervention plans rely on teaching appropriate skills.	4.32	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>Very High</b>

### 5.1.2 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers According to General Education Class Membership and Full Participation

Table 2 revealed the level of inclusive education practices of SPED teachers in general education class membership and full participation dimension. The overall mean rating indicated was 4.32, which is described as very high. This meant that the SPED teachers had always manifested the behavior to entice full cooperation from students.

Accordingly, inclusive education is an approach to teaching and learning that strives to remove any barriers that may prevent students from accessing and fully participating in their education. According to Törmänen and Roebers (2018), inclusive education ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can learn and thrive in the same environment. Schools must support all students, including those with special education needs, to enable them to learn with their peers. The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that every student has the right to access quality education, and should be delivered to meet their individual needs. Farias *et al.* (2019) argue that inclusive education is not only beneficial for students with disabilities but also for those without disabilities, as it promotes diversity, equity, and respect for all members of the school community. By ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn and grow together, inclusive education helps to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

As per the existing policy on inclusion, it is essential to provide learners with special needs and learning disabilities the necessary support within the mainstream education system. This approach ensures they receive adequate education and contribute to their academic and social growth. According to Florian (2015), mainstream class teaching has several advantages for learners with disabilities, including increased participation of all students in the learning process and reduced exclusion of those with learning disabilities from the mainstream school curriculum. Therefore, integrating learners with special needs into the mainstream classroom is crucial for creating an



inclusive learning environment and promoting equal educational opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, inclusive educators in this study do not believe that students with additional learning needs, such as those with disabilities or developmental delays, should be segregated into special classes or schools. Instead, they believe that all students should have equal access to education and be provided with the necessary support and accommodations to help them succeed (Ainscow, 2020). Inclusion is considered both a process and a goal, involving identifying and removing barriers to access, learning, and achievement for all students (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2021). This might include providing assistive technology, modifying assignments or assessments, or offering additional support from a teacher or specialist. Ultimately, inclusive education aims to create a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, and supportive for all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or identities.

**Table 2:** Level of Inclusive Education Practices according to General Education Class Membership and Full Participation

Statements	Mean	Description
1. The student is on the roster of and is formally a member of an age-appropriate general education class.	4.37	Very High
2. The student progresses through the grades according to the same pattern as students without disabilities.	4.33	Very High
3. The student marches at graduation at the average age at which other classmates without disabilities graduate.	4.34	Very High
4. The student is not pulled out of general education classes for instruction.	4.35	Very High
5. Related services are delivered in typical, inclusive environments.	4.35	Very High
6. There are no places or programs just for students with disabilities.	4.37	Very High
7. Students with disabilities are proportionally represented in classes, courses, clubs, and extracurricular activities.	4.33	Very High
8. The student receives the same materials as students without disabilities, with support provided as necessary.	4.31	Very High
9. The student participates in classroom instruction in similar ways as students without disabilities.	4.30	Very High
10. The student's individual behavioral goals are aligned with the school-wide behavioral rules.	4.29	Very High
11. The student's individual behavior supports and interventions are similar to ways that students without disabilities are supported	4.32	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>Very High</b>

### 5.1.3 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers according to Instruction and Support

Table 3 revealed the level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in the Instruction and Support dimension. From the result, it can be gleaned that the overall mean was 4.33, which is described as very high. This meant that the SPED teachers always observed instruction and provided support to learners. This exemplary evidence of

practicing instruction and support for inclusive education signifies that the curriculum is based on common content standards for all students.

Basing the common content standards in the curriculum for all students as a form of instruction and support highlighted the contention of Finkelstein *et al.* (2021) that embracing and responding positively to difference and diversity is essential. Teachers should recognize and appreciate each individual's unique perspectives and experiences and ensure they feel included and valued in the learning environment. Moreover, as highlighted by Moberg *et al.* (2020), it is crucial to identify and address any barriers that might hinder students' learning and participation. This could include anything from physical and emotional to social and cultural barriers. By doing so, teachers ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. The author also suggests that teachers should learn from their experiences and use this knowledge to support the learning and participation of others. They should reflect on past successes and challenges and share these insights with peers and colleagues. By doing so, they can create a more inclusive and supportive learning community that benefits everyone.

Furthermore, the results of this study affirm that inclusive education is a crucial aspect of ensuring that every student feels valued and can participate fully in the learning process. To achieve this, educators can employ various approaches, such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2021). UDL is a proactive approach emphasizing the importance of planning for student diversity. It involves developing a flexible curriculum, instruction, and assessment that can be adjusted to meet the needs of all learners, regardless of their specific abilities, backgrounds, or learning styles. With UDL, teachers aim to create a learning environment that is accessible and inclusive to all students right from the start. On the other hand, differentiated instruction is a reactive approach that focuses on adapting instruction to meet the specific needs of individual students (Lidner & Schwab, 2020). This approach involves varying instruction content, process, or product based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

Moreover, the inclusive education practices using instruction that reflect the learning styles of all students in the class through the use of visual, tactile, and kinesthetic materials and experiences exemplify the application of differentiated instruction, which is a teaching approach that involves modifying various aspects of the learning environment to cater to the diverse needs of students. This approach can include modifying the instruction, content, learning processes, product, assessment, and timeframes in which students engage with the learning material (Lidner & Schwab, 2020). By making these modifications, teachers can ensure that every student can learn at their own pace and in a way that suits their unique learning style. Another critical aspect of differentiated instruction is student grouping, which can also be differentiated to support the learning of all students.

**Table 3: Level of Inclusive Education Practices According to Instruction and Support**

Statements	Mean	Description
1. The curriculum is based on common content standards for all students.	4.37	Very High
2. The curriculum is presented in a variety of accessible formats, including written information at appropriate reading levels and in formats as indicated on the student support plan.	4.33	Very High
3. Learners who require academic support learn better when teachers facilitate remedial teaching.	4.34	Very High
4. Emerging barriers to learning are just too difficult to overcome in the classroom.	4.35	Very High
5. There are students that whom teachers should provide separate settings other than the inclusive classes	4.31	Very High
6. The instruction is individualized through the development of personalized performance demonstrations for some students.	4.30	Very High
7. The instruction reflects the learning styles of all students in the class through the use of visual, tactile, and kinesthetic materials and experiences.	4.29	Very High
8. The instruction prioritizes the use of research-based strategies for increasing student achievement.	4.32	Very High
9. The instruction is provided in multiple formats, such as individual, pairs, small groups, and whole class.	4.35	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>Very High</b>

#### 5.1.4 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers According to Evaluation and Grading

Table 4 shows the result of the level of education practices of SPED teachers in the evaluation and grading dimension. The overall mean rating was 4.31, which is described as very high. This implied that SPED teachers always observed exemplary practice of evaluation and grading in the conduct of inclusive education. This also signifies that assessment and grading include criteria for judging success that reflect general education curriculum standards and individualized IEP goals and objectives.

The study's results denote that regular and special school settings are exposed to different components of measurement and evaluation and how to adapt other forms of assessment to prevent unfair discrimination against learners with varying forms of disabilities. In special needs education, measurement and evaluation are essential in ensuring that learners receive the necessary support to achieve their academic goals. Measurement and evaluation play crucial roles in both special needs education and general education. However, due to the unique learning needs of students with special needs, their assessment processes often require adjustments and adaptations to ensure fairness and accuracy in evaluating their progress. Ugodulunwa (2023) emphasizes the importance of modifying assessment techniques and tools to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for special needs students. This requires a thorough understanding of the unique needs and abilities of these students, as well as a willingness to adapt traditional assessment methods to better suit their learning styles. By doing so,

educators can help ensure that these students are given the same opportunities for success as their peers, and that they are able to fully participate in the learning process.

One of the critical aspects of assessment in special needs education is accommodation. This study's assessment includes criteria for judging success that reflect general education curriculum standards and individualized IEP goals and objectives. Accommodation refers to adapting assessment instruments and providing support and services that help learners demonstrate their learning. These accommodations may include providing additional time to complete assignments and tests, using alternative formats for printed assessment materials such as braille, and reading out questions in the resource room for visually impaired learners (Ozaji, 2018). Accommodations are tailored to the learner's needs and may include technology and assistive devices to help them access the curriculum. Using assistive technology such as screen readers, speech recognition software, and adaptive keyboards can significantly enhance the learning experience for learners with special needs. Assessment accommodations are just one aspect of special needs education, but they play a vital role in ensuring that learners with special needs receive a fair and equitable education. Learners with special needs can reach their full potential and achieve academic success by providing the necessary support and accommodations.

**Table 4:** Level of Inclusive Education Practices According to Evaluation and Grading

Statements	Mean	Description
1. Includes criteria for judging success that reflects general education curriculum standards and individualized IEP goals and objectives.	4.37	Very High
2. Reflects benchmarks similar to those of students without disabilities.	4.31	Very High
3. Reflects evaluation methods similar to those of students without disabilities.	4.30	Very High
4. Allows the student to receive grades that reflect "personal best" achievement and improvement.	4.29	Very High
5. Teachers should have professional affiliations with stakeholders of inclusive education.	4.32	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>Very High</b>

### 5.1.5 Level of Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers According to Family-School Partnerships

Table 5 shows the result of the level of inclusive education practices of SPED teachers in the family-school partnership dimension. Based on the table, the overall mean was 4.31, which is described as very high. This indicated that SPED teachers had always practised family-school partnerships to support the learning needs of students.

The result of family-school partnerships, promoting children's educational achievement and literacy development through individual behavioral interventions reflecting the family's cultural practices, is a significant aspect that requires the involvement and support of families. Friend and Cook (2020) state that family involvement is critical to children's academic success, and inclusive education recognizes

the importance of families as partners in the educational process. This approach actively involves families in decision-making, goal-setting, and problem-solving related to their child's education. Inclusive education recognizes the value of family engagement in promoting a strong home-school connection, which can enhance student outcomes. When engaged, families are more likely to attend school events, participate in parent-teacher conferences, and support their child's learning at home. This partnership can create a positive learning environment for the child, resulting in better academic performance and educational outcomes.

Several studies have shown that involving parents in their children's academic lives can positively impact the student's well-being and academic performance. According to research conducted by Sheridan *et al.* in 2019, regular engagement of parents in their children's schooling can lead to improved mental health, increased student engagement, and reduced school dropout rates. Furthermore, Garbacz *et al.* (2015) have emphasized the importance of effective teacher-parent communication and strong school-family partnerships in achieving these outcomes. Therefore, schools must establish and maintain open communication channels with parents to foster a collaborative learning environment that benefits the students.

**Table 5:** Level of Inclusive Education Practices According to Family-School Partnerships

Statements	Mean	Description
1. Families acknowledge teachers' efforts on behalf of their children.	4.31	Very High
2. Families know about resources for building their own leadership and advocacy skills relative to their child's education.	4.30	Very High
3. Families attend case-management meetings or planning meetings on a regular basis.	4.29	Very High
4. Families have input and receive regular information about their child's social behavior.	4.32	Very High
5. Individual behavioral interventions reflect the family's cultural practices.	4.35	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	4.31	<b>Very High</b>

## 5.2 The Influence of Systems Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, Perception, Attitude and Commitment on the Inclusive Education Practices of SPED Teachers in Region XI

Table 6 revealed the results obtained from the analysis of regression on inclusive education practices. The regression model identifies five variables, including systems leadership, teacher empowerment, teacher perception, teacher attitude, and teacher commitment, that have a significant influence on inclusive education practices since the F-value of 289.791 based on the p-value of .000, which is less than the .05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. The R-square value of .786 indicates that approximately 78.6% of the variations in inclusive education practices can be explained by combined variations of systems leadership, teacher empowerment, teacher perception, teacher attitude, and teacher commitment. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that an increase in one unit of the variance in teacher empowerment will increase

the variance of inclusive education practices by .349. An increase in the variance of teacher attitude toward inclusive education will decrease the variance of inclusive education practices by .184. Increasing teacher commitment toward inclusive education will improve the practices by .621. Among the five endogenous variables, only three have significantly influenced the inclusive education practices of SPED teachers, with teacher commitment as the highest, followed by teacher empowerment and teacher attitude, respectively.

The impact of explanatory variables such as teacher empowerment, attitude, and commitment towards inclusive education practices has been studied extensively. The findings of this study substantiated Neupane (2020), who stressed that inclusive education encompasses various dimensions, including curriculum adaptations, teacher training, support services, and policy frameworks, which play a crucial role in facilitating inclusive practices and addressing barriers marginalized groups face in accessing education. It has been observed that the teacher's commitment plays a vital role in the success of any educational institution. When teachers are empowered, it creates an environment that fosters positive behavior. Active participation in school life enables teachers to develop innovative practices and support the overall development of the school (Atik & Celik, 2020).

Furthermore, it has been concluded that the success of inclusion in classrooms largely depends on teachers' attitudes towards learners with special education needs. Their views regarding classroom differences and willingness to respond positively and effectively to them are also critical factors (Saloviita, 2020). Therefore, creating a supportive environment that enables teachers to develop a positive attitude toward inclusion is imperative. This can be achieved by providing them with relevant training and resources to enhance their skills and knowledge. Such measures will ultimately benefit the students and the school as a whole. Hence, of the five exogenous variables,

The combined influence of independent variables on inclusive education practices affirmed the Transformational leadership theory (Macgregor, 1978) that emphasized the circular relationship between stimuli and responses. When teachers are exposed to external stimuli, namely systems leadership and teacher empowerment, the cognitive schema or the way they think about inclusive education practices in the form of accommodation. The inclusive education practices of teachers are manifestations of acceptance of something new from the environment. The latest stimulus was the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program. It aims to promote inclusive education in the Philippines by giving every Filipino access to a high-quality education rooted in their cultural context. This stimulus is reinforced by the cognitive schema associated with teachers' perception, attitude, and commitment toward inclusive education. Inclusive education is a response to providing inclusive education where teachers involve children with special needs as much as possible within the typical class setup (Nuñez & Rosales, 2021). Additionally, inclusive education as a community of practice using a constructivist approach 'embraces social engagement in practices directly related to the role of schools, families, and communities (Al-Shammari *et al.*, 2019).

**Table 6:** The Extent of Influence of Predictor Variables on Inclusive Education Practices

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p-value	R-Square	F	p-value
		B	Std. Error					
1	(Constant)	.442	.126	3.497	.001	.786	289.791	.000
	Systems Leadership	.061	.041	1.489	.137			
	Teacher Empowerment	.349	.049	7.106	.000			
	Teacher Perception Toward Inclusive Education	.055	.043	1.278	.202			
	Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education	-.184	.040	-4.594	.000			
	Teacher Commitment to Inclusive Education	.621	.029	21.666	.000			

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

- 1) The level of inclusive education practices of SPED teachers is very high.
- 2) The combination of teacher empowerment, teacher attitude and teacher commitment significantly influence the inclusive educational practices of SPED teachers in Region XI. Specifically, of the three exogenous variables, teacher commitment came out as the best predictor of inclusive educational practices followed by teacher empowerment and teacher attitude, respectively.

### 6.1 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following are recommended in the context of the attainment of sustainable development goals, particularly on quality education:

Promote teacher empowerment by providing them with the necessary training, resources, and support to effectively implement inclusive education practices. This could include professional development workshops, mentorship programs, and access to specialized teaching materials.

Foster positive teacher attitudes towards inclusivity through awareness campaigns that bring attention to the benefits and importance of inclusive education. These campaigns can be targeted at both teachers and students and can feature materials such as posters, videos, and informational sessions.

Implement strategies that recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusive practices. This can be achieved by identifying and acknowledging the efforts of teachers who create a welcoming and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their background or abilities. Additionally, providing opportunities for collaboration and professional growth in this area can help teachers develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach diverse students. This can include workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs that focus on inclusive practices and support teachers in implementing them.

Adopt a systems leadership model that reinforces the vision, direction, and support for inclusive education initiatives at both school and district levels. This could involve establishing clear policies and guidelines for inclusive education that reflect the collective values of the community and are aligned with national and international standards. Furthermore, building stakeholder collaboration is essential. Encouraging open communication and collaboration between school administrators, teachers, families, and community members can help to ensure that inclusive education initiatives are implemented successfully and meet the needs of all learners.

Promote inclusive education by advocating perception and awareness building. This involves increasing understanding among all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the broader community, about the importance and benefits of inclusive education. Such understanding can be achieved through a variety of educational campaigns, workshops, and community engagement activities that promote a more inclusive and supportive school environment. These activities can help foster a sense of belonging and encourage a culture of respect and appreciation for diversity, which can contribute to improved academic and social outcomes for all students.

Implement a system of continuous monitoring and evaluation. This could involve gathering feedback from various stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and parents, and conducting regular assessments of inclusive education outcomes. The resulting data can then be used to inform decision-making and resource allocation, as well as identify areas that require improvement. By establishing and utilizing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation, schools can foster a culture of inclusivity and ensure that all students have equitable access to quality education.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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