

Teaching in an Inclusive Education: A Multiple Case Study among Non- Sped Teachers

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Abstract:- This study aimed to describe the teaching experiences of non-SPED teachers teaching children with special needs in an inclusive education. Not much is known of the problems, difficulties and challenges they are facing. The current study is done within the qualitative framework, employing multiple case study design for which five (5) participants were chosen through purposive sampling and were interviewed. The audio- recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative template analysis, and the emergent themes were noted. The study showed that participants have common struggles and hardships in handling children with special needs in teaching in an inclusive education. They further resolved in the use of strategies to cater the needs of these children. The result of this study will help the school administration to shape a professional development initiative for non-SPED teachers in the promotion of children’s wellness with several foci within school practice.

Keywords:- Inclusive education, Non-SPED teachers, multiple case study, Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a democratic country like the Philippines, every child has the right to education and all children be provided an equal opportunity to learn about their capacities. Correspondingly, Education for All (EFA) was launched internationally to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society. Concerning inclusive and unbiased culture, which needs to consider diversity, which is bound to disability. In realizing EFA, a broad partnership of national governments, including civil society groups and development agencies committed to achieving specific educational goals for the benefit of every child. On the other hand, inclusive education constitutes a whole school concern. It works special education with general and primary education that most efficiently and effectively imparts quality education to all learners. As a result, significant progress is achieved in integrating disabled pupils into general education classrooms. On the other hand, educator training hasn’t kept up (Mader, 2017; McKnight, O’Malley, Ruzic, Horsley, Franey & Bassett, 2016).

Moreover, they conceptualized inclusive education and pledged to “leave no one behind.” In the Philippines, it has long started through different policies that uphold the rights of differently-abled persons, out of youths and even adults. When it comes to schools, inclusive education is typical to refer to as special education. While private schools have higher costs, public special education schools rely on relevant partners to establish inclusive education. In fact, as

of April 2019, the Department of Education has 140 recognized public schools offering Special Education (SPED). For the most part, inclusive education provides for the needs and values of all students as individuals with or without special needs (Abasolo,2017; Borich, 2016; Tongson, 2017).

However, the barriers to inclusion include the lack of training among teachers and appropriate equipment and tools used in implementing education Teachers in non-SPED schools continuously analyze and revise their school policies and services aimed at marginalized sections to deliver better inclusive education. However, it will not be possible to overcome the obstacles without active coordination between policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders; the active collaboration with the local community members, such as political and religious leaders, local education officials, and the media. Similarly, the demand that all children have access to and complete good quality education is taking a toll on teachers that move the researcher to investigate the experiences of non-SPED school teachers to establish bases for several initiatives by governments, non-government organizations to address the special education needs of children and successfully implement inclusive education (Bailey, Nomanbhoy & Tubpun, 2015; Mukherjee & Bear, 2017).

A. Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was to describe, analyze and interpret the teaching in inclusive education to the children with special needs. This study also served as an avenue for other researchers to conduct further studies that would give chances to indigenous participants to tell their stories.

B. Purpose Statement

The objective of this study was to significantly understand and analyze the multiple case of non- SPED teachers teaching children with special needs, specifically in the division of General Santos City. In this study, handling children with special needs, all children need love, encouragement, and support, and kids with learning disabilities. Positive reinforcement can help ensure that they emerge with a strong sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and the determination to keep going smooth when things are tough.

C. Theoretical lens

Social Cognitivism Theory by Bandura (1960). This theory I Quoted can be classified into categories: interested in self or belief; influenced by what they observe other people achieve. Inclusive education is the placement of students with special educational needs in mainstream settings alongside students without disabilities. The determination of appropriate educational practices used in public education schools provided a variety of educational services to assist all students with special needs in learning to their full potential. Inclusive education practices include well-known instructional approaches such as explicit or direct instruction (cited by Miller, Manderfeld & Harsma, 2019). Moreover, behaviorism theory revealed that inclusive education practices include applying behaviorism education settings, emphasizing student behavior, and manipulating stimulus materials to be more effective. Inclusive education included practices in well-known instructional approaches such as explicit or direct instruction. The method has shown positive research results with students with special needs in general education classrooms. Practices based on clear or direct instruction are systematic, involving a step-by-step process provided by a teacher and followed by students during instruction (AlShammari, 2019A; Guercio, 2020; Zhang et al., 2016).

D. Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- How do the participants describe teaching in inclusive education?
- How do the participants describe teaching in inclusive education to the children with special needs?
- How do the participants describe their successful journey in teaching children with special needs?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Qualitative Methodology and Design

This study utilized the multiple case qualitative research methods to have an in-depth description and analysis of the different cases of non-SPED teachers teaching children with special needs. Qualitative research is an inquiry approach helpful in exploring the success of non-SPED teachers. The researchers analyzed and interpreted the information's meaning (Creswell, 2015; Muscutt, 2020). This study utilized the method of multiple case studies. Multiple-case design refers to case study research. Several instrumental bounded cases are selected to develop a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena than multiple cases can provide. The generalizability is improved relative to a multiple case of the study. Additionally, in the complex field of teaching and learning in public schools, people continue to seek ways to improve their work in supporting schools to be places that value diversity and celebrate difference. Some of their efforts deliver measurable outcomes in the short term, as improvements in access and equity for students. There is no empirical measure for others, but a long-term goal in changing social and cultural expectations so that education is for all. Policymakers and practitioners need information on which to base their decisions about reforming education to effectively include all students in the

classroom without prejudices (Bonner, Warren, & Jiang 2018; Muscutt, 2020).

B. Research Site and Purposeful Sampling

The five non-SPED teachers handling learners with special needs, children with Autism, Hearing Impairment, and Intellectual Disability, of the two General Santos City Division elementary schools: Bagong Silang Elementary School and Fataldao Primary School. The said schools served as the participants of this qualitative study. The method used to identify the participants in the survey is the purposive heterogeneous sampling technique. Qualitative research commonly uses purposive heterogeneous sampling (Conlon, Timonen, Elliott-O'Dare, Keeffe & Foley, 2020). Moreover, the researcher included five participants for a one-on-one in-depth interview to have more cases to study and a wide range of comparisons for evidence to be solid and reliable as what a multiple-study requires. They were teachers from elementary schools in the Division of General Santos Division. They were identified through the use of maximum variation purposive sampling or otherwise known as heterogeneous purposive sampling (Amir, Jabeen & Niaz, 2020). Similarly, purposive sampling involves the researcher selecting potential participants who represent the group to be studied to talk to a reasonable cross-section of people. Although purposive sampling is judgmental, selective, and subjective, this sampling helps the researchers access a particular subset of people. All participants of a study are selected because they fit a specific profile. In purposive sampling, the researchers thoroughly think through how they will establish a sample population, even if it is not statistically representative of the more significant population at hand. As the name suggests, researchers went to this public on purpose because they think that these persons fit the profile of the people that they need to reach (Amir, Jabeen & Niaz 2020; Bolderston, 2015). Meanwhile, the findings from purposive sampling do not always have to be statistically representative of the more significant population of interest. They are qualitatively generalizable. The more prior information researchers have about their particular community of interest, the better the sample they will select (Etikan & Bala, 2017; Hughes, White, Foley & Devine, 2018). The Inclusion criteria in selecting participants were the following: Age -25 to 35 years old, length of Service-5 to 15 years. Either single or married and finished with bachelor's degree in education major in general education without SPED unit.

C. Data Analysis Procedure

The researcher gathered necessary data from the participants through employing in-depth interviews. Thus, a semi-structured interview guide was formulated. Moreover, the researcher personally asked questions to the participants based on principle and developing questions. This study used the conduct of a one-on-one interview to collect necessary data from the participants. Due to the pandemic's travel restrictions and the distance of other participants, a face-to-face interview was not made possible. The interview was done online using the messenger application, readily available on smartphones, wherein participants did not open their laptops or computers. For participants who didn't have an internet connection, interviews were done through direct

phone calls. The interviews’ format and protocols will be followed with examples (Gustafsson, 2017; Martinson, & O’Brien, 2015 DeVore-Wedding, 2017). Creswell (2014)stated six steps to follow in data analysis. Step one organization and preparation of data and analysis. It involves transcription of the interview, typing up field notes, and sorting and arranging the data in different types.The second step is reading all the data. This step gives information and reflection to provide all meaning. It helps to analyze the general ideas of the participants according to the tone, credibility, and use of the data. At this stage, I am writing notes in the margins of the transcript of field notes or recording general thoughts about the data.

The third step is coding all the data. Coding is the process of classifying the data by grouping and writing a word representing a category in the margins. It involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or images into order, and labeling those categories with a term based on the actual language of the participant (Gan, Li, Li, Sun, and Gong; Rossman & Rals, 2015).In addition, the fourth step is using the coding process to produce a description of categories or themes analysis. Delineation involves detailed information about people, events, and places. The researcher generates codes and explanations for designing depictions of the research projects. These themes were findings of qualitative studies and often used as heading in the findings section of studies. Similarly, the fifth step is analyzing how the description and themes represented the study. It discusses chronologically and completes sub-themes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and quotations or arguments with interconnecting themes. It presents a process model or conveys descriptive information about each participant in a table as in case studies and ethnographies (France, Uny, Ring, Turley, Maxwell, Duncan, & Noyes, 2019).The final and sixth step in data analysis is the interpretation of findings or results. It could also be a meaning derived from comparing the findings with information from the literature or theories. Moreover, when qualitative research uses a theoretical lens, they can form interpretations that call for action agendas for reform and change (Grossi, Kallio, Sargiacomo, & Skoog, 2019).In securing the study’s validity, there is a need to ensure its trustworthiness which involves credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the qualitative data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the responses of the Non-SPED teachers, two main themes came out. These were struggles and hardships, and coping mechanisms.

Main Themes: Struggles and Hardships

Cluster Themes	Emergent Themes
A. Personal Challenges 1. Lack of training to handle learners with special needs 2. Patience in teaching learners with special needs 3. Teaching is not easy 4. Autism learner needs strategies 5. Camaraderie of pupils 6. Respect as the teacher 7. More patience 8. Setting the moods 9. I cannot stop shouting 10. Lack of experience 11. Different behaviors 12. Hesitant and scared 13. Lack of experience 14. Confused in encountering varied behaviors 15. Wanted to quit 16. Depressed and hopeless	1. Dealing Difficulties 2. Unexpected Tantrums 3. Hesitations and Confusions
B. External Discouragement 1. Providing individual needs 2. Struggle as a teacher 3. Greatest challenges 4. Communication with parents 5. The knowledgeable person handling special needs 6. Parents complain about attitudes 7. Learners might hurt 8. Difficult to teach	4. Follow-up Mishaps 5. Unsolicited Remarks

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of the Struggles and Hardships Endured by Non-SPED Teachers

Table 1 presents the struggles and hardships of the participants and is further analyzed through cross-case analysis as follows:

A. Part 1 – Cross – Case Analysis

a) Main Theme: Struggles and Hardships

The first main theme, struggles, and hardships have two cluster themes: personal challenges with three emergent themes and external discouragement with two emergent themes.

b) Personal Challenges

Personal Challenges are the first cluster theme under struggles and hardships. This cluster theme has three emergent themes that describe the dealing difficulties of teachers who faced various SPED learners’

behaviors. Unexpected tantrums that they do not know when would burst into their class, and hesitations and confusions because they are also left with no choice as non-SPED teachers teaching SPED learners.

c) Dealing Difficulties

This emergent theme surfaced as seven responses from all five participants reveal the challenges in dealing with various behaviors of SPED children.

They unanimously said that coping with SPED children is one of the most challenging parts of teaching. Each of them has a fair part of the experience. Participants 2, 3, and 4 said that dealing with SPED children needs a lot of patience. Participants 1 and 5 admitted that their lack of training caused them difficulties in handling the SPED learners. Half of the subject teachers handling classes with special needs have difficulties managing the classroom and behavior of learners with special needs, and subject teachers' knowledge about behavior management methods and techniques have little or insufficient knowledge. Moreover, the researchers added that these non-SPED teachers do not know what to do alone with behavior problems. A national push to take learners with disabilities out of isolation means most now spend most of their time in general education classrooms rather than separate special-education classes. However, training programs do little to prepare teachers; Fair's experience is typical (Garwood, Werts, Varghese & Gosey Nagler 2016; Rasmussen and Kis, 2018).

d) Unexpected Tantrums

The second emergent theme comes very near to the first theme. While dealing with difficulties refers to SPED learners' different behaviors, this emergent theme of unexpected tantrums refers to a particular SPED learner's sudden burst of emotions in the classroom.

Participants 2, 3, and 5 said they make everything ready to set the mood to identify the learner so that it would not trigger a tantrum. Participant 3 also said that she had already mastered a strategy on keeping a SPED learner in a good mood as time goes by.

e) Hesitations and Confusions

The last and final emergent theme under challenges and difficulties is the hesitations and confusions. This emergent theme describes how the participants were reluctant at first to handle SPED class. There were times that they felt confused about the situations, which left them facing difficulties. Participants 2 and 3 admitted that they were assigned to handle the class with totally no knowledge of how a SPED class would go about it. Participant 4 even felt depressed at first, wanting to give up teaching because she feared she could not carry out her responsibilities as a SPED teacher.

f) External Discouragement

The second cluster theme is external discouragement. In this cluster theme, there are two emergent themes: the follow-up mishaps, in which the participants refer to the role of parents in following up their SPED children at home, and the unsolicited remarks cover the unwelcome comments from stakeholders on the performance and behavior of SPED leaders and about how the non-SPED teachers deal with them.

g) Follow-up Mishaps

The first emergent theme under external discouragement is the follow-up mishaps. In this theme, two participants said they felt discouraged when they saw that parents do not follow up with their children at home. Participant 3 noted that she communicates with parents to remind them to give ample time for their children at home as they are the ones who know their children very well.

Unsolicited Remarks

The second emergent theme under external discouragement is unsolicited remarks. Two participants felt embarrassed and discouraged when their SPED children were being told unnecessary things. They also felt be little when people said they did not know how to handle SPED learners. Additionally, teacher qualifications must teach pupils who productively have special needs. The study revealed that teachers expressed their lack of training support and services and peer support. It also includes negative attitudes from colleagues and school administrators to subject teachers. As a result, teachers handling SPED classes reduced their motivation and prevented them from teaching efficiently. Moreover, unsolicited remarks among non-SPED teachers could mean that the recipient has not granted verifiable permission for the message sent. Thus, the bulk means that the news assigns as part of a more extensive collection of letters with substantively identical content (Hammond, 2016; Rasmussen and Kis, 2018; Walton & Rusznyak, 2017).

Cluster Themes	Emergent Themes
II. Coping Mechanisms	
A. Passion for Calling	
1. Grateful for teaching children	1. Acceptance and Appreciation
2. Unique individuals	
3. No choice in handling inclusive education	
4. Lack of patience	1. Commitment
5. Understand the situation	
6. The classroom is conducive to learning	2. Love and Compassion/Understanding
7. Classroom management is	

<p>important</p> <p>8. Giving positive reinforcement</p> <p>9. Giving rewards</p> <p>14. Positive change</p> <p>15. Good communication with parents</p> <p>16. Embrace love and care</p> <p>17. Deserve to learn like social skills</p> <p>18. Enough time</p> <p>19. Fulfilled and blessed</p> <p>20. Simple and meaningful gesture</p> <p>21. Learning Basic skills</p>	<p>3. Fulfillment</p>
<p>B. Capability to Teach</p> <p>1. Being adaptable and flexible</p> <p>2. More responsibility and happy</p> <p>3. Good facilitator of learning</p> <p>4. Meeting the demands</p> <p>5. Passion and flexibility in many ways</p> <p>6. Classroom should be clean</p> <p>7. Positive reinforcement</p> <p>8. Emphasizing the respect</p> <p>9. Feel that they are a member of the family</p> <p>11. Workshop and materials</p> <p>12. Financial support</p> <p>13. Assessment</p>	<p>4. Flexibility</p> <p>5. Friendly Strategies and Classroom Set-up</p> <p>6. Learning from Others</p>

Table 2 Thematic Analysis of the Coping Mechanisms of Non-SPED Teachers

Table 2 presents the coping mechanisms of the participants and further analyzed through cross-case analysis as follows:

B. Part 2 – Cross – Case Analysis

- a) Main Theme: Coping Mechanisms
The second main theme is coping mechanisms. It also has two cluster themes: a passion for the calling with four emergent themes and the capability to teach with three emergent themes.
- b) Passion for the Calling
Passion for the calling is the first cluster theme under coping mechanisms. This cluster theme contains four emergent themes: Acceptance and Appreciation,

Commitment, Love and Compassion/Understanding, and Fulfillment.

- c) Acceptance and Appreciation
Acceptance and Appreciation is the first emergent theme under the passion for calling. In this theme, the participants related why they stay as SPED teachers even though they are from regular departments and are not SPED teachers. Participants 1 and 4 share that they had no choice but to accept the responsibility given that education should be inclusive. They also added that they know how to continue amidst challenges when they feel appreciated.
- d) Commitment
The second emergent theme under coping mechanisms is commitment. This theme describes the innate driving force among teachers to play their role in nurturing children with special needs. It fuels them to continue their vocation and find ways to solve their everyday struggles with strategies and techniques. Our concern is starting from the evidence that the promise of teachers represents an essential aspect of their activity with significant consequences both on personal and professional life.
- e) Love and Compassion
This third emergent theme, love and compassion, give Non-SPED teachers the will to help children with special needs.

They also have built sympathy among their parents as these teachers also have children. Participant 5 shared that she can, even more, relate to the situation because of his sibling with special needs. Participants 2,3, and 4 admitted they developed love and compassion among SPED learners even they sometimes feel impatient with their tantrums. Participants 1 and 5 both agree that children with special needs have to be developed to become self-reliant.
- f) Fulfillment
Fulfillment is the final emergent theme under the coping mechanism. The participants describe this as the thrill that no money can buy. Participants 1, 2, and 3 said they feel fulfilled when they slightly improve children with special needs. Participants 3 and 4 said that although the job is tiring, they feel joy in doing it. Participants 4 and 5 added that they feel happy when given equal opportunity with other normal children because they deserve society’s love and care.
- g) Capability to Teach
Capability to teach is the second cluster theme under Coping Mechanism. Three emergent themes further explain this cluster theme: Flexibility, Friendly

Strategies, and Classroom Setup, and Learning from Others.

h) Flexibility

The first emergent theme under capability to teach is flexibility. The participants said that to teach SPED learners successfully, one should be adaptable to the situation. Participant 5 noted that teaching SPED learners also entails knowing how to address every unique need of children. Participant 2 said that a Non-SPED teacher needs to be creative.

i) Friendly Strategies and Classroom Management

Aside from being flexible, employing friendly strategies and classroom management is also needed to be capable teachers in SPED. Participants 3, 4, and 5 related the importance of a conducive classroom and having rules inside the class. It will lessen the distraction in the course and will also give an organized setting and order.

j) Learning from Others

Another emergent theme under capability to teach is learning from others. While all the participants engaged in training and upskilling, they recognized the importance of learning from others. Participant 1 also knows from the experience of her friends who are also teaching SPED learners.

IV. CONCLUSION

The participants shared ideas and experiences as public school teachers assigned to handle children with special needs. They shared everyday struggles and hardships as they saw difficulties taking children with several behavioral problems and unexpected tantrums. The participants said that the most challenging part in implementing inclusive education was how to deal with different learners in a class. Having been assigned in a regular class before, they can see the big difference in handling children with special needs. There were times when they were in the middle of storytelling, and then a sudden tantrum burst. They felt helpless and impatient at times. The unsolicited remarks from other people also sadden them. They felt oppressed when others looked down on their children. They also felt resentment when people give negative comments on how they deal with their learners. To cope with the challenges, they tried several strategies to keep their teaching efficient. Most of them felt impatient when they started teaching but developed love and understanding of what they do later on. They accepted that they embraced the situation as their job and as teachers' noble calling of making a change in the lives of children. Some participants ventured into different classroom strategies, but they all said that classroom management and establishing rules and regulations helped them minimize problems. They also sensed the importance of equipping themselves with the recent educational tools. All of them were active in participating in the webinars. Some of them were also active in sharing best practices with their colleagues and getting knowledge from other teachers. They were confused when they started. The teachers assigned to handle children with special needs also

learned from the experiences of others. They, too, continued attending seminars and training to widen their grasp and creativity in the classroom. They further confessed that their learners' joy and fulfillment from seeing minor improvements created a deep sense of passion for their calling. Their commitment increased as they saw how important their role was in making these children with special needs become self-reliant.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Non-SPED teachers teaching in inclusive education have struggled because of limited training, if not none. Thus, the study is essential to understand the feelings and plight of the teachers who have been recipients of too many adjustments in implementing inclusive education. It can also be used as an orientation to other teachers and administrators as a source of understanding. The school administrators and authorities need to know teachers' sentiments and provide intervention or assistance to keep their teaching efficiency high. This research would also a great help in educating society on how complex the situation is. It would be a better reference for school administrators to provide follow-up and intervention to teachers to provide technical assistance and training before assigning teachers to handle children with special needs.

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