PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract – This study aimed to determine the attitudes of public school teachers towards inclusive education in the identified elementary schools for the school year 2020-2021 as the basis for action plans. Quantitative and qualitative research designs were used to gather the data. Respondents were selected through universal sampling. Gathered data were treated using frequency and percentage, weighted mean, ANOVA, chi-square, and thematic analysis. Results showed that most respondents aged between 25 and 35 years old, the majority of females, at the masters level, had a combined monthly family income of 21,914-43,828 pesos, had taught for more than ten (10) years, and the majority did not attend training about SpEd teaching. Furthermore, the teachers' perceived attitudes towards IE were moderately positive. The highest educational attainment showed a significant relationship and significant difference when grouped by profile. It can be concluded that the teachers' educational attainment significantly affects their perceived attitude towards inclusive education. The higher their educational attainment, the more they gauge a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Hence, the researchers recommend that the study's output be adopted.
Keywords: Special Education; Teachers Attitude on Inclusion; Level of Teachers Attitude; Inclusive Education Training; Mixed Method; Cebu, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

Education for All (EFA) is a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of personal and societal development (Poed, 2020). EFA ensures that every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, or geographic location, has access to quality learning opportunities. Through an inclusive educational environment, teachers empower people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Education for all promotes equality and breaks the cycle of poverty, driving sustainable development and social cohesion.

The idea of inclusive education (IE), which emphasizes the need to meet everyone's learning requirements and ensure no one is left behind, is inextricably tied to the idea of education for all (Hanreddy & Östlund, 2020). The urgent need for adaptable learning settings that meet each learner's specific needs—including those of learners with special needs, learning challenges, and other marginalized groups—is a key component of inclusive education. By incorporating inclusive practices into the larger education framework for all, obstacles that impede fair access to education were removed. According to Guberina (2023), a sense of respect and belonging enables all learners to participate actively and benefit from a high-quality education. In the end, Molina Roldán et al. (2021) added that IE enriches the educational process by ensuring that all students receive the support they require to achieve, in addition to merely granting access.

As such, earnest efforts to address this call through various initiatives must come into play. The audience, as educators, policymakers, and researchers in the field of education, play a crucial

role in advocating for and implementing inclusive education. Guided by the principle that has been the foundation in the formulations of education legislations among multiple regions and countries, one can see the light at the end of the tunnel in gradually progressing towards immediate and effective implementation of inclusive education globally. For the framework to be practical, the crafting of national, regional, and local plans in assessing the general education and curriculum must complement to fit local requirements and circumstances(Gouëdard et al., 2020).

In the study of (Kenny et al., 2020), it is practiced in many countries for children and youth with special educational needs (SENs) to be educated in separate schools. However,(Paulsrud & Nilholm, 2023) stated that several schools accept the challenge of teaching students with SENs as much as possible within the regular classroom context. This condition proves that school systems have geared towards this end by engaging in and implementing IE.

Typically, as Vigo-Arrazola et al. (2022) mentioned that the government and schools should work together to observe the critical features of IE, which are laid down in the Salamanca Statement. The school system should develop flexible teaching methods, learning approaches, and content, collaborate with parents and general communities, and investigate students' needs, strengths, and risk of failure (Bryan et al., 2020). The government could use these features as guidelines to encourage more schools to implement IE.

As a member country of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines supports the global commitment to IE in promoting inclusive practices such as access and equity, unity and identity, quality and relevance, and efficiency and effectiveness(Amihan et al., 2023). Relevant and proactive legislation has been put in place to strengthen the Philippines' position in support of IE. For one, an Act known as Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSNs) is crafted to protect and promote the rights of CYSNs to quality education and take steps to make such education accessible to them.

Despite earnest efforts to implement IE, various studies have concluded that the approach is still ineffective, problematic, and far from reaching its goals(Kefallinou et al., 2020). In fact, according to Global Education Monitoring on Inclusion and Education, 40% of low—and lower-middle-income countries have not supported learners at risk of exclusion during the crisis, such as poor, linguistic minorities, and learners with disabilities (UNESCO, 2020).

Moreover, many studies have also shown that teacher and teacher-related factors are the main barriers to the success of IE implementation (Nelson, 2021; Saloviita, 2020; San Martin et al., 2021). These have to be aptly addressed in paving the way for effective implementation. It was found that positive teacher attitudes are essential for successfully including someone with special needs in mainstream classrooms(Boyle et al., 2020; Lindner et al., 2023; Russell et al., 2023). Indeed, teachers are seen as crucial implementers of IE.

In the Philippines, many public schools are not ready, thorough, and effective in handling IE; hence, many teachers hesitate to take classes in such settings (Cailing et al., 2024). This suggests that policies about IE should be strengthened to appreciate its value and empower teachers to address students with SENs in their classrooms effectively.

Teachers' attitudes towards IE have become the focus of research to date. The reason could be attributed to more diverse and contemporary approaches in education. Teachers are the key players in an inclusive setting who could have fully grasped this practice's ins and outs, what ifs, buts, and whys. Moreover, this can be addressed by evaluating the attitudes of those who form an essential part of that dynamic system, namely, the teachers. Indeed, educators' perspectives have been found to affect the processes and outcomes of inclusion to a great extent (Francisco et al., 2020; Lindner & Schwab, 2020; Savolainen et al., 2022).

Several studies have cited teachers' behavior toward educating children and youth with SENs as a decisive factor in making schools more inclusive. Suppose mainstream teachers do not accept the education of these learners as an integral part of their job. In that case, they will try to ensure that someone else (often the special education teacher) takes responsibility for these pupils and will resort to segregation in the school (e.g., the particular education class) (Heyder et al., 2020; Pastore & Luder, 2021; Pedaste et al., 2024; Rajendran et al., 2020).

A few studies have focused on the attitudes of regular teachers regarding educating children and youth with SENs in an inclusive setting(Van Mieghem et al., 2020; Yada et al., 2022). Further, only a few studies have been conducted to assess whether a significant difference is evident in teachers' attitudes towards IE and their relevant information and whether a substantial relationship is observed between the levels of teachers' attitudes towards IE and their relevant information.

This also holds for the Department of Education Cebu Province Division, particularly in Cordova District. Cordova District is composed of ten (10) elementary schools, one (1) integrated school, and one (1) secondary school offering both Junior and Senior High Schools. These matters call for immediate attention so that IE can be successfully implemented across all levels for all children and youth with SENs. Thus, the researchers were prompted to conduct a similar study in the locality where they are currently working after acknowledging the need to examine further teachers' attitudes towards IE implementation in some of the schools in the district.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the attitudes of public school teachers towards inclusive education in the identified elementary schools for the school year 2020-2021. Specifically, this sought to answer questions relevant to the profile of the respondents, the perceived level of attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education, the relationship between the profile of the respondents and their perceived level of attitudes towards inclusive education, and the difference in the perceived level of attitudes towards inclusive education when grouped by its profile.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part contains the research methodology, which includes the research design, respondents, instruments, data gathering procedure, statistical treatment of data.

3.1 Research Design
This study employed a quantitative research design, which used a descriptive method to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, the perceived level of attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education, the test of the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their perceived level of attitudes towards IE, and the test of significant difference in their perceived level of attitudes when grouped by their profile.

3.2 Respondents
The respondents were the elementary teachers at Cordova District, Cebu Province Division, specifically from the three selected elementary schools - Cordova Central School, Pilipog Elementary School, and Day-as Elementary School. The respondents were chosen using a universal sampling technique.

3.3 Research Instrument
The main instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire about teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education adapted from Kern's (2006) study. The survey questionnaire has two parts. The introduction part of the questionnaire deals with demographic information about the teachers, specifically on their gender, age, educational attainment, monthly income, years of total teaching, and the number of special education courses taken. The second part deals with the perceived level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, a 42-item statement with five sub-domains for training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables.

3.4 Data Collection
The researchers secured the study's approval from Cordova's Public Schools District Supervisor. After the approval, the researchers distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, who were given time to answer them. The data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis using frequency and simple percentage, weighted mean, ANOVA, and chi-square.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents, analyzes, and interprets the data obtained for the studied variables.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
A. Age (in years)		
Below 25	1	0.74
25 - 35	62	45.93
36 - 45	39	28.89
46 - 55	24	17.78
More than 55	9	6.67
B. Gender		
Female	129	95.56
Male	6	4.44
C. Educational Attainment		
Doctoral Graduate	1	0.74
Doctoral Level	2	1.48
Masters Graduate	14	10.37
Masters Level	69	51.11
College Graduate	49	36.3
D. Monthly Income [in PhP]		
Below 10,957	0	0
10,957 - 21,914	26	19.26
21,914 - 43,828	89	65.93
43,828 - 76,669	15	11.11
76,669 - 131,484	2	1.48
131,483 - 219,140	2	1.48
More than 219,140	1	0.74
E. Years of Total Teaching		
Less than a year	1	0.74
1 - 3	27	20
4 - 6	18	13.33
7 - 10	33	24.44
More than 10	56	41.48
Mean : 10.29		
StDev : 7.43		
F. Training in Teaching SpEd		
Yes	40	29.63
No	95	70.37

Age and Gender. As reflected in Table 1A, most respondents, or 45.93 percent, were between 25 and 35 years old. The result indicates that most of the teachers are in the prime time of their lives. This is their most energetic and productive time in teaching. They are passionate, trainable, and more positive towards basic inclusion (Saloviita, 2018).

On the other hand, Table 1B shows that 129 or 95.56 percent of the research respondents are females while only 6 or 4.44 percent are males. The results indicate that female respondents dominated the population of this study. Teaching is a womanly profession because of a woman's nurturing and motherly nature (Mim, 2020).

Highest Educational Attainment. Table 1C shows that most respondents have taken master's units, with 69 respondents, or 51.11 percent, being at the Master's level. There are several reasons why most of the respondents are not Master's Graduates. They have less control over their

schedules and less time devoted to professional growth. Economic reasons, family responsibilities, and childcare are their topmost priorities, specifically for married females (Arpino & Luppi, 2020; Rincón & Martínez, 2020).

Combined Monthly Family Income. As presented in Table 1D, the majority of the respondents, or 65.93 percent, had a combined monthly family income of 21,914 – 43,828 pesos. Most teacher respondents (89 of 135) reported a monthly combined or family income ranging from PhP21,914 to PhP43,828. This could indicate that teachers, with the rising cost of living, need to receive more, considering their enormous responsibility in their work. Many   young   education graduates and teachers from private schools are flocking to be hired in the DepEd for security reasons. Teachers deserve just compensation considering their extended time and effort in helping the students. Financial stability is a key factor in job satisfaction and retention (Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020). With the new standardization law, newly hired teachers with a salary grade 11 received more than 21,000 (Valdez & Dominado, 2020). Most respondents were young and new teachers, so the highest percentage belongs to the 21,914 - 43,828 bracket, respectively.

Total Years in Teaching. As reflected in Table 1E, 56 respondents, or 41.48 percent, taught for more than ten (10) years, which comprises the majority of the respondents. According to San Martin et al. (2021), the presence of many veteran teachers suggests a workforce with substantial teaching experience. This can enhance the overall quality of education, as experienced teachers are likely to have developed effective teaching strategies and classroom management skills over the years. Moreover, while experienced teachers bring many strengths, they may also be more resistant to change, mainly if new initiatives or reforms are introduced. Effective communication and involvement in decision-making processes can help mitigate resistance and encourage buy-in.

Training in Teaching Special Education.   As reflected in Table 1F, 90 respondents, or 70.37 percent, reported that they did not undergo training related to Special Education, while 40, or 29.63 percent, reported otherwise. Based on the result, it could be deduced that more than half of the respondents need training in teaching SpEd, while only a few reported having attended training. The researchers were teachers in SpEd, and they observed that training was scarce because teacher training entails a large budget, and monetary resources are limited. That is one reason not all teachers can attend a seminar or training. Training relevant to inclusive education is essential to teachers, especially with the ongoing implementation of inclusive; teacher training is a must (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021).

Perceived Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

This part discusses the teachers' perceived attitudes towards inclusive education regarding training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables. Tables 2-7 present the results.

Table 2. Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education as to Training

	Indicators	Mean	Description
A.	**Training**		
1.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with cognitive delays and deficits in daily living skills.	3.20	Agree
2.	I need more training in order to appropriately teach students with an IEP for learning problems.	3.32	Strongly agree
3.	My district provides me with sufficient out of district training opportunities in order for me to appropriately teach students with disabilities.	2.82	Agree
4.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with behavioral difficulties.	3.03	Agree

5.	My educational background has prepared me to teach students with special needs.	2.87	Agree
6.	I am provided with sufficient in-service training through my school district which allows me the ability to teach students with an IEP.	2.81	Agree
7.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 1 year below level.	2.74	Agree
8.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students with speech impairments.	2.56	Agree
9.	1 need more training in order to appropriately teach students an IEP for behavioral problems.	3.27	Strongly agree
10.	My educational background has prepared me to effectively teach students who are 2 or more years below level.	2.70	Agree
	Aggregate Mean	**2.93**	**Agree**

Range:
1.00-1.74 Strongly Disagree; 1.75-2.49 Disagree; 2.50-3.24 Agree; 3.25-4.00 Strongly agree

As reflected in Table 2, teachers' perceived level of attitudes toward inclusive education and training showed that they Agreed on the indicators stated with an aggregate mean of 2.93. Moreover, it can be gleaned from the table that indicator 2 and indicator 9 had means of 3.32 and 3.27, respectively, and were interpreted as strongly agreeing. They strongly agree that they need more training to appropriately teach students with an IEP for learning problems and that their educational background has prepared them to effectively teach students with behavioral difficulties.

The data demonstrate that the teachers have a moderately positive attitude towards training to cater to the unique needs of learners in inclusive settings. They mostly agree that they have the educational background and were given district training to handle the diverse needs of students. A difference in the respondents' answers is manifested in indicators 2 and 9, with the top 2 highest mean ratings and a strongly agree description. They think it is insufficient even if they have prior knowledge and training. They strongly agree that they need more training to handle students with learning and behavioral problems.

Teachers noted that they need more training on inclusive educational practices and teaching methods and expressed their interest in receiving such training. Such training is essential to improving professional development (Moriña et al., 2020). Teacher training is crucial for implementing inclusive education because it affects teachers' self-efficacy and motivation in SPED teaching (San Martin et al., 2021) .

Table 3. Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education as to Administrative Support

	Indicators	Mean	Description
B.	**Administrative Support**		
1.	I am encouraged by my administrators to attend conferences /workshops on teaching students with special needs.	2.97	Agree
2.	I can approach my administrators with concerns hold regarding teaching students who have special needs.	3.14	Agree
3.	I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with behavioral difficulties in my classroom.	3.14	Agree
4.	My administrators provide me with sufficient support when I have students with an IEP in my classroom.	2.98	Agree

5.	I am provided with enough time in order to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs.	2.79	Agree
6.	I am provided with sufficient materials in order to be able to make appropriate accommodations for students with special needs.	2.76	Agree
7.	I feel supported by my administrators when faced with challenges presented by students with learning difficulties in my classroom .	3.10	Agree
8.	I am provided with monetary support in order to attend conferences/workshops on teaching students with special needs.	2.60	Agree
	Aggregate Mean	**2.94**	**Agree**

As reflected in Table 3, the level of teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in terms of administrative support shows that the respondents **agree** with all indicators, with an aggregate mean of 2.94.

The result was a good indication that teachers have a moderately positive attitude towards the administration support. The highest mean rating is 3.14, which means they think they can approach the administrators with concerns regarding teaching SpEd and feel supported by the administrators when faced with challenges regarding behavioral difficulties in the classroom. School administrators who are supportive of the inclusive program and have a positive attitude toward the inclusion of children with special needs can affect the success of the implementation of inclusive practices (Nguluma et al., 2017).

The lowest mean rating is 2.60 for the monetary support by the administration for teachers in attending conferences and workshops on teaching students with special needs. A school can generate funds from local or national sources, a portion of which can be used for professional development for educators to acquire the knowledge and skills to improve teaching (Borg, 2018).

Table 4. Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education as to Peer Support

	Indicators	Mean	Description
C.	**Peer Support**		
1.	My colleagues are willing to help me with issues which may arise when I have students with an IEP in my classroom.	3.10	Agree
2.	I can approach my colleagues for assistance when needed if I have students with special needs in my classroom.	3.08	Agree
3.	My colleagues are approachable when I ask for their advice when I teach students with special needs.	3.16	Agree
4.	I feel comfortable in approaching my colleagues for help when I teach students with special needs.	3.04	Agree
5.	My colleagues will try to place all of their special needs students in my classroom if I start including students with an lEP in my regular classroom.	2.54	Agree
	Aggregate Mean	**2.98**	**Agree**

As shown in Table 4, teachers' attitudes towards peer support range between 2.50 and 3.24, with a description of "agree." The aggregate mean was 2.98, which is interpreted as **agree**.

The data suggest that the teachers have a moderately positive attitude towards their peer support. They received great support from their peers and colleagues who were willing to help them with challenges in the inclusion of learners with special needs in their classroom. The highest mean rating is 3.16, which the respondents expressed that they can approach their colleagues when they need advice on inclusion. Peer support is a helpful method for struggling teachers to ensure that quality education is provided to learners with needs (White, 2018).

The lowest mean rating is 2.54, where the teachers think their colleagues will place their students with special needs if they include students with IEP in their classroom. This denotes that most teachers are not confident in teaching and making IEP for students with special needs. In a study, some teachers were concerned about the changes in their role in implementing IEP. Successful implementation of IEP requires personal sacrifices and careful planning (Safer et al., 2018).

Table 5. Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education as to Collaboration

	Indicators	Mean	Description
D.	**Collaboration**		
1.	I feel comfortable in working collaboratively with special education teachers when students with an IEP are in my classroom.	3.07	Agree
2.	I welcome collaborative teaching when I have a student with an IEP in my classroom.	3.15	Agree
3.	Collaborative teaching of children with special needs can be effective particularly when students with an IEP are placed in a regular classroom.	2.83	Agree
4.	Special education teachers should teach students who hold an IEP.	3.24	Agree
5.	Regular education teachers should not be responsible for teaching children with special needs.	2.61	Agree
6.	I like being the only teacher in the classroom.	2.79	Agree
7.	I should only be responsible for teaching students who are not identified as having special needs.	2.56	Agree
8.	Both regular education teachers and special education teachers should teach students with an IEP.	2.90	Agree
9.	Special education teachers might lose their jobs if I teach children with an IEP.	2.28	Disagree
	Aggregate Mean	**2.83**	**Agree**

As presented in Table 5, teachers' perceived level of attitude towards inclusive education and collaboration showed that the respondents agree with indicators 1 to 8. For indicators 1 to 3, the teachers believed collaboration is effective for teaching students with special needs. Indicator 9 received a "disagree" rating from the teachers. It has an aggregate mean of 2.83, interpreted as Agree.

The general agreement on collaboration indicates that teachers recognize the value of working together to support inclusive education. It further showed that teachers have a moderately positive attitude towards collaboration in IE setting. On the contrary, the disagreement with the statement about job loss for special education teachers suggests that general education teachers do not believe that inclusive practices will result in the redundancy of special education roles. This implies that teachers see the continued need for specialized skills and expertise in supporting students with IEPs.Collaboration between special and general education teachers is said to have positive benefits for student learning (Rabin, 2019). When teachers work together in sharing ideas and expertise towards for students with diverse needs, it can lead to various benefits such as

increased academic effort, increased understanding of student data, and creative lesson plans (Davis, 2020).

For indicators 4 to 8, it can be observed that teachers are apprehensive about teaching students with special needs in their classrooms. General education teachers may not be confident in handling special children, but they feel comfortable if it is given to special education teachers. This suggests there is less collaboration here, where general education teachers believe special education teachers have more knowledge and training in handling students with special needs. Special education teachers are skillful and are expected to do many things (Grafwallner, 2017).

Table 6. Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education as to Student Variable

Indicators	Mean	Description
E. Student Variable		
1. Students who are 2 or more years below grade level should be in special education classes.	2.70	Agree
2. Students who are diagnosed as autistic need to be in special education classrooms.	3.13	Agree
3. All efforts should be made to educate students who have an IEP in the regular education classroom.	3.14	Agree
4. Students who are diagnosed a mentally retarded should be in special education classes.	3.31	Strongly agree
5. Students who are verbally aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms.	2.82	Agree
6. Students who are physically aggressive towards others can be maintained in regular education classrooms.	2.59	Agree
7. All students who have an lEP for any reason need to receive their education in a special education classroom.	2.87	Agree
8. Students who display speech and language difficulties should be in special education classes.	2.96	Agree
9. Students who are I year below grade level should be in special education classes.	2.61	Agree
10. Students who are identified as depressed but do not display overt disruptive behavior should be in regular education classes.	2.66	Agree
Aggregate Mean	**2.88**	**Agree**

As presented in Table 6, the perceived level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education as to the student variable shows that the respondents agree with all indicators. Indicators 3, 5, 6, and 10 expressed support for including students with special needs in regular classrooms. Indicators 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9 show agreement for students with special needs to be placed in SpEd classes.

This shows that some teachers have a positive attitude regarding accepting students with needs in the classroom, while others are negative about inclusion. It can be observed that many teachers favor placing students in special education classrooms more than in regular education classrooms. Indicator 6 has the lowest mean rating of 2.59. Teachers still believed that behavioral problems among students are manageable in a regular classroom, while indicator 4 obtained the highest mean rating of 3.31 with a "strongly agree" description.

The majority of the teachers agree that students diagnosed as mentally retarded should be in SpEd classes. This shows that teachers' attitudes have something to do with the type of disability of students. Teachers are found to be more positive in the inclusion of students with mild impairments

and quite negative for severe impairments such as intellectual disabilities (Arcangeli et al., 2020). This can be connected to the need for teacher training that makes them apprehensive about accepting students with special needs in the regular classroom. Teachers who attended SPED training courses tend to have better attitudes towards inclusion than those who did not attend trainings (Clipa et al., 2020).

Table 7. Summary Table on Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education

	Indicators	Mean	Description
A.	Training	2.93	Agree
B.	Administrative Support	2.94	Agree
C.	Peer Support	2.98	Agree
D.	Collaboration	2.83	Agree
E.	Student Variable	2.88	Agree
	Overall Aggregate Mean	**2.91**	**Agree**

Range:

1.00-1.74 Strongly Disagree; 1.75-2.49 Disagree; 2.50-3.24 Agree; 3.25-4.00 Strongly agree

Table 7 summarizes the teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education regarding training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables. The table shows that the teachers "agree" with all indicators. It had an overall aggregate mean of 2.91, described as **agree.** Agreement across these indicators suggests that teachers feel well-supported in multiple dimensions necessary for successful inclusive education. This comprehensive support can significantly enhance the effectiveness of inclusive practices. Moreover, teachers with positive attitudes toward these indicators will likely be more motivated and committed to implementing inclusive education. They are more confident in their ability to address diverse student needs. Teachers' agreement with the training indicator implies that they find current professional development opportunities relevant and beneficial. This can lead to continuous improvement in their skills and knowledge related to inclusive education (Moberg et al., 2020; Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018).

Test of Significance of the Relationship

Table 8 shows data on the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their profiles regarding age, gender, educational level, current teaching level, monthly income, years of teaching SpEd, and years of total teaching experience.

Table 8. Relationship Between Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education and their Profiles

Variable	Computed Chi-Square	df	Critical Value	Significance	Result
Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education					
Age	6.775	8	15.507	Not significant	Ho accepted
Gender	0.502	2	5.991	Not significant	Ho accepted
Educational Attainment	25.041	8	15.507	Significant	Ho rejected
Monthly Income	2.039	10	18.307	Not significant	Ho accepted
Years of Teaching SpEd	6.455	8	15.507	Not significant	Ho accepted
Years in Total Teaching	6.919	8	15.507	Not significant	Ho accepted

As shown in Table 8, the data showed that the calculated chi-square statistics followed the enumerated profile: age (χ^2 =6.775), gender (χ^2 =0.502), monthly income (χ^2 =2.039), years of

teaching in SpEd (χ^2 =6.455), and years in total teaching (χ^2 =6.919) were less than their critical values, which indicated that there was no significant relationship between the level of teachers' attitudes towards IE and their profiles. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted for these identified variables. On the other hand, the data showed a significant relationship between the teachers' perceived level of attitude towards inclusive education and their educational attainment (χ^2 =25.041), hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

For one, teachers' favorable attitude toward inclusion is not dictated by whether they are younger or older or male or female. The data, as shown in the table above, also reveals that teachers' positive attitude towards inclusion is not affected by whether they have high or low combined monthly family income, have acquired training in teaching SpEd or not, and have longer or shorter lengths of service.

Cooper et al. (2020) stated that teachers should be open to seeking help from experienced teachers and engaging in continuous professional growth to really grasp how inclusive education works. This result is in conjunction with the findings of the study of Chitiyo et al. (2019) that indicated the importance of professional education development in fostering an inclusive climate.

Test of Significance of the Difference

Table 9 presents the significant difference in the level of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education when grouped by its profile. The difference in the perceived level of attitude for each profile signifies the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the respondents' attitudes towards inclusive education.

Table 9. Difference on Level of Attitude of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education When Grouped by its Profiles

Grouped by its	F-Value	P-Value	Significance	Result
A. Age	1.55	0.192	Not significant	Ho accepted
B. Gender	0.01	0.905	Not significant	Ho accepted
C. Educational Level	5.70	0.000	Significant	Ho rejected
D. Monthly Income	0.60	0.696	Not significant	Ho accepted
E. Years of Total Teaching	0.74	0.821	Not significant	Ho accepted
F. Training	0.92	0.497	Not significant	Ho accepted

As presented in Table 9, with the computed p-values of age (p=0.192), gender (p=0.905), monthly income (p=0.696), years of teaching SpEd (p=0.821), and training (p=0.497) were significantly greater than 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the computed p-value of educational level (p=0.000) was lesser than the 0.05 level of significance, which indicates that educational level had a significant relationship to the perceived level of attitude of teachers towards IE. Thus, the null hypothesis for educational level was rejected.

The study indicates no significant difference in teachers' perceived level of attitudes towards inclusive education when grouped by its profile. This means that age, educational level, monthly income, years of teaching SpEd, and training have no effect or practical importance on the teachers' perceived level of attitudes towards inclusive education. Teachers who have completed their bachelor's degree can have different attitudes from teachers who have completed all the academic requirements and passed the comprehensive examinations for the degree leading to their master's or those who finished their master's and doctorate degrees.

Based on the data, teachers who have taken master's units tend to be more favorable toward inclusive education than teachers who are undergraduates, master's, and doctorate degree

graduates. Thus, the teachers are heterogeneous in their overall perceived level of attitude toward inclusive education in terms of their highest educational attainment. Lautenbach and Heyder (2019) reiterated that Professional Development is key to influencing positive teacher attitudes toward inclusive education. Further, Nislin and Pesonen (2019) reinforced such a claim for improved self-perceived ability to adapt instructions in addressing the diverse needs of children.

5. FINDINGS

Based on the data gathered, the findings of the study were as follows.

On the profile of the respondents, the data showed that most of the respondents aged between 25 and 35 years old (45.93%), dominated by female teachers (95.56%), attained masters level (51.11%), had a combined monthly family income that ranged from 21,914-43,828 pesos (65.93%), been in teaching service for more than ten (10) years (41.48%), and the majority reported that they did not attend training about SpEd (70.37%).

Furthermore, the teachers' perceived attitudes towards inclusive education regarding training, administrative support, peer support, collaboration, and student variables showed a moderately positive attitude characterized by the description agree.

In addition, the test of the significant relationship between the respondents' profiles and their perceived level of attitudes towards IE revealed that only the highest educational attainment was significant. The rest of the profile variables, such as age, gender, combined monthly family income, total years of teaching, and SpEd training taken, showed no significant relationship to their perceived level of attitudes towards IE.

On the other hand, when grouped by profile, results showed that only the highest educational attainment showed a significant difference. The rest of the profile variables, like age, gender, combined monthly family income, total years of teaching, and SpEd training taken, showed no significant difference in their perceived level of attitudes towards IE.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the salient findings in the study, it can be concluded that the teachers' educational attainment significantly affects their perceived level of attitude towards inclusive education. The higher their educational attainment, the more they gauge a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Teacher training, administrative and peer support, collaboration, and students' knowledge were essential elements that determine the level of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

The researchers recommend that the study's output be adopted and utilized to provide adequate training and workshops for elementary public school teachers on handling learners with special educational needs.

7. STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study focuses on assessing the attitudes of public school teachers toward inclusive education in the identified public elementary schools. Specifically, it examines the perceptions, beliefs, and readiness of teachers to implement inclusive education practices within their classrooms. The study is limited to public elementary schools within Cordova district of Cebu province.

Future research could include a comparative analysis between different regions, types of schools (urban vs. rural, public vs. private), or educational levels (elementary vs. secondary) could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how contextual factors influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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