



**THE EXTENT OF ATTAINMENT OF INCLUSIVE KINDERGARTEN
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES**

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Abstract:

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An evaluation on how inclusive kindergarten schools implemented the inclusion of early learners with disabilities was the objective of this study. Specifically, it evaluated the extent of attainment of the inclusive kindergarten program toward achieving specific goals to expand inclusive education in terms of: Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modification, and Parental Involvement. This research work employed the descriptive evaluative Results showed that the attainment of the inclusive kindergarten program objectives consistently yielded a high level of implementation with approximately 61%-80% target indicators implemented in Davao City Schools Division. Hence, the study concluded that inclusive education in Davao City Schools Division is highly implemented. It is recommended that intensive trainings and seminars on special education-related topics for both regular and Special Education teachers be designed; intensify support to kindergarten teachers in terms of professional and financial needs to help them perform their best; and child find should be conducted not only by Special Education teachers but by the regular teachers as well.



MỨC ĐỘ ĐẠT ĐƯỢC CÁC MỤC TIÊU CỦA CHƯƠNG TRÌNH MẪU GIÁO HÒA NHẬP Ở MIỀN NAM PHILIPPINES

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
<p>Ngày nhận bài: 12/10/2021</p> <p>Ngày sửa bài: 15/12/2021</p> <p>Ngày duyệt đăng: 5/3/2022</p>	<p>Mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này là đánh giá về việc các trường mẫu giáo hòa nhập thực hiện việc đưa trẻ khuyết tật vào học sớm. Đặc biệt là, nó đánh giá mức độ đạt được của chương trình mẫu giáo hòa nhập nhằm đạt được các mục tiêu cụ thể để mở rộng giáo dục hòa nhập ở các khía cạnh: Tìm trẻ, Đánh giá, Lựa chọn Chương trình, Sửa đổi Chương trình học và Sự Tham gia của Phụ huynh. Nghiên cứu này sử dụng các kết quả đánh giá mô tả cho thấy rằng việc đạt được các mục tiêu của chương trình mẫu giáo hòa nhập luôn mang lại hiệu quả cao với khoảng 61% -80% mục tiêu được thực hiện tại Khối các Trường học Thành phố Davao. Do đó, nghiên cứu cho rằng giáo dục hòa nhập ở Khối các Trường học Thành phố Davao được thực hiện rất hiệu quả. Khuyến nghị nên thiết kế các khóa đào tạo và hội thảo chuyên sâu về các chủ đề liên quan đến giáo dục đặc biệt cho cả giáo viên Giáo dục thường xuyên và Giáo dục đặc biệt; tăng cường hỗ trợ giáo viên mẫu giáo về chuyên môn và tài chính để họ thực hiện tốt công việc của mình; và việc tìm trẻ phải được tiến hành không chỉ bởi các giáo viên Giáo dục Đặc biệt mà còn bởi các giáo viên thông thường.</p>
<p>Từ khóa:</p> <p><i>Giáo dục hòa nhập, mẫu giáo, trẻ khuyết tật học sớm, tìm trẻ</i></p>	

Introduction

The trust in education especially inclusive education has grown. Inclusive education at the present time is very essential definitely for diverse students who have special educational needs. It espouses the notion that learners regardless of their characteristics or differences they have a right to education. Particularly, inclusive school has to encourage students with special educational needs and students without special needs to learn together. Therefore, students are able to acquire learning through Inclusive schools even those children with the most severe educational disabilities. (Cross, Salazar, Campuzano and Batchelder, 2009).

In the Philippines, according to the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities or Republic Act 7277, stressed that persons with disabilities are guaranteed and offered suitable quality education and sufficient opportunities to enhance their skills by the State. Moreover, persons with disabilities are given access to education as provided by the State. It also stated that it is illegal for any school not to admit a person with disability because of handicap or incapacity (National Council on Disability Affairs, 2008).

Kindergarten special education is simply intended to meet the developmental needs of every child. Special education is not a clinic or a hospital where patients are treated nor an orphanage for the orphans

(Barbetta, Norona, and Bicard, 2005). Although the General Kindergarten Program contains the Inclusiveness of Kindergarten Education which caters the needs of the learners with special needs: the gifted, those with disabilities, and other diverse learners (Official Gazette, 2012).

As an educator for the learners with special educational needs, the researcher found out that there are early learners with special educational needs being mainstreamed in regular classes specifically in kindergarten. In fact, they are placed in inclusive classes as early as five years old. Some are diagnosed with disabilities while others are simply based on the teachers' assessment. This propelled the researcher to conduct an evaluation on the extent of inclusiveness of kindergarten for early learners with disabilities.

This study considers the extent of attainment of the program objectives in the implementation of inclusive kindergarten program as employed by the principals and teachers. This helps evaluate the extent of attainment of the program and come up with a proposal to enhance the implementation of inclusive kindergarten education program.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the UNESCO's belief, (2015) that inclusive education is ethnically sensitive, accepts diversity, and inspires learning for ALL children, encourage involvement, support, and teamwork. And that also encourages healthy habit and makes children responsible in their daily lives through guided learning. Moreover, teachers have the opportunities to learn and benefit from that learning. People involved in this program learn to collaborate for the children's benefit.

Also, Jordan and McGhie-Richmond (2014), posited that inclusive practices become a style of teaching that supports all learners, rather than a supplement to regular classroom practices. In classroom management, effective teachers establish rules for routines such as starting and completing lessons, modulating classroom noise levels and student talk, and for retrieving learning materials. They establish rules for behavior and mutual respect, and provide charts as required to remind students of the classroom rules and their responsibilities to assist one another. Effective teachers had well established classroom routines for beginning and completing a lesson, handing out and collecting materials and transitions between tasks, expecting students to help each other before asking for help from the teacher, and taking some responsibility for managing their behavior and engagement in learning activities.

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the extent of the implementation of inclusive kindergarten education. Specifically, this answers the following queries: what is the extent of attainment of the program objectives in terms of: Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modification, and Parental Involvement; and what enhancement program maybe proposed based on the findings of the study?

Method

This research work employed the descriptive evaluative design. It is used to clarify what a program is supposed to be focused on, how it is supposed to work, what the purpose of the program is and if the program theory or rational is solid which is specifically referred to a Clarificative Evaluation by John Owen (2006). The program which has been running for years in the Philippines is deemed ripe for Clarificative Evaluation.

The respondents of the study were the school administrators who have handled schools for two years or more and the permanent kindergarten teachers who have also been teaching for two years or more in the selected public and private schools. There is a total summary of 84 principals and 251 kindergarten teachers equivalent to 335 respondents involved in this study.

Purposive sampling method was used to identify the involvement of respondents in the implementation of the inclusive kindergarten program. Upon retrieval, 58 schools from the public responded while 26 schools from the private schools responded. Summing all the respondent schools both public and private, 84 schools were included in the conduct of evaluation.

Research locale is in Davao of City which is part of Southern Philippines. Specifically, public elementary schools and private schools are the target of the study. Davao City is the capital of Region XI also known as Davao Region. It is strategically located in the Southeastern part of Mindanao, Philippines.

A tool was developed from the comprehensive inclusive program for children with special needs (DepEd Order no. 72 s. 2009) with the following components: "child find, assessment, program options, curriculum modifications, and parental involvement". The modified tool from the comprehensive inclusive program for children with special needs (DepEd Order no. 72 s. 2009) was submitted to the panel of experts for validation to ensure its validity and reliability through a pilot testing. To confirm its reliability, the questionnaires were pilot tested to randomly selected 30 kindergarten teachers who were not part of the respondents/or study.

Results

It should be noted that there are targets set to be achieved in the implementation of the inclusive education program. This section assessed its extent of attainment as indicated in the rating of the respondents.

Presented in table 1 is the extent of attainment of program objectives in the implementation of an inclusive education kindergarten program in terms of child find. Child find as outlined in table 1 shows that the program outcomes set in this component were achieved to a high extent with a mean of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.030. This means that approximately 61%-80% of the child-find target indicators of the inclusive education program in Kindergarten were accomplished in Davao City Division. The Department of Education emphasized the accomplishment of Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children otherwise known as Department of Education Order no. 72 series of 2009. First, of the components of a comprehensive, inclusive program for children with special needs is child find.

Looking at the item indicators, the highest rating is on the effort provided by the schools “to convince parents to enroll their children in the SPED centers or school” (M=3.66). On the other hand, the lowest rating is on the teachers’ service to conduct home visitation (M=3.17). This may be attributed to the roles of teachers as they are mandated to convince parents to enroll their children. Whereas home visitation is the lowest considering that teachers are bothered with so much paper works and reports leaving limited time to visit children with special needs aside from preparation of instructional materials and the distance of the school to the pupils’ residences especially in far flung areas.

Based on the roles of administrators, they have to facilitate in receiving children with learning needs in the school and work on advocacy/information program to support students and community awareness on inclusive education and special education in general. Moreover, the roles of regular teachers are to agree on the idea of inclusive education and accept the students as qualified enrollees in the regular class (DepEd. Order 72. S. 2009)

Table 1. The Extent of Attainment of the Program Objectives in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Terms of Child Find

The extent of attainment of the program objectives/outcomes in the implementation of Inclusive Education in terms of Child Find	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
• “Locates children with special needs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family mapping survey ▪ Advocacy campaigns ▪ Networking with local health workers.” 	3.63	1.127	High
• “Lists children with special needs who are not in school.”	3.22	1.242	Moderate
• “Special Education Teachers visit children with special needs in their homes”;	3.16	1.253	Moderate
• “Convince parents to enroll their children in SPED centers or school nearest their home”.	3.66	1.119	High
Overall Mean	3.47	1.030	High

Legend: “Very High- 4.21- 5:00; High- 3:41-4:20; Low- 2.61-3.40; Very Low- 1.81-2.60; Not Achievable-1:00-1:80” (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) Source: DO 72, s. 2009 from <http://deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>

Presented in table 2 is the attainment of the program objectives in terms of assessment. It consistently yielded a high level of implementation in all indicators with the mean percentage of 3.73 and a standard deviation of .939. This means that nearly 61%-80% of the assessment target indicators of the inclusive program in kindergarten were accomplished in the division of Davao City. Particularly, indicator number two is on the highest rank about the constant

process of identifying the weaknesses of children with special needs with a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of .977. However, the lowest in rank is on Special Education centers assisting regular schools in the assessment process.

UNESCO (2015), strongly advocates an in-depth formal assessment for children with special needs be included in the education process to track students’ growth and development. Full and continuous support

be given to a student with learning needs not only in their academic needs but also with their financial needs. Further, assessment should include identifying people who can conduct planning, implementing and setting up a coordinating group for the educational needs of the students.

In addition, the K to12 Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (2012), clearly emphasized that the role of assessment in the growth and learning of every child

help promote the “holistic way by which young children grow and develop, and recognizes the role of families and communities in supporting the child through various stages of growth and development. More so, the learning program and activities should be appropriate for developing the domains and must sustain the interest in active learning of all young children including those with special abilities, marginalized, and or those at risk.

Table 2. The Extent of Attainment of the Program Objectives in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Terms of Assessment

The extent of attainment of the program objectives in the implementation of Inclusive Education in terms of Assessment.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
• Implements a constant process of identifying the strengths of children with special needs.	3.88	.942	High
• Implements a constant process of identifying the weaknesses of children with special needs.	3.90	.977	High
• Implements the use of a formal assessment tool for proper program grade placement of children with special needs.	3.71	1.017	High
• Implements the use of an informal assessment tool for proper program grade placement of children with special needs.	3.71	1.024	High
• SPED Centers assist regular schools in the assessment process.	3.47	1.129	High
Overall Mean	3.73	.939	High

Legend: “Very High- 4.21- 5:00; High- 3:41-4:20; Low- 2.61-3.40; Very Low- 1.81-2.60; Not Achievable-1:00-1:80” (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) Source: DO 72, s. 2009 from <http://deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>

Program options as enumerated in table 3, shows that the outcomes set in this component were attained to a high extent with a mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of .916. This means that around 61%-80% of the program options indicators of the inclusive kindergarten program were attained in the Davao City Schools Division. Considering on the item indicators, the highest mark landed on the labor of SPED teachers to provide one-on-one instruction for children with special needs with a mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 1.119. On the other hand, the “use of resource room where the child with special needs shall be pulled out from the general/regular class” got the lowest with a mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 1.154.

The Department of Education Order No. 72 series 2009 required:

“a comprehensive, inclusive program for children with special needs specifically, program options. The first program options is a self-contained class for children with similar disabilities which can be mono-grade or multi-grade handled by a trained SPED teacher. The second option is inclusion or placement in general education or regular class where the child with special needs learns with peers under a regular teacher and/or SPED trained teacher who addresses the child’s needs. The third option is a resource room program where the child with disabilities shall be pulled out from the general education or regular class and shall report to the SPED teacher who provides small group/one-on-one instruction and/or appropriate interventions for children”.

Table 3. Extent of Attainment of the Program Objectives
in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Terms of Program Options

The extent of attainment of the program objectives in the implementation of Inclusive Education in terms of Program Options	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
• Implements “program option that is a self-contained class for children with similar disabilities which is mono-grade handled by a trained SPED teacher”;	3.39	1.127	Moderate
• Implements program option where a child with special needs are placed in “general/regular class where he/she learns with a SPED trained teacher who addresses the child’s needs.”	3.46	1.137	High
• Make use of resource room where the child with special needs “shall be pulled out from the general/regular class”;	3.35	1.154	Moderate
• SPED teachers provide small group instruction for children with special needs.	3.55	1.146	High
• SPED teachers provide one-on-one instruction for children with special needs.	3.82	1.119	High
• SPED teachers provide appropriate interventions for children with special needs.	3.78	1.128	High
Overall Mean	3.58	.916	High

Legend: “Very High- 4.21- 5:00; High- 3:41-4:20; Low- 2.61-3.40; Very Low- 1.81-2.60; Not Achievable-1:00-1:80” (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) Source: DO 72, s. 2009 from <http://deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>

Attainment of the program objective in terms of curriculum modification is shown in table 4. It constantly yielded a high level of implementation in all indicators with the mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of .783. This indicates that nearly 61%-80% of the curriculum modification indicators of the inclusive kindergarten program were attained in the division of Davao City.

Particularly, modification in classroom instructions and activities through developing teaching-learning process got the highest mean of 4.99 with a standard deviation of .844. In contrary, support services for children with special needs on volunteerism got the

lowest with a mean of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.094. The roles of regular teachers are to examine existing instructional materials for modification purposes, organize with Special Education (SPED) teachers for required modification of the curriculum and help secure special equipment and materials. In addition, SPED teachers are mandated to offer social, interpersonal and physical assistance in measuring environmental situations of the school. Further, Non-teaching personnel are expected to monitor school facilities for possible modification and help prepare instructional materials for teachers and children with special needs (DepEd Order 72 s. 2009).

Table 4. Extent of Attainment of the Program Objectives in the Implementation
of Inclusive Education in Terms of Curriculum Modification

The extent of attainment of the program objectives in the implementation of Inclusive Education in terms of Curriculum Modification.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
• Implements “adaptation to foster optimum learning based on individual’s potentials”.	3.97	.847	High
• Implements “accommodation to foster optimum learning based on individual’s needs”.	4.00	.850	High
• Involves “modification in classroom instructions and activities through:			
○ new ways of a thinking process	4.10	.843	High
○ developing teaching-learning process	4.99	.844	High

○ Changes in any of the steps in the teaching-learning process”.	4.12	.859	High
● Provides support services for children with special needs from:			
○ professionals	3.99	.940	High
○ Specialists	3.77	1.062	High
○ Parents	4.05	.963	High
○ Volunteers	3.46	1.094	High
○ Peers	3.74	.962	High
○ Buddies	3.72	.979	High
Overall Mean	3.96	.783	High

Legend: “Very High- 4.21- 5:00; High- 3:41-4:20; Low- 2.61-3.40; Very Low- 1.81-2.60; Not Achievable-1:00-1:80” (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) Source: DO 72, s. 2009 from <http://deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>

Parental involvement is shown in table 5, which reflect that the objectives/outcomes set in this component were achieved to a high extent with a mean of 3.98 and a standard deviation of .844. This denotes that approximately 61%-80% of the parental involvement target indicators of the inclusive Kindergarten Program were accomplished in Davao City Schools Division. Looking at the item indicators, support on moral development got the highest rating with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of .898. On the other hand, the lowest rating

is the involvement of parents in volunteerism in the classroom as a teacher aide with a mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.121. Agbenyega and Sharma, (2014) also emphasized that pursuing and supporting the active involvement of parents and family members are necessary. The leaders must seek support from parents of children with and without disabilities through various means. They make sure to involve parents in decision-making at different levels. They also ensure that the agenda of school being inclusive is not just owned by educators but also parents.

Table 5. Extent of Attainment of the Program Objectives in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Terms of Parental Involvement

The extent of attainment of the program objectives in the implementation of Inclusive Education in terms of Parental Involvement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
● Parents/Caregivers play “a vital role in preparing children with special needs in:			
○ academic development	4.21	.909	Very High
○ moral development	4.22	.898	Very High
○ spiritual development”	4.15	.903	High
● “Parents involve themselves in observing children with special needs’ performance”.	3.99	.963	High
● Parents involve themselves in “volunteering to work in the classroom as a teacher aide”.	3.59	1.121	High
● Parents involve themselves in providing support to other parents.	3.72	1.012	High
Overall Mean	3.98	.844	High

Legend: “Very High- 4.21- 5:00; High- 3:41-4:20; Low- 2.61-3.40; Very Low- 1.81-2.60; Not Achievable-1:00-1:80” (Sullivan & Artino, 2013) Source: DO 72, s. 2009 from <http://deped.gov.ph/orders/do-72-s-2009>

In summary, the extent of attainment of the program objectives consistently yielded a high level of implementation in all indicators. This means that approximately 61%-80% target indicators of the inclusive kindergarten program were accomplished in one of the Divisions of Southern Philippines. Out of the five indicators, parental involvement got the highest mean followed by curriculum modification, next is assessment, then program options and lastly is child find. Results indicate that mostly, kindergarten schools observed a high level of attainment in the implementation of an inclusive kindergarten program. Further, this shows that the school administrators, teachers, and parents strongly support an inclusive kindergarten program. This affirms with the Department of Education order that

“there is an urgency to address the participation rate of children with learning needs on inclusive education. All children as assured by the Department of Education, have the right to suitable education within the regular or inclusive setting regardless of their race, size, shape, color, ability or disability with support from school staff, students, parents and the community” (DepEd Order No. 72 s, 2009).

An enhancement training program about inclusive classes for kindergarten teachers is proposed: thorough knowledge on inclusive education in the local, regional, national and international community, identify legal bases about inclusive education and categorize different exceptionalities; familiarize strategies and intervention programs for children with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom; techniques on Child Find; and expose to Special Education schools/centers.

Conclusion

Findings show that the attainment of the program objectives consistently yielded a high level of implementation in all indicators. This means that approximately 61%-80% target indicators of the inclusive kindergarten program were accomplished in Davao City Schools Division. Out of the five indicators, parental involvement got the highest mean followed by curriculum modification, next is assessment, then program options and the child find which got the lowest mean.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made: Compulsory survey, family mapping, campaigns, and networking for children with learning needs should be conducted not only by the SPED teachers but also by the regular teachers. Intensive trainings and seminars on SPED-related topics be designed for both regular and SPED kindergarten teachers, participate in trainings,

seminars-workshops, and the benchmark to schools that accommodate learners with special educational needs. Intensify support to kindergarten teachers in terms of professional and financial needs to help them perform their best. Further research be conducted as regards enhancement of Inclusive Kindergarten Program problem.

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