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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN MAINSTREAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the implementation of inclusive practices within mainstream elementary schools catering to learners with special needs. Employing exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the study delineates crucial themes and structural dimensions that are vital for augmenting inclusive educational frameworks. A total of nine themes were identified, emphasizing pivotal areas such as social cohesion, inclusive learning environments, and challenges related to resource accessibility each critical for fostering supportive educational contexts. Furthermore, the EFA revealed five foundational dimensions, including Inclusive Special Education Support, Advocacy and Inclusive Education, Collaborative Professional Development, Confidence in Teaching Diversity, and Inclusion in School Activities. These dimensions are essential for outlining the infrastructural elements necessary for the effective integration of inclusive practices. The analytical process led to the development of an evaluative instrument comprising 64 rigorously validated items spread across these identified dimensions, which exhibited a high degree of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.976), thus confirming its suitability for measuring inclusive practices. The study also articulates targeted recommendations for diverse educational stakeholders' school administrators, teachers, students, and the community. These recommendations stress the importance of resource allocation, the enhancement of professional development, the active fostering of inclusivity, and the engagement with community resources to cultivate a comprehensive inclusive environment. This investigation significantly enriches the academic literature by providing a validated measurement tool and detailed strategies designed to support the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream educational settings.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Special Needs, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Exploratory Approach, Alamada, North Cotabato.*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion of learners with special needs in mainstream elementary education remains a challenging issue worldwide. Despite advancements in educational policies, a significant disparity persists in educational opportunities for these learners. Based on the report indicated that only 61% of children with disabilities in developing countries complete primary school, compared to 91% of children without disabilities. This discrepancy highlights the urgent need for more inclusive practices in mainstream

schools to ensure equitable education for all learners, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities (UNESCO, 2019).

In the Philippines, the journey towards inclusive education has been gradual but progressive. A study in Metro Manila examined the implementation of inclusive practices in ten public elementary schools. The research found that while teachers showed a positive attitude towards inclusion, there were significant barriers such as lack of training, inadequate resources, and infrastructural challenges. This study underscores the Philippine government's commitment to inclusive education as mandated by the 'Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013', yet it also reveals the realities and challenges on the ground (Albert, 2021).

Internationally, inclusive education models have varied success. A comprehensive study by Hardy and Woodcock (2023) surveyed inclusive practices across 30 countries. It found that Scandinavian countries, renowned for their inclusive education systems, have successfully integrated over 80% of learners with special needs into mainstream classrooms. However, the study also noted a significant disparity in implementation in developing countries, with less than 40% integration. These variations underscore the need for context-specific strategies in inclusive education.

While these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in comprehensive understanding. Specifically, there is limited research exploring the practical application of inclusive practices in diverse Philippine settings, encompassing both urban and rural areas. This gap indicates a need for more extensive research to understand and address the varied challenges and opportunities in implementing inclusive education (Custodio, 2019).

Similarly, a local study conducted in the rural areas of Alamada, North Cotabato, explored the inclusivity in elementary schools. The research highlighted that schools in Alamada face distinct challenges such as limited access to specialized training, inadequate learning materials, and infrastructural constraints. However, the study also observed a strong community support system and innovative local initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity, showcasing the potential for effective grassroots strategies in rural education. (Magbanua, 2021).

Thus, this study aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of teachers' inclusive practices in Philippine mainstream elementary schools, identifying successful strategies and areas for improvement to support learners with special needs.

FRAMEWORK

The theoretical orientation or framework of a study guides how research is conducted, and findings are interpreted. It forms the foundation for understanding the study's objectives, variables, and relationships, influencing the study's direction and methodology. This study drew from various theories to inform its research design and analysis.

Initially, the **Social Development Theory** developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978) plays a crucial role in understanding inclusive practices. Vygotsky emphasized social interaction in the development of cognition, suggesting that learning is inherently a

social process. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is particularly relevant to inclusive education. ZPD represents the difference between what a learner can do without help and what they can achieve with guidance. In inclusive settings, this theory underscores the importance of collaborative learning environments where students with special needs can learn alongside their peers, benefiting from social interactions and scaffolded support.

Hence, the **Theory of Multiple Intelligences** introduced by Howard Gardner, (1983) has significant implications for inclusive education. Gardner proposed that intelligence is not a single general ability but a combination of multiple intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences. This theory supports the idea of personalized learning approaches in inclusive classrooms, where teaching strategies are adapted to cater to the diverse intelligence profiles of students. By recognizing and valuing different types of intelligence, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning experiences for students with special needs.

Conclusively, the **Ecological Systems Theory** posited by Urie Bronfenbrenner, (1979) is another essential framework for understanding inclusive education. This theory views the child's development within the context of a system of relationships that form their environment. Bronfenbrenner’s model divides the environment into five interrelated systems, ranging from the immediate family and school environment to broader societal influences. In the context of inclusive education, this theory emphasizes the importance of considering the various environmental factors that influence a child's learning experience. It highlights how family, school, community, and societal attitudes and policies impact the effectiveness of inclusive practices in mainstream schools.

These theories provide a comprehensive theoretical framework to understand and develop effective inclusive practices in mainstream elementary education for learners with special needs.

METHODS

Research Design

In the study, the exploratory sequential mixed method was utilized. Initially, the plan started with collecting and analyzing qualitative data, and then it progressed to collecting and analyzing quantitative data (Cresswell, 2003).

The purpose of this design was to explore situations where it is beneficial in the creation of questionnaires (Plano Clark, 2005). Qualitative data was employed particularly when variables were not yet identified or when a theory had not been established (Morrow, 2007). This included content analysis, which is based on the

assumption that people's beliefs or opinions about a subject can be reliably inferred from their statements (Wilkinson, 2004). Hence, a primary goal of content analysis was to discern public opinion. This process involved organizing what people had said into coherent groups of opinions. In this approach, the initial aspects of work ethics were derived from the stories of the participants.

On the other hand, the quantitative phase employed construct validity to determine the factor structure of the construct or measure. Construct validity is a broad term used to assess the measurement method of a specific construct, incorporating several other types of validity, such as content validity, convergent and divergent validity, and criterion validity, all of which contribute to evaluating construct validity (Messick, 1989). Therefore, construct validity is viewed as a process of evaluating the validity of a measurement procedure, while other types of validity serve as practical tools to assess whether the measurement procedure accurately measures a given construct (Wainer & Braun, 1988).

Research Participants

A total of ten (10) teachers were invited for in-depth interviews and seven (7) teachers for the focus group discussion. The results of the interview were used in drafting the initial items of examining inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools for learners with special needs.

The constructed survey questionnaire from the qualitative interviews was disseminated to 300 teachers in Alamada, North Cotabato. The respondents were selected using the stratified randomized sampling technique. This necessitates knowing the characteristics of the population members so that the population can be stratified before the sample is chosen (Fowler, 2009). After which, the final tool was distributed to 30 respondents for pilot testing.

The inclusion criteria encompass public school teachers who have been in service from their initial employment to the present, while the exclusion criteria pertain to private school teachers.

Research Instrument

In the qualitative phase, the researcher formulated interview guide questions that will give insight on teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools for learners with special needs. The items of the questionnaire were constructed based on the frequency of occurrence as result of interview and focus group discussions. The construction of the tool from qualitative phase revealed the teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools for learners with special nee. This tool is subjected to dimension reduction to look for the factors that constitute the teachers' inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools for learners with special needs. The researcher also invited five experts to perform content validity of the interview questions and check the suitability of the items that capture the teachers' inclusive practices in

mainstream elementary schools for learners with special needs. This is to ensure the readability and comprehensibility of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The notes that are obtained from in-depth interview are analyzed using thematic analysis. This method emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or “themes”) within the data. Patterns in data sets that are significant to the description of a phenomenon and are linked to specific research topics are called themes (Boyatzis, 1998).

In quantitative data, the exploratory factor analysis is used in the study. It determines empirically how many constructs, or latent variables, or factors underlie a set of items. Factor analysis is a type of multivariate analysis that seeks to explain the relationship between many variables (items) in terms of a set of independent underlying factors. This statistical method can serve as an important tool for validating the structure of instruments (Nunnally, 1978; Carpenter, 2006) pointed out that factor analysis is not a simply defined statistical method, but a broad category of methods for conceptualizing groupings of variables that includes mathematical procedures for assigning variables to certain groups. Factor analysis, as described by Hare et al. (1998), is a set of statistical approaches for analyzing interrelationships among a large number of variables and explaining these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors). On the other hand, internal consistency reliability, often measured using Cronbach's alpha, assesses the consistency of responses within a single administration of the instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Emerging Themes on Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs.

Theme 1. Social Cohesion in Inclusive Settings.

This theme emphasizes the importance of creating harmonious, diverse environments where individuals from various backgrounds feel valued and integrated. It focuses on the strategies and policies that foster mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration among community members, aiming to build stronger, more inclusive societies that celebrate diversity while working towards common goals.

The theme implies that Inclusive settings not only bolster social cohesion but also prepare students for a diverse world by fostering empathy, teamwork, and an understanding of diversity. Educators and policymakers must prioritize inclusivity in curriculums and school cultures to cultivate environments where every student thrives socially and academically.

Moreover, it is confirmed in the study of Artiles, A. J., & Kozleski, E. B. (2020) that inclusive education involves transforming educational systems and policies to cater to the diverse needs of all learners. It underscores the value of a learning environment that does not merely accommodate but celebrates diversity, ensuring equal

opportunities for participation and learning. The significance of social cohesion within such settings cannot be overstated, as it is crucial for the development of a cohesive, understanding, and empathetic society.

Theme 2. Inclusive Learning Environments

The theme emerged that emphasizes the creation of educational spaces where all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or needs, are welcomed, supported, and given equal opportunities to succeed. It focuses on adapting teaching methods, materials, and policies to ensure accessibility and promote diversity and equity in education.

This implies that Inclusive learning environments significantly enhance academic and social outcomes for all students. By embracing diverse teaching strategies and supports, these settings promote independence among students with special needs while enriching educational experiences for everyone, thereby preparing a more adaptable, empathetic, and inclusive future workforce.

The ideas are supported by Baker, E. T., Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (2021) that the core philosophy of inclusive education revolves around the idea that all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, have the right to participate in, and benefit from, high-quality educational programs and experiences. This approach not only supports students with special needs but also enhances the learning experience for all students by promoting diverse teaching methods and a curriculum that is accessible to everyone.

Theme 3. Collaborative and Supportive Inclusive Communities.

The theme of Collaborative and Supportive Inclusive Communities" emphasizes the power of collective efforts in fostering environments where diversity is celebrated, and everyone's needs are met. It highlights the importance of collaboration among educators, students, families, and society to create supportive networks that enhance inclusivity, understanding, and respect across all community interactions.

This implies that implementing collaborative and supportive inclusive communities in educational settings enhances learning outcomes, fosters emotional well-being, and promotes a sense of belonging among all students. Such environments require the commitment of educators, specialists, students, and the wider community to create a truly inclusive and dynamic learning atmosphere.

Similarly, the statements corroborated the ideas of Booth, T., Ainscow, M., & Kingston, D. (2021) that the foundational principle of inclusive education is the belief that all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, should have the opportunity to learn together in the same environment. This requires a shift from traditional educational models towards more flexible and adaptive approaches that cater to the diverse needs of the student population. Key to this approach is the collaboration among teachers, specialists, students, and the wider community, which enhances the learning environment and supports the diverse needs of all students.

Theme 4. Resource and Accessibility Challenges

The theme focuses on the hurdles educational institutions face in providing equitable access to learning for all students. It highlights issues like limited funding, inadequate materials, and insufficient support services, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to overcome these barriers and ensure inclusivity in education.

This implies that resource and accessibility challenges in education hinder the implementation of inclusive practices, limiting opportunities for students with diverse needs. Addressing these issues requires increased funding, improved infrastructure, and strategic allocation of resources to ensure equitable access to education for all students.

Correspondingly, the statements are supported by Cook, B. G., Cook, S. C., & Landrum, T. J. (2020). Research indicates that schools often struggle with limited resources, particularly in providing adaptive technologies, specialized materials, and support services necessary for students with special needs. The availability of these resources significantly impacts the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives, as they play a crucial role in accommodating diverse learning styles and needs. Furthermore, the implementation of inclusive practices can be hampered by financial constraints, with schools facing difficulties in securing adequate funding for necessary programs and supports. Insufficient financial resources not only impede the development of inclusive education but also perpetuate inequalities in educational opportunities for marginalized students.

Theme 5. Overcoming Barriers to Inclusive Education

Another theme emerged which focuses on strategies and efforts to address obstacles hindering the implementation of inclusive practices. It highlights the importance of identifying and surmounting challenges such as resource constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and societal attitudes to ensure equitable access and participation for all students.

The statement implies that Overcoming barriers to inclusive education necessitates comprehensive teacher training, adaptable curricula, and manageable class sizes. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that all students receive the support and accommodations needed to thrive in inclusive learning environments, promoting equity and maximizing educational outcomes for every learner.

Similarly, the ideas are corroborated to the findings of Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2021), systemic barriers, such as inadequate funding and resource allocation, can impede efforts to create inclusive learning environments (Baker et al., 2013). Research suggests that schools serving marginalized communities often face greater resource constraints, limiting their ability to provide necessary supports and accommodations for diverse learners. Addressing these systemic barriers requires a

commitment from policymakers to prioritize inclusive education and allocate sufficient funding to support the implementation of inclusive practices.

Theme 6. Social and Cultural Inclusion

This theme hurdles encompasses barriers stemming from societal attitudes and norms that marginalize certain groups. These hurdles impede equitable access to education, perpetuate stereotypes, and necessitate efforts to promote understanding and inclusivity within educational settings.

This implies that social and cultural inclusion hurdles underscore the need for targeted efforts to address misconceptions, resistance, and concerns among educators, parents, and the broader school community. Overcoming these barriers is essential to foster inclusive cultures and ensure equitable access to education for all students.

The implications are supported by Fullan, M. (2021). They gave lighted to schools also face challenges in creating and maintaining inclusive school cultures that value diversity and inclusion. Research indicates that the absence of an inclusive culture can lead to feelings of exclusion among marginalized students and contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases. To address this hurdle, schools must prioritize efforts to foster inclusive environments that celebrate diversity and promote a sense of belonging for all students.

Theme 7. Empowering Educators through Specialized Training.

The theme "Empowering Educators through Specialized Training" entails equipping teachers with tailored skills and knowledge to effectively support diverse learners. This approach enhances educators' capacity to address individual needs, foster inclusive environments, and promote academic and social success for all students, irrespective of their abilities or backgrounds.

This implies that empowering educators through specialized training enhances their capacity to support diverse learners effectively, fostering inclusive environments conducive to academic and social growth. This investment in professional development ensures that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the individual needs of all students.

The implications are supported by Hetzroni, O. E., & Tzuriel, D. (2019). Continuous professional development is essential for equipping educators with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively implement inclusive practices. Research indicates that ongoing training programs focused on inclusive education strategies, such as differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and positive behavior support, can significantly enhance teachers' ability to meet the diverse needs of students. Professional development initiatives that provide educators with opportunities

for collaboration, reflection, and feedback further contribute to their growth and effectiveness in supporting diverse learners.

Theme 8. Optimizing Resources for Inclusive Classrooms.

The theme "Optimizing Resources for Inclusive Classrooms" focuses on strategic allocation and utilization of resources to support diverse learners effectively. It emphasizes maximizing funding, personnel, technology, and instructional materials to create inclusive environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students, promoting equity and academic success.

This implies that optimizing resources for inclusive classrooms ensures equitable access to support services, adaptive technologies, and individualized attention. This approach enhances learning outcomes for diverse learners, fosters a supportive environment, and promotes academic and social success for all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

The implications are supported by Kauffman, J. M., Hallahan, D. P., & Pullen, P. C. (2021). Increasing funding for inclusive education initiatives is essential for ensuring that adequate resources are available to support diverse learners. Research indicates that schools often face resource constraints, limiting their ability to provide necessary accommodations, materials, and personnel to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. By increasing funding, policymakers can ensure that schools have the resources they need to create inclusive environments that prioritize the needs of all students.

Theme 9. Inclusive Community Cultivation

This theme involves fostering a supportive and welcoming environment where diversity is celebrated, and all individuals feel valued and included. It emphasizes promoting empathy, respect, and understanding among community members to create a cohesive and supportive atmosphere that embraces and appreciates individual differences.

This implies that inclusive community cultivation fosters a supportive school environment where diversity is celebrated. By promoting awareness, enhancing parent involvement, and recognizing student achievements, schools nurture a sense of belonging for all, fostering empathy, respect, and understanding among students, parents, and staff, ultimately enhancing academic and social outcomes.

The implications are supported by Peters, S. J., & Sturmey, P. (2021). Promoting a school culture that celebrates diversity and inclusion is critical for creating an inclusive community. Research suggests that awareness programs and activities, such as cultural events, diversity workshops, and inclusive curriculum initiatives, can help foster a sense of belonging for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. By promoting

empathy, respect, and understanding among students, parents, and staff, schools can create a supportive environment where diversity is celebrated and valued.

Construction of Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs Scale

The items genrated from the interview reflect the fundamental topics, fundamental ideas/ assertions, issues demonstrated, and implications. There are 80 items on the survey questionnaires. This drafted tool is designed to provide a thorough insight into the complex aspects of inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools for learners with special needs.

Dimensions of Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs

***Testing of the Propose Questionnaire consisting of 80 item scale on Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs*.** Prior to the proposed 80-item scale for Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs undergoing factor analysis, the Kaiser Meyer-Okin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed. Table 1 highlighted the results.

Table 1 **KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.927
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	31077.558
	df	3160
	Sig.	.000

Moreover, the results displayed aboved revealed the KMO test generated a value of .927 which is above .5. This means the sample can be treated with EFA. Also, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity result yields a .000 significant value which tells that the data have patterned relationships, and factorability was assumed. Hence, there was empirical evidence to proceed with the factor analysis.

***Derivation of Factors Structures for Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs*.** To determine the number of factors, the 80-item scale was tested using an unrotated factor matrix with estimates of eigenvalues, percent of the variance, and cumulative variance. Eigenvalues represent the total amount of variance that can be explained by a given principal component. They can be positive or negative in theory, but in practice, they explain variance which is always positive (UCLA, 2021). Under the Kaiser criterion, all components are dropped

with eigenvalues under 1.0, this being the eigenvalue equal to the information accounted for by an average single item (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

Correspondingly, five factors were identified in the model with eigenvalues above 1. The loading factor for each item corresponds to a factor score that was above .40. This means, there was a sufficient correlation between factors and variables; hence, the item can be considered as part of the particular factor.

The pattern matrix using Principal Axis Factoring with a Promax rotation method of Promax with Kaiser Normalization was used. The results revealed that the loadings of items in the five factors are above .4. It can be supported by Field (2005) that .4 is recommended and necessary to obtain the desired factors. Furthermore, it can be observed that there is no item cross-loading or not loading at all which means that the items best represent their factors. It is emphasized by hair et al. (1998) that loadings indicate the degree of correspondence between the variable and the factor, with higher loadings making the variable representative of the factor.

Moreover, the item loadings of each item to their factor indicate a sufficient correlation between factors and variables, and thus can be considered as a component of the factor. By using the EFA, the five-factor model of Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs with 64 items was developed as shown in table 3, namely: Inclusive Special Education Support, Advocacy and Inclusive Education, Collaborative Professional Development, Confidence in Teaching Diversity, and Inclusion in School Activities

However, the items that do not fit with the factor were removed from the final questionnaire. Specifically, the items deleted are Item 8 "*I regularly assess the effectiveness of inclusive practices in my classroom and make adjustments as needed.",* Item 9, "*I provide differentiated instruction to address the diverse needs of all learners in my classroom.", item 13 "I ensure that the physical environment of my classroom is accessible and inclusive for all students*.", Item 16 "*I address bullying and discrimination against students with special needs to create a safe and supportive learning environment."* Item 18 *"I collaborate with school administrators and support staff to ensure that inclusive practices are implemented throughout the school.",* item 20 *"I attend professional development workshops and conferences to enhance my knowledge and skills in inclusive education."* Item 21 *"I incorporate universal design principles into my lesson planning to ensure that all students can access the curriculum.*", item 27 *"I provide opportunities for students with special needs to develop social skills and peer relationships.",* item 29 *"I facilitate discussions about disability awareness and acceptance in my classroom." ,* item 31 *"I establish clear expectations and routines in my classroom to support students with special needs.*", item 35 *"I ensure that students with special needs are included in classroom assessments and evaluations.",* item 36 *"I provide opportunities for students to share their perspectives and experiences related to inclusion in the classroom.",* item 56 *" I involve students in decision-making processes related to classroom rules and expectations.",* item 57 *" I promote self-advocacy skills among students with special needs, empowering them to voice their needs and preferences.*", and item 63 *" I collaborate with parents to develop strategies for supporting students with special needs at home".*

Reliability Test of the Scale

The internal consistency of the questionnaires' item was determined and evaluated for its reliability test. It can be seen in table 2 that the overall reliability score of Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs is high with Cronbach's value of (α = 0. 976) the subscale or the dimension is also above the criteria reliability above score alpha namely, Inclusive Special Education Support (α= 0. 875), Advocacy and Inclusive Education (α= 0. 895), Collaborative Professional Development (α= 0. 919), Confidence in Teaching Diversity (α= 0. 992), and Inclusion in School Activities (α= 0. 976).

According to Huck, (2007). Determining reliability is essential as it refers to the consistency throughout the parts of a quantifying instrument. Also, a scale is said to have high internal consistency reliability if the items of a scale "hang together" and quantify the same construct (Huck, 2007, Robinson, 2009).

The most used internal consistency measure is the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. It is considered as the most suitable measure of reliability when making use of Likert scales (Whitley, 2002, Robinson, 2009). However, no definite rules occur for internal consistencies, however, most concur on a minimum internal consistency coefficient of .70 (Whitley, 2002, Robinson, 2009).

Thus, Aquino (2016) implied that reliability should compel the adequacy of tools to secure validity. The implications can be derived from the educational, discovery, and case analysis of the study.

Moreover, Diaz (2019) supported the idea of aquino (2016). He emphasized that implications on educational practices in the Philippines are standards and systematic however another measurement tool should encourage to deepen its standards and foundational course that still exist in the Educational and philosophical foundation in the educational system. It may suggest that the educational system may vary and change and find the best possible curriculum amidst this pandemic.

Table 2

Reliability Test Scale for Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs

Scale	Cronbach's alpha
Inclusive Special Education Support	0.875
Advocacy and Inclusive Education	0.895
Collaborative Professional Development	0.919
Confidence in Teaching Diversity	0.992
Inclusion in School Activities	0.976
Overall Reliability	**0.976**

Final Version of Inclusive Practices In Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs Model.

The finalized version of the instrument, resulting from this study, is presented in the format outlined in Table 3, wherein the initial set of 80 items has been refined to 64 items. The analysis reveals notable concerns regarding face validity, primarily deduced from the factor loadings associated with each item. Items exhibiting small coefficients, specifically those falling below .40, have been systematically excluded. This decision is substantiated by the guidance of Hair et al. (2010), positing that items with negligible coherence or lacking reflective power may be deemed dispensable within the model. Furthermore, in accordance with Hair et al. (2010), loading coefficients may be judiciously set by the researcher to retain only those items that most aptly encapsulate the underlying factor, thereby ensuring the exclusion of items with low coefficients from the final factor structure.

Using the EFA, the Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners With Special Needs Questionnaire was developed. This scale consists of 64 items. Specifically, the Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools For Learners With Special Needs consists of sixty-four (64) items which comprises five factors such as Inclusive Special Education Support with twenty four (24) items, Advocacy and Inclusive Education with twenty (20) items, Collaborative Professional Development with seven (7) items, Confidence in Teaching Diversity with seven (7) items, and Inclusion in School Activities with seven (7) items. Thus, the five-point Likert scale from 5-strongly agree to 1- strongly disagree is shown below.

Table 3
Final Tool for Inclusive Practices in Mainstream for learners with Special Needs

Underlying Dimensions	5	4	3	2	1
Factor 1: Inclusive Special Education Support					
1. I provide positive reinforcement and encouragement to students with special needs to boost their self-esteem and confidence.					
2. I address language barriers and provide support for English language learners with special needs.					
3. I collaborate with special education teachers to co-teach lessons and support students with special needs in the classroom.					
4. I provide opportunities for students to engage in hands-on and experiential learning activities that cater to their interests and abilities.					
5. I provide accommodations and modifications to support students with special needs during standardized testing.					
6. I create opportunities for students to engage in service-learning projects that promote inclusivity and social justice.					
7. I collaborate with community members to provide job shadowing and internship opportunities for students with special needs.					

8. I provide ongoing feedback and encouragement to students with special needs to support their growth and development.
9. I promote a growth mindset among students, emphasizing the importance of resilience and perseverance in overcoming challenges.
10. I create a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment that celebrates the unique strengths and abilities of all students.
11. I collaborate with special education teachers to develop and implement individualized behavior plans for students with special needs.
12. I use technology to support students with special needs in accessing the curriculum and completing assignments.
13. I provide opportunities for students to engage in hands-on and experiential learning activities that cater to their individual interests and abilities.
14. I collaborate with school counselors and mental health professionals to support the social and emotional well-being of students with special needs.
15. I involve students in setting academic and social goals and tracking their progress over time.
16. I collaborate with community organizations and agencies to provide additional support and resources for students with special needs.
17. I promote a sense of belonging and acceptance among all students in the classroom.
18. I use cooperative learning strategies to promote peer interaction and collaboration among students with special needs.
19. I provide opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities and clubs that match their interests and abilities.
20. I collaborate with families to develop transition plans for students with special needs as they move to new grade levels or schools.
21. I create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes.
22. I use visual supports and cues to help students with special needs understand expectations and routines in the classroom.
23. I provide opportunities for students to engage in real-world learning experiences that connect classroom learning to their lives outside of school.
24. I advocate for the rights and needs of students with special needs within the school community and beyond.

Factor 2: Advocacy and Inclusive Education

25. I seek feedback from students, parents, and colleagues to continuously improve my inclusive practices.
26. I create individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs to outline their goals, accommodations, and support services.
27. I foster a growth mindset among students with special needs, emphasizing the importance of effort and perseverance in achieving success.
28. I collaborate with families to develop transition plans for students with special needs as they move between grade levels or schools.
29. I advocate for the allocation of resources and funding to support inclusive practices in mainstream elementary schools.
30. I address misconceptions and stereotypes about students with special needs to promote a culture of acceptance and respect in the classroom.
31. I provide opportunities for students to engage in peer tutoring and mentoring to support their academic and social development.
32. I collaborate with school counselors and mental health professionals to address the social and emotional needs of students with special needs.
33. I encourage students to reflect on their learning and set goals for improvement.
34. I promote self-regulation and executive functioning skills among students with special needs to support their academic success.
35. I encourage students to celebrate each other's differences and learn from each other's experiences.

36. I collaborate with community partners to provide inclusive recreational and extracurricular activities for students with special needs.
37. I advocate for the inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream educational settings to promote social integration and diversity.
38. I create a classroom environment that values diversity and promotes cultural competence among students.
39. I promote the use of positive reinforcement and rewards to motivate students with special needs.
40. I provide opportunities for students to engage in project-based learning and collaborative group activities.
41. I use differentiated assessments to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students with special needs.
42. I collaborate with occupational therapists and physical therapists to address the sensory and motor needs of students with special needs.
43. I establish a classroom culture of respect and empathy, where students feel valued and supported.
44. I provide opportunities for students to engage in peer-mediated instruction and support.

Factor 3: Collaborative Professional Development

45. I encourage peer support and collaboration among students to promote a sense of belonging and acceptance in the classroom.
46. I celebrate diversity and promote cultural awareness in my classroom to foster a sense of respect and understanding among students.
47. I encourage students to self-advocate for their needs and preferences in the classroom.
48. I involve students in setting goals and tracking their progress towards academic and social objectives.
49. I use data-driven decision-making to monitor student progress and identify areas for improvement in my inclusive practices.
50. I participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaborate with colleagues and share best practices in inclusive education.
51. I provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and take on roles of responsibility in the classroom.

Factor 4: Confidence in Teaching Diversity

52. I am aware of the benefits of inclusive education for learners with special needs.
53. I believe that all learners, regardless of their abilities, should have access to inclusive educational opportunities.
54. I feel confident in my ability to implement inclusive practices in my classroom.
55. I have received adequate training and support to effectively implement inclusive practices in my classroom.
56. I actively promote a culture of inclusion and acceptance among my students.
57. I collaborate with other teachers and specialists to meet the diverse needs of all learners in my classroom.
58. I adapt my teaching strategies to accommodate the individual learning styles and needs of students with special needs.

Factor 5: Inclusion in School Activities

59. I involve students with special needs in classroom activities and discussions to promote their participation and engagement.
60. I advocate for the inclusion of students with special needs in extracurricular activities and school events.
61. I communicate regularly with parents/guardians of students with special needs to keep them informed about their child's progress and support needs.
62. I use assistive technologies and accommodations to support students with special needs in accessing the curriculum.
63. I use positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) to promote a positive and inclusive classroom environment.

64. I collaborate with community organizations and agencies to provide additional support and resources for students with special needs.

Legend:

5 = Strongly agree
4 = Agree
3 = Moderately agree
2 = Disagree
1 = Strongly Disagree

CONCLUSIONS

To give light on the study, the following conclusions are enumerated.

1. There were nine (9) distinctive themes emerged shedding significant light on the Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs. These themes include the Social Cohesion in Inclusive Settings, Inclusive Learning Environments, Collaborative and Supportive Inclusive Communities, Resource and Accessibility Challenges, Overcoming Barriers to Inclusive Education, Social and Cultural Inclusion Hurdles, Empowering Educators through Specialized Training, Optimizing Resources for Inclusive Classrooms, Inclusive Community Cultivation. This means that the students' perspectives on adaptive technological transitions suggest essential areas for improvement in inclusive education. Addressing resource and accessibility challenges, enhancing educator training, and fostering inclusive community cultures are critical. Such measures will bolster social cohesion, overcome educational barriers, and optimize learning environments for all students.

2. The exploratory factor analysis yielded five underlying factors within Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs: Inclusive Special Education Support, Advocacy and Inclusive Education, Collaborative Professional Development, Confidence in Teaching Diversity, and Inclusion in School Activities. These factors underscore the need to integrate robust support systems for special education within mainstream settings, promote advocacy for inclusive practices, and ensure that professional development for educators addresses collaboration and confidence in teaching diverse student populations.

3. Similarly, the reliability test for the final scale of the questionnaire derived from the Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs was very high with an overall Cronbach's alpha value of (α = 0. 976) the subscale or the dimension is also above the criteria reliability above score alpha namely, Inclusive Special Education Support (α= 0. 875), Advocacy and Inclusive Education (α= 0. 895), Collaborative Professional Development (α= 0. 919), Confidence in Teaching Diversity (α= 0. 992), and Inclusion in School Activities (α= 0. 976).

4. Conclusively, the final instrument which can be used to measure the Inclusive Practices in Mainstream Elementary Schools for Learners with Special Needs contains five (5) dimensions with a total of 64 items. This means that these items are appropriate and passed the face validity for measuring tools in the study.

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