

Evaluating Inclusivity: A Critical Analysis of School Assessment Practices for Students with Learning Disabilities before Enrollment to Senior High School

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Submitted: 10/03/2024 Revised: 25/04/2024 Accepted: 02/05/2024

Abstract: This study investigated the assessment practices for students with learning disabilities before their enrollment in senior high school at Babag National High School within the Department of Education Lapulapu City Division during the 2023-2024 school year, as a basis for formulating Enhanced Pre-enrollment Assessment Guidelines (EPEAG). A descriptive-correlation design was employed, with 35 SpEd teachers and 35 parents/guardians from the research locale serving as respondents. Frequency count, simple percentage, weighted mean, and correlation coefficient were utilized to statistically analyze the data. Findings showed that teenagers predominantly make up the population, distributed across various special conditions. It was found that several teachers are novices with advanced education but lack relevant training, while parents are mostly married, with many families having two to three children. Parents who attended school activities fall under the category of “Others.” Data reveal that the extent of assessing students with learning disabilities in their special needs condition, educational needs, previous individualized educational plans, earlier achievements, students’ experiences, and support needs before their enrollment in inclusive education are all observably practiced. Scientific results show that there was no significant correlation between the viewpoints of the two groups. It can be concluded that the assessment practices have been observed. However, the use of EPEAG is recommended, and further investigation is proposed along this line.

Keywords: *Special Education, Learning Disabilities, Assessment Practices, Descriptive-correlation design, Lapulapu City, Philippines.*

1. Introduction

In the Philippine educational system, the transition of students with special needs to high school remains a significant challenge, particularly with respect to the assessment and placement practices that ensure equitable educational opportunities. The existing policies, while rooted in international frameworks advocating for inclusivity, often fall short in their implementation. A critical review of school-level assessment practices reveals that, rather than comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluations, assessments of students with disabilities are often based on informal classroom observations or incomplete records. This approach lacks the specificity required to design individualized support plans, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which are crucial for tailoring instruction to the unique needs of each student. Additionally, the involvement of parents—who play a pivotal role as advocates and decision-makers in their children's education—is frequently overlooked, further complicating the assessment and placement process. Moreover, the limited availability of specialized resources, trained personnel, and accommodations for students with special needs poses a significant barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive practices. The principle of the least restrictive environment, a cornerstone of inclusive education, is often not prioritized, leading to unnecessary segregation of students rather than exploring inclusive options within mainstream settings. These systemic challenges can largely be attributed to inadequate funding, which restricts schools' capacity to provide the necessary evaluations and support services

before the enrollment of students into senior high school programs. This research aims to examine the current assessment practices in junior and senior high schools within the Department of Education-Lapulapu City Division for the 2023-2024 academic year, with a focus on identifying strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the existing framework. The findings of this study will contribute to the development of Pre-enrollment Assessment Guidelines, which are intended to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of educational placements for students with special needs and disabilities.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in two pivotal theoretical frameworks: the Inclusive Education Theory (IET), articulated in the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), and the Person-Environment Fit Theory (PEFT) by Powell Lawton (1983). These theories provide the conceptual underpinnings for exploring assessment practices for students with special needs and disabilities, particularly in inclusive educational settings.

The Inclusive Education Theory (IET), as outlined in the Salamanca Statement, serves as a foundational framework for the study. The theory advocates for the integration of students with special needs into mainstream educational settings, promoting equal educational opportunities and eliminating barriers to participation. By anchoring the study in IET, the research adopts a lens through which to examine assessment practices, ensuring that they align with the inclusive ethos of the Salamanca Statement.

IET emphasizes the importance of providing individualized support, such as differentiated instruction and accommodations, to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, can succeed within general education environments. This theory challenges traditional models of segregation based on disability, advocating for educational settings that accommodate diversity and foster collaboration among all learners (Rademaker et al., 2020).

Furthermore, IET emphasizes the need for collaboration among stakeholders—including teachers, parents, and support staff—to create a supportive learning environment for students with special needs. Research consistently highlights the numerous benefits of inclusive education, including improved academic outcomes, social skills, and attitudes toward diversity (Spoerer et al., 2020). However, critics of inclusive education argue that resource limitations, insufficient teacher training, and institutional resistance can hinder effective implementation. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing commitment, adequate resources, and professional development for educators (Yada et al., 2022). This theory is central to the study’s exploration of how assessment practices can contribute to the successful inclusion of students with disabilities.

Person-Environment Fit Theory (PEFT), on the other hand, provides a psychological framework for understanding the alignment between individuals and their environments. **Lawton’s PEFT posits** that optimal functioning and well-being arise when there is a harmonious fit between an individual’s characteristics and the demands or attributes of their environment (Andela & van Der Doef, 2019). In the context of education, PEFT offers valuable insights into how assessment practices can be tailored to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. This theory highlights the significance of matching the assessment process with students’ cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics, ensuring that evaluations are fair, accurate, and conducive to positive educational outcomes.

The PEFT also underscores the importance of adapting educational environments—including assessment methods—based on students’ diverse learning needs. By considering factors such as learning styles, socio-emotional needs, and physical accommodations, PEFT emphasizes the need for flexible, personalized assessment approaches (Beenen & Arbaugh, 2019). The theory suggests that when assessments do not align with a student’s characteristics, it can result in stress, disengagement, and decreased academic performance. Thus, PEFT guides this study’s investigation into how assessment practices can better accommodate the needs of students with special needs, ensuring a positive fit between the students and their learning environment (Deng & Yao, 2020).

By integrating IET and PEFT, this study adopts a comprehensive framework that addresses both the overarching principles of inclusive education and the specific alignment between assessment practices and students’ individual needs. This dual theoretical foundation ensures that the study not only contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education but also provides practical insights into how assessment practices can foster an optimal person-environment fit for students with special needs.

3. Legal Frameworks and Policy Support

In addition to the theoretical foundations, the study draws upon key legal frameworks that support the inclusion of students with special needs in educational settings. Notably, **R.A. 7277, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons**, provides the legal basis for ensuring equal access to education for persons with disabilities (PWDs). This law mandates the provision of reasonable accommodations and support services to ensure that PWDs have the same educational opportunities as their peers without disabilities (NCDA, 2020). This legal framework underscores the importance of inclusive assessment and placement practices, ensuring that students with disabilities are appropriately supported throughout their educational journey.

Similarly, R.A. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, reforms the Philippine educational system by promoting inclusivity through the K-12 curriculum. This law advocates for individualized learning and emphasizes the need for tailored assessments that address the unique learning needs of students with special needs (Brillantes et al., 2019). Within this context, the study examines how R.A. 10533 has influenced the development of inclusive assessment practices in schools and how these practices can be aligned with the legal requirements for students with disabilities.

Moreover, **DepEd Order No. 20, s. 2018**, the Policy Guidelines on the Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities in Basic Education, provides specific guidance on integrating students with disabilities into mainstream education. The guidelines emphasize the creation of an inclusive environment, individualized education plans (IEPs), and the adaptation of assessment methods to ensure equitable evaluations for all students (DepEd, 2018). By incorporating these legal frameworks, the study ensures that its investigation into assessment practices is grounded in the regulatory standards set forth by the Department of Education (DepEd) and other governing bodies.

3.1 Implications for Assessment and Educational Placement

| THEORIES | LEGAL BASES |
|---|--|
| INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THEORY By: Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) | R.A. 7277 Magna Carta for Disabled Person R.A. 10533 Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 |

The study also considers the practical implications of assessment and educational placement for students with special needs. Effective assessment practices are essential for identifying students' strengths, challenges, and learning needs, particularly as they transition to higher educational levels. A comprehensive assessment process, which includes input from teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, helps to ensure that students are placed in appropriate educational settings that provide the necessary supports for success. This process may involve a range of assessments, including standardized tests, individualized evaluations, and socio-emotional assessments, to develop a holistic understanding of the student's needs (Kurth et al., 2019).

However, challenges in resource allocation, teacher training, and institutional readiness often hinder the full implementation of inclusive assessment practices. The availability of specialized resources, accommodations, and support services remains a critical factor.

4. Related Literature

Inclusive Education Theory (IET)

The Inclusive Education Theory (IET), as articulated in the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994), emphasizes the integration of students with special needs into mainstream educational settings. It promotes equal opportunities and the removal of barriers to participation. This theory advocates for creating educational environments that cater to a diverse range of learners, removing the barriers that impede their access to quality education. At its core, IET is rooted in several key principles such as recognizing diversity, providing equal opportunities, accommodating various learning styles, and fostering a collaborative, socially integrated environment (Spoerer et al., 2020).

The theory reflects a paradigm shift from the medical model of disability, which views disabilities as individual deficits, to a social model, which sees societal barriers as the primary impediments to full participation (Rademaker et al., 2020). IET also emphasizes the importance of individualized support for students, including differentiated instruction and assistive technologies, to ensure that each student has access to the resources they need to succeed (Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

While inclusive education theory has gained widespread acceptance, challenges persist in its implementation. Resource constraints, lack of teacher training, and resistance to change are some of the barriers that hinder its full realization (Yada et al., 2022). Nonetheless, research consistently highlights the numerous benefits of inclusive education, including better academic outcomes, enhanced social skills, and more positive attitudes toward diversity (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2019).

Person-Environment Fit Theory (PEFT)

The Person-Environment Fit Theory (PEFT), proposed by Powell Lawton in 1983, focuses on the dynamic interaction between individuals and their environments. The theory suggests that optimal functioning occurs when there is a good match between an individual's characteristics (e.g., cognitive abilities, emotional needs) and the environmental demands (Andela & van Der Doef, 2019). In an educational context, this alignment is crucial for creating inclusive environments that meet the diverse needs of students, particularly those with special needs and disabilities.

PEFT highlights the importance of adapting educational settings, including assessment practices, to suit the specific requirements of individual learners (Deng & Yao, 2020).

When there is a misalignment, or "lack of fit," between the person and the environment, individuals may experience stress and disengagement, which can impede their academic performance (Beenen & Arbaugh, 2019). The theory emphasizes the need to design educational environments and assessment methods that accommodate diverse learning styles, socio-emotional needs, and physical requirements. This adaptability is essential for fostering a positive educational experience for students with disabilities.

4.1 Legal Frameworks and Policy Support

In many countries, inclusive education policies are underpinned by legal frameworks that advocate for the rights of students with disabilities. For instance, R.A. 7277, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons in the Philippines, underscores the need for equal access to education and mandates the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities (NCDA, 2020). Similarly, R.A. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, emphasizes inclusive education and individualized learning, particularly for students with special needs (Brillantes et al., 2019). These legal frameworks provide a foundation for inclusive education and guide the development of assessment practices that ensure fairness and equity for all students.

Additionally, DepEd Order No. 20, s. 2018, the Policy Guidelines on the Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities in Basic Education, sets specific guidelines for the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream educational settings, stressing the importance of creating accessible learning environments and providing individualized support (DepEd, 2018). These guidelines directly influence how assessments are conducted and how accommodations are made to ensure equitable evaluation and placement of students with special needs.

4.2 Related Studies

Several studies have explored various aspects of inclusive education and assessment practices, providing insights into the effectiveness of different strategies and identifying barriers to successful implementation.

4.2.1 Inclusive Education and Teacher Perceptions

Research by Woodcock & Jones (2020) explored the attitudes and beliefs of Special Education (SpEd) teachers toward inclusive education. Their study highlighted the importance of teacher self-efficacy and belief in the potential for successful inclusion, which directly affects the effectiveness of inclusive practices, including assessment. Teachers who believe in the efficacy of inclusive education are more likely to implement personalized and differentiated assessment practices that cater to diverse student needs.

4.2.2 Challenges in Inclusive Education

A study by Navarro-Mateu et al. (2019) identified key challenges faced by teachers in inclusive settings. These include a lack of training, insufficient resources, and the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The study emphasizes that, while inclusive education holds many potential benefits, effective implementation requires overcoming these significant challenges. The study suggests that teachers need ongoing

professional development and support to adapt assessment practices that ensure the inclusion of students with special needs.

4.2.3 Assessment and Educational Placement

Research by Kurth et al. (2019) examined the factors influencing educational placement decisions for students with disabilities. The study found that assessment practices were often insufficient in considering the individual needs of students, particularly in terms of the supports and services they required. It also revealed that educational placements were sometimes determined based on factors like available resources, staffing, and budget, rather than the actual needs of the students. This misalignment underscores the importance of developing more inclusive and comprehensive assessment tools that can guide appropriate educational placement decisions.

4.2.4 Holistic Assessment for Special Needs Students- A study by Lindner & Schwab (2020) examined the effectiveness of holistic assessment approaches for students with special needs. It found that assessments that consider not only academic performance but also social, emotional, and behavioral development provide a more accurate picture of a student's needs. The study argues that a holistic approach to assessment is essential for creating educational plans that support students' overall development and well-being, particularly in inclusive educational settings.

4.2.5 Teacher-Student Relationships and the Person-Environment Fit -A study by Lai et al. (2020) explored the role of teacher-student relationships in the context of PEFT. The research found that positive teacher-student relationships were crucial for enhancing the person-environment fit, particularly for students with special needs. Teachers who understand the unique needs of their students are better equipped to adjust assessment methods and provide the necessary accommodations, thereby improving the fit between the student and the educational environment.

5.Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the assessment practices for students with learning disabilities before their enrollment to senior high school in Babag National High School within the Department of Education Lapulapu City Division during the school year 2023-2024, as basis for the formulation of an Enhanced Pre-enrollment Assessment Guidelines.

It specifically sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the school's demographic profile as to the inventory of students with learning disabilities and their age?
2. What is the demographic profile of the respondent-groups in terms of:
 - 2.1 SpEd Teachers
 - 2.1.1 Educational background and specialization, and
 - 2.1.2 Experience level and attendance to relevant training or seminars?
 - 2.2 Parents/Guardians
 - 2.2.1 Civil status and number of children, and

2.2.2 Occupational status and attendance to any school activities?

3. What is the extent of practices in assessing the students with learning disabilities before their enrollment in senior high school as to the following aspects:

- 3.1.1 Special needs condition,
- 3.1.2 Educational needs,
- 3.1.3 Previous individualized educational plans,
- 3.1.4 Earlier achievements,
- 3.1.5 Students' Experiences, and
- 3.1.6 Support needed?

4. Do the respondent-groups have similar observations as to the extent of practices in assessing the students with learning disabilities before their enrollment to senior high school?

5. Based on the findings of the study, what particular assessment guidelines shall be formulated?

5.1 Statement of Hypothesis

H₀: The respondent-groups do not have similar observations as to the extent of practices in assessing the students with learning disabilities before their enrollment in the inclusive education program.

6.Research Methodology

The Research Methodology section outlines the systematic approach employed to ensure the rigor, transparency, and reliability of the study. A descriptive-correlation design was used to investigate the relationships between the responses of school personnel and parents/guardians regarding the assessment practices for students with special needs prior to their enrollment in an inclusive education program. This design was chosen because it allows for exploring associations between variables without manipulation, making it suitable for examining the perspectives of both respondent groups. The research followed the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which structured the study: the Input Box focused on gathering demographic data of schools, school personnel, and parents/guardians, as well as the extent of current assessment practices for students with special needs. The Process Box outlined the sequence of activities, including the distribution of request letters, informed consent procedures, administration of the survey, data collection, and subsequent statistical analysis. The final Output Box presented the formulation of Pre-Enrollment Assessment Guidelines based on the research findings.

Data collection was conducted using a survey questionnaire, designed to capture the perspectives of both school personnel and parents/guardians on the assessment practices for students with special needs. Once completed, the responses were subjected to statistical analysis to identify relationships and patterns between the observations of the two respondent groups. The analysis focused on comparing the alignment between school personnel's and parents' views on the extent of assessment practices. Data was then analyzed and interpreted to address the research questions, and the findings were presented through descriptive statistics and visual representations such as tables and charts. The study's ultimate goal was to generate evidence-based Pre-Enrollment

Assessment Guidelines that could inform and improve the assessment processes for students with special needs, enhancing the inclusion of these students in appropriate educational settings

7. Research Environment

The research was conducted at Babag National High School (BNHS), a public secondary school located in Barangay Babag, Lapu-Lapu City, under the Department of Education-Lapu-Lapu City Division. BNHS was selected due to its large student population, with 2,153 enrollees, and its established inclusive education program, which has been operational for several years. The school serves 12 students with special needs or disabilities and is staffed by 68 general education teachers and 5 non-teaching personnel. Facilities include 30 classrooms, a Guidance office with a counseling room, computer and science laboratories, a clinic, and a school canteen, though some essential facilities are still lacking. The school's long-standing commitment to inclusive education made it an appropriate locale for this study, which aimed to investigate assessment practices for students with special needs before their enrollment in inclusive programs.

Post-Survey Phase: Upon completion of the survey, the collected data were processed for statistical analysis and interpretation.

8.1 Statistical Treatment

To ensure the reliability and accuracy of the research findings, the raw data were subjected to the following statistical tools:

Frequency Count: Used for tallying occurrences, especially for demographic profiling.

Simple Percentage: Calculated to express proportions in the demographic profiles of special education teachers and parents/guardians.

Weighted Mean: Employed to compute the average response for scaled interval data from the survey.

Pearson's r: Used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the responses of teachers and parents regarding the school's assessment practices for students with special needs.

8.2 Scoring Procedures

The scoring matrix below was used to evaluate the school's assessment practices for students with special needs:

| Scale | Scoring Range | Response Category | Description |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|---|
| 4 | 3.25 – 4.00 | Fully Observed | The assessment practices comprehensively address the needs of students with special needs and disabilities. |
| 3 | 2.50 – 3.24 | Observed | The assessment practices adequately address the needs of students with special needs and disabilities. |
| 2 | 1.75 – 2.49 | Fairly Observed | The assessment practices partially address the needs of students with special needs and disabilities. |
| 1 | 1.00 – 1.74 | Not Observed | The assessment practices do not adequately address the needs of students with special needs and disabilities. |

9. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Students with Learning Disabilities

| Age Range | ASD | HIS | LD | VI | Others | Total |
|-----------|-----|-----|----|----|--------|-------|
| 29–31 | – | – | – | – | 1 | 1 |
| 17–19 | 2 | 4 | 3 | – | 1 | 10 |
| Subtotal | 2 | 4 | 3 | – | 2 | 11 |

This table shows that **91%** (10 out of 11) of students with learning disabilities are in the **17–19 age group**. **Hearing and Speech Impairment (HIS)** is the most common condition, accounting for **36%** of the students. Only **1 student** is in the **29–31 age group**, suggesting potential gaps in services for older students, as seen in previous studies where older children with disabilities are less likely to attend school (Singal et al., 2020).

Table 2: SpEd Teachers' Educational background and Specialization in ASD

8. Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering process was carried out in three phases to ensure the study's rigor and credibility:

Preliminary Phase: Approval letters for conducting the study were sent to relevant authorities from the Department of Education and the school. Informed consent forms were distributed to respondents for review and confirmation.

Survey-Taking Phase: A questionnaire was administered to the respondents after a brief orientation. The orientation covered the study's purpose, a refresher on data privacy protections, and instructions on completing the three-part questionnaire. Respondents were allotted a maximum of 30 minutes to complete the survey.

| Educational Background | Specialization in ASD (Freq.) | % |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Doctorate degree holder | 1 | 2.86 |
| With units in doctorate program | 2 | 5.71 |
| Master's degree holder | 10 | 28.57 |
| With units in Master's program | 12 | 34.29 |
| College graduate | 10 | 28.57 |
| Total | 35 | 100.00 |

Among **35 SpEd teachers**, **62.86%** hold **Master's degrees** or have **graduate-level coursework**. **2.86%** have a Doctorate. This high level of education supports previous research linking teacher expertise to better outcomes for students with special needs (Majoko, 2019; Admiraal et al., 2021)

Table 3: SpEd Teachers' Experience Level and Training Attendance

| Experience Level | Training Attendance | Frequency (%) |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1–3 years | Attended specialized training | 50% |
| 4–6 years | No training or minimal training | 30% |
| 7+ years | Attended regular seminars/workshops | 20% |
| Total | | 100% |

Of the teachers surveyed, **50%** with **1–3 years of experience** attended specialized training, while **30%** with **4–6 years** had limited or no training. Regular professional development is vital, as studies suggest newer teachers benefit most from targeted training (Byrd & Alexander, 2020), while more experienced teachers may need more consistent updates (Majoko, 2019).

Table 4: Experience Level and Attendance to Relevant Training or Seminars

| Disability Type | Novice | Intermediate | Experienced | Expert | Total |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|--------|-----------|
| Specific Learning Disability | 1 (1.39%) | 4 (5.56%) | 1 (1.39%) | – | 6 (8.33%) |
| Autism Spectrum Disorder | 1 (1.39%) | 2 (2.78%) | 1 (1.39%) | – | 4 (5.56%) |
| Emotional Disturbances | 2 (2.78%) | 3 (4.17%) | – | – | 5 (6.94%) |

| Disability Type | Novice | Intermediate | Experienced | Expert | Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Speech/Language Impairment | 1 (1.39%) | 2 (2.78%) | 1 (1.39%) | 1 (1.39%) | 5 (6.94%) |
| Deafness (only) | 2 (2.78%) | 6 (8.33%) | – | – | 8 (11.11%) |
| Other disabilities (e.g., VI) | 1–3% | 50% | 6.94% | 23.61% | |

This table shows the training attendance of teachers by experience level, highlighting that **41.67%** are novices and **50%** are intermediate-level, with only **6.94%** at the experienced/expert level. The most common training attended concerns **deafness** and **emotional disturbances**, suggesting that training is often focused on high-incidence disabilities. However, the **23.61%** of teachers who have not attended any relevant training could hinder the effective assessment and placement of students. Previous studies highlight the need for targeted professional development to ensure teachers are equipped to identify and support a wide range of learning disabilities (Aktan, 2020; Adewumi & Mosito, 2019)

Table 5: Civil Status and Number of Children

| Civil Status | Only Child | 2-3 Children | 4-5 Children | 6+ Children | Total |
|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Married | 1 (2.86%) | 17 (48.57%) | 5 (14.29%) | 4 (11.43%) | 17 (77.15%) |
| Single | – | – | 4 (11.43%) | – | 4 (11.43%) |
| Widow/Widower | 1 (2.86%) | – | – | – | 1 (2.86%) |
| Single Parent | – | 2 (5.71%) | 1 (2.86%) | – | 3 (8.57%) |

77.15% of respondents are **married**, with the majority (48.57%) having **2–3 children**. Larger families (4+ children) represent **28.57%** of the sample, while **11.43%** are single parents. This demographic suggests that families with **fewer children** are more likely to provide stable environments for students with learning disabilities, while **larger families** may face resource constraints. The **single-parent** and **widow/widower** households, though smaller in number, may require more targeted support to ensure the successful educational placement of their children. Research indicates that family instability and size can influence children's educational outcomes (Brand et al., 2019; AlSaleh et al., 2021).

Table 6: Occupational Status and Attendance to PTA Meetings

| Occupational Status | PTA Meeting Attendance | Frequency (%) |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Manager Level | 1 (2.86%) | (2.86%) |
| Professional Level | 6 (17.14%) | (17.14%) |
| Technician Level | 4 (11.43%) | (11.43%) |
| Clerical Level | 6 (17.14%) | (17.14%) |
| Others | 18 (51.43%) | (51.43%) |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

The majority of parents attending PTA meetings are from the "Others" category, which includes workers from skilled trades and informal labor, making up **51.43%**. **Professional** and **clerical** workers also represent **34.28%** of attendees. This suggests a significant portion of parents involved in school activities come from diverse and potentially lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Such involvement could be influenced by work schedules, as parents from lower-income sectors may face greater challenges in balancing work and school activities. Schools may need to offer flexible participation options to better engage parents and support their children's educational success (Hornby & Lafaele, 2023; Wilder, 2023).

Table 7: Assessment of Special Needs Condition

| Indicators | \bar{x}_T (SpEd Teachers) | \bar{x}_P (Parents) | \bar{x}_A (Average) | VD |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 1. The school provides a range of assessment tools designed to identify various types of special needs and disabilities accurately. | 2.2 | 2.8 | 2.5 | OB |
| 2. School personnel involve parents, specialized professionals, and other relevant stakeholders in the assessment process. | 2.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 | OB |
| 3. Assessment plans are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student, considering factors such as cognitive, physical, sensory, and emotional abilities. | 2.3 | 3.1 | 2.7 | OB |
| 4. Assessments are promptly conducted upon identification of potential special needs or disabilities, ensuring | 2.3 | 3.0 | 2.7 | OB |

| Indicators | \bar{x}_T (SpEd Teachers) | \bar{x}_P (Parents) | \bar{x}_A (Average) | VD |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| timely intervention and support. | | | | |
| 5. The school maintains detailed records of assessment outcomes, progress reports, and interventions to inform decision-making and facilitate continuity of care. | 2.3 | 3.3 | 2.8 | OB |
| Aggregate Weighted Mean | 2.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 | OB |

The results indicate that both SpEd teachers and parents agree that the school's assessment practices are generally observed, with an aggregate weighted mean of **2.8** (observed). The slight difference between the perspectives of SpEd teachers and parents could suggest that parents perceive the assessment process to be more effective than teachers do. This discrepancy may be due to the parents' limited exposure to the actual procedures or a more optimistic view of the school's efforts.

The involvement of various stakeholders, such as parents and specialized professionals, is crucial to ensure that the assessment process is holistic and considers all facets of a student's abilities. This aligns with best practices in inclusive education, which emphasize the importance of a collaborative approach to identifying students' needs (Florian, 2019)

.Additionally, the emphasis on timely assessments and record-keeping supports the need for data-driven decision-making to ensure continuity of care for students with special needs (Kenny et al.,2020)

A study by Rosyadi et al. (2021) emphasized that the identification and early assessment of students' special needs is essential to providing appropriate interventions and support. Furthermore, previous research by Florian (2019) highlighted the importance of individualized strategies and the use of diverse assessment tools in inclusive settings to ensure that every student's unique needs are adequately met.

Table 8: Assessment of Educational Needs

| Indicators | \bar{x}_T (SpEd Teachers) | \bar{x}_P (Parents) | \bar{x}_A (Average) | VD |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|
| 1. The school utilizes a variety of assessment tools to evaluate the educational needs of students, including academic, social, emotional, and behavioral domains. | 2.0 | 3.2 | 2.6 | OB |
| 2. The school identifies and plans for necessary adaptations and | 2.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 | OB |

| Indicators | $\bar{x}T$ (SpEd Teachers) | $\bar{x}P$ (Parents) | $\bar{x}A$ (Average) | VD |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| accommodations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment methods. | | | | |
| 3. There are formal processes in place to facilitate the transition of students from specialized programs to inclusive settings. | 2.3 | 3.3 | 2.8 | OB |
| 4. The school implements regular progress monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions. | 2.2 | 3.2 | 2.7 | OB |
| 5. Families are involved in the assessment process, providing insights, observations, and concerns regarding their child's needs. | 2.3 | 3.3 | 2.8 | OB |
| Aggregate Weighted Mean | 2.3 | 3.2 | 2.8 | OB |

The data shows that both SpEd teachers and parents view the school's efforts in assessing the educational needs of students positively, with an average weighted mean of **2.8** (observed). However, there is a clear difference in how SpEd teachers and parents rate family involvement in the assessment process. Teachers rated family involvement somewhat lower than parents did, suggesting that there may be room for further integration of families in the assessment and planning processes.

The use of diverse assessment tools that cover academic, social, emotional, and behavioral domains is critical to ensuring that all aspects of a student's needs are addressed. According to Florian (2019), a comprehensive assessment that includes these different areas allows for better tailoring of educational interventions, which is vital in an inclusive setting. Moreover, the formal processes for transitions from specialized to inclusive settings, as well as the regular monitoring of progress, align with inclusive education practices that aim to ensure continuous development and support for students with disabilities.

Florian (2019) emphasizes the importance of using various assessment methods to ensure that the diverse needs of students are properly addressed. Additionally, research by Hornby and Lafaele (2023) indicates that parental involvement in the assessment process positively influences the educational experience of students, highlighting the need for more collaborative efforts between schools and families.

Table 9: Assessment of Previous IEPs

| Indicators | $\bar{x}T$ (SpEd Teachers) | $\bar{x}P$ (Parents) | $\bar{x}A$ (Average) | VD |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Previous IEPs are reviewed thoroughly as part of the assessment process to understand the student's learning history and progress. | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.8 | OB |
| 2. The school consults previous IEPs in developing new educational plans to ensure continuity of support. | 2.5 | 3.2 | 2.9 | OB |
| 3. Teachers and parents collaboratively discuss and update previous IEPs to adjust educational goals as needed. | 2.2 | 3.0 | 2.6 | OB |
| Aggregate Weighted Mean | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.8 | OB |

The findings from Table 9 suggest that both SpEd teachers and parents generally agree that the school makes efforts to review previous Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) as part of the assessment process, with an average weighted mean of **2.8** (observed). However, there is some room for improvement, particularly in the area of collaboration between teachers and parents in updating and adjusting the IEPs.

The consultation of previous IEPs is essential in ensuring that there is continuity of support for students, especially those transitioning from specialized to inclusive educational settings. This practice is supported by research indicating that continuity in educational planning significantly enhances students' academic and social development (Carballo et al., 2021). The involvement of both teachers and parents in discussing and updating the IEPs also ensures that the plans remain relevant and responsive to the student's evolving needs.

Table 10: Assessing Experiences

| Indicators | $\bar{x}T$ | $\bar{x}P$ | $\bar{x}A$ (Average) | VD |
|--|------------|------------|----------------------|----|
| Surveys gather insights into students' experiences and challenges. | 2.3 | 3.2 | 2.8 | OB |
| Feedback from parents on perceptions of inclusivity and support. | 2.4 | 3.4 | 2.9 | OB |
| Teachers document insights on student experiences. | 2.2 | 3.3 | 2.8 | OB |
| Reviews of incident reports to identify concerns. | 2.5 | 3.3 | 2.9 | OB |

| Indicators | \bar{x}_T | \bar{x}_P | \bar{x}_A (Average) | VD |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Records of accommodations and their effectiveness are reviewed. | 2.4 | 3.1 | 2.8 | OB |
| Aggregate Weighted Mean | 2.4 | 3.3 | 2.9 | OB |

The overall average score of 2.9 suggests that the practices for assessing student experiences in previous educational settings are somewhat effective but need further development. Teachers rated the assessment process lower than parents in almost all areas. For example, parents rated the surveys and feedback mechanisms at an average of 3.2, while teachers rated them at 2.3, reflecting a 0.9-point difference. This disparity suggests that teachers might be more critical of these assessment tools, potentially due to their practical challenges in observing or interpreting students' lived experiences in a consistent manner.

The review of incident reports and accommodations (with averages of 2.9 for both) indicates that these mechanisms are important but underutilized or insufficiently detailed in certain cases. In line with research by Chen et al. (2019), students with disabilities often face challenges in social engagement, which could be addressed more effectively with improved experience assessments. Understanding these experiences is key for ensuring smoother transitions into inclusive environments.

Table 11: Assessing Support Needs

| Indicators | \bar{x}_T | \bar{x}_P | \bar{x}_A (Average) | VD |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Surveys assess academic, behavioral, and physical support needs. | 2.3 | 3.1 | 2.7 | OB |
| Collaborative planning meetings involve teachers, therapists, and parents. | 2.2 | 3.1 | 2.7 | OB |
| Medical and therapeutic needs are reviewed for appropriate support. | 2.3 | 3.0 | 2.7 | OB |
| Transition plans for continuity of support services are in place. | 2.2 | 3.0 | 2.6 | OB |
| The school assesses physical accessibility for students. | 2.3 | 2.9 | 2.6 | OB |
| Aggregate Weighted Mean | 2.3 | 3.0 | 2.7 | OB |

The data reveal a consistent discrepancy between teacher and parent evaluations, with an average of 2.7, indicating that while schools do have systems in place to assess support needs, these are perceived to be inconsistent. Teachers provided ratings around 2.3 for most indicators, while parents rated these mechanisms around 3.0, demonstrating a 0.7-point difference. This reflects a perception gap that suggests schools may need to engage more thoroughly with teachers to ensure that support services are effectively communicated and implemented.

Furthermore, the transition plans and assessments for physical accessibility (average scores of 2.6 and 2.7, respectively) indicate that while schools recognize the importance of these factors, their

implementation might be insufficient or not fully realized. As Francisco et al. (2020) point out, the challenge lies in the adequacy of resources to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities, which could explain the relatively moderate scores for these areas.

The discrepancies in teacher and parent ratings emphasize the need for better communication and a more holistic approach to addressing support needs across all dimensions—academic, social, behavioral, and physical.

Table 12: Correlating Viewpoints on Assessment Practices

| Variables Under Inference | \bar{x} | df | Comp | rho | p-value | Results | Decision |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----|--------|---------|-----------------|------------------|----------|
| SpEd Teachers' Viewpoints | 2.3 | 68 | -0.235 | 0.1743* | Not significant | Do not reject Ho | |
| Parents/Guardians' Viewpoints | 3.1 | | | | | | |

The correlation coefficient of -0.235 indicates a weak inverse relationship between the viewpoints of SpEd teachers and parents. The p-value of 0.1743 confirms that this correlation is not statistically significant, suggesting that the differences in perceptions between these two groups are not strong enough to conclude a meaningful relationship. Teachers rated the overall assessment practices at 2.3, whereas parents rated them at 3.1, which represents a difference of 0.8 points. This further emphasizes the disconnection in perceptions between the two groups.

The lack of alignment in viewpoints between parents and teachers is consistent with research by Ilik & Er (2019), which found that collaborative efforts between parents and teachers are often hindered by differing perceptions and understanding of the child's needs. This research indicates the necessity for greater alignment in expectations and practices between parents and educators to ensure that all support systems are effectively put in place. This gap in alignment could be critical in making accurate and informed decisions regarding the student's needs and placement in inclusive settings.

Findings

Demographic Profile

Students with learning disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Hearing and Speech Impairment (HIS), and Visual Impairment (VI), were primarily teenagers. The majority of SpEd teachers had advanced education, but many lacked specific training in the field of special education. Parents were mostly married, with two to three children, and engaged in various occupations.

Assessment Practices

The findings revealed that parents consistently rated assessment practices higher than SpEd teachers, particularly in evaluating students' special needs. There was a general consensus that assessment practices are observed, but the extent varied across the indicators. For example, the evaluation of Individualized

Education Plans (IEPs) showed a moderate level of engagement, while assessing students' previous academic achievements and functional skills was also moderately observed.

Perception Gaps

A weak inverse correlation (-0.235) between SpEd teachers' and parents' viewpoints on assessment practices was observed, though it was not statistically significant ($p = 0.1743$). This suggests that teachers and parents view the effectiveness of the assessments differently, with parents generally rating the practices more favorably.

Recommendations

1. **Standardize and Optimize Assessment Practices** Schools should develop consistent and comprehensive assessment tools to evaluate students' academic history, IEPs, functional skills, and behavioral development. This would provide a more accurate and holistic understanding of students' needs.
2. **Enhance Teacher Training**-SpEd teachers should undergo more specialized training to improve their ability to assess students with learning disabilities and communicate effectively with parents.
3. **Improve Collaboration with Parents**-Schools should increase collaboration with parents through regular meetings and updates on their child's assessment results. This will help align teacher and parent perceptions and ensure that students' needs are fully understood and addressed.
4. **Adopt Pre-enrollment Assessment Guidelines**-Implement the proposed Pre-enrollment Assessment Guidelines to formalize and improve the pre-enrollment process for students with learning disabilities, ensuring a smoother transition into inclusive education.

Acknowledgements

We, the authors, would like to express our sincere gratitude to our Professors for their invaluable guidance and support throughout this research. Our thanks also go to the College of Education at Cebu Technological University, the faculty and staff of the Special Education Department, and the parents and SpEd teachers who participated in the study.

We are deeply appreciative of the encouragement and support from our families, friends, and peers. This research would not have been possible without the collective efforts of all those involved.

Author contributions

In the study titled *Evaluating Inclusivity: A Critical Analysis of School Assessment Practices for Students with Learning Disabilities Before Enrollment to Senior High School*, Karl R. Altubar led the conceptualization and methodology design, overseeing the entire research process. Regina E. Sitoy contributed significantly to the literature review, survey design, and data collection, ensuring a thorough analysis of assessment practices. Irene O. Mamites, Rufa B. Cañadilla, and Jefanny P. Pino played a key role in data curation, validation, and the development of the research framework, providing critical insights into the implementation of inclusive educational practices. Raymund C. Espina contributed to the statistical analysis and interpretation of results, as well as the development of recommendations for

improving assessment practices.

Together, the authors collaborated in drafting the initial manuscript, refining the research questions, conducting interviews, and editing the document. This collective effort from conceptualization to data analysis and final manuscript preparation was essential to shaping the study's findings and ensuring its quality and relevance to inclusive education.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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