

## The Role Of Professional Development In Enhancing Pedagogical Practices Of Teachers In Inclusive Classroom

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**Abstract:** This research aimed to assess the role of professional development in enhancing pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive education at Mambaling National High School in the Division of Cebu City for school year 2024-2025 as basis for an action plan. Among the 42 respondents, the majority were female and the largest age groups are 44–48 years and 34–38 years. In terms of highest educational attainment, majority of the teachers, 71.43% (30 individuals), have attained a master's level of education. Lastly, on the training attended, only 23.81% (10 individuals) have attended training. The extent of implementation of instructional improvement programs and services for learners with special needs had an aggregate mean score of 2.96 (SD = 0.84) reflects that, overall, the instructional improvement programs are being implemented. While the level of respondents' pedagogical practices for educating learners with special needs at Mambaling National High School in the Division of Cebu City, with an aggregate mean of 3.31 (SD = 0.70) the respondents demonstrated a high level of competence in implementing pedagogical practices for inclusive education. With regards to the level of challenges that teachers face in accessing professional development programs, the most significant challenges are related to the unavailability of relevant professional development opportunities for inclusive education (WM = 3.33, SD = 0.85) and the lack of financial resources to attend such programs (WM = 3.36, SD = 0.73), both categorized as "Extremely Challenged." Using the Pearson product moment correlation test, the study found out there is a moderate positive relationship between the implementation of instructional programs and the pedagogical practices for the education of learners with special needs, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and indicating a statistically significant relationship. Additionally, the test on the relationship between the implementation of instructional programs and the challenges in accessing professional development programs showed a weak negative correlation between the two variables, also leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and confirming a statistically significant relationship. To enhance the connection between program implementation and effective pedagogical practices, it is essential to provide specialized training on inclusive teaching strategies. Additionally, the development and implementation of a comprehensive action plan are strongly recommended to improve instructional practices and better address the diverse needs of students with special needs.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive education, instructional practices, professional development inclusive practices, educational programs, action plan, descriptive-correlational, Mambaling National High School, Division of Cebu City*

### 1.Introduction

Inclusive education has become a cornerstone of global educational policy, with an increasing emphasis on ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students, regardless of their individual needs or disabilities. This educational approach acknowledges the diversity of students, including those with disabilities, and aims to integrate them into mainstream classrooms to provide a holistic learning experience. However, the successful implementation of inclusive education is contingent on the readiness and effectiveness of educators in addressing the varied academic, social, and developmental needs of their students. This is particularly challenging when instructional environments and programs are not specifically designed to accommodate students with disabilities or those from diverse educational backgrounds. In the Philippines, significant strides have been made to support inclusive education through initiatives such as the "Inclusive

Education for All" program, which underscores the country's

commitment to promoting inclusivity in education. This program, in partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), focuses on providing teachers with the essential skills and knowledge to establish inclusive learning environments. The initiative aims to equip educators with strategies to effectively address the needs of students with disabilities and other marginalized groups, fostering an educational culture that promotes diversity and inclusivity.

Central to the success of these inclusive education initiatives is the professional development of teachers. The role of professional development in enhancing pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms is critical. Training programs designed to enhance educators' capacity for differentiated instruction, classroom management, and

inclusive lesson planning are essential in ensuring that all students—regardless of their abilities—have access to quality education. These programs help educators shift their mindset towards inclusive education and prepare them to effectively integrate students with disabilities into general education classrooms. By focusing on both academic and social aspects of student development, these professional development programs aim to create supportive learning environments that not only address the academic needs of students with disabilities but also foster their emotional and social well-being.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist, particularly in schools like Mambaling National High School, where the implementation of inclusive education practices has yet to reach its full potential. Teachers at these institutions often face difficulties in adapting their teaching methods to meet the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities, due to insufficient training or support. As such, the role of professional development programs becomes crucial in enhancing teachers' pedagogical practices and ensuring that they are equipped with the tools necessary for successful inclusion. This study seeks to explore the impact of these professional development programs on the teaching practices of educators at Mambaling National High School, with the aim of understanding how such programs contribute to the promotion of inclusivity and academic success for students with diverse needs.

## 2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

**2.1 Theoretical Framework**-The theoretical framework for this study draws on several established theories to understand how professional development enhances the pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms. These theories are directly relevant to the context of the Philippines and its evolving educational landscape, particularly for teachers working with diverse learners in inclusive environments.

**Constructivist Learning Theory:** This theory suggests that learners actively construct knowledge through their interactions and experiences, emphasizing the importance of a student-centered approach (McLeod, 2024). In inclusive classrooms, where students possess diverse needs, this theory supports the idea that teachers should use strategies that encourage active engagement and problem-solving. Professional development initiatives that align with constructivist principles can enable teachers to develop more flexible, adaptive teaching methods that accommodate the varied needs of their students (Matthews, 2003). The emphasis on collaborative learning in teacher professional development allows for the exchange of ideas and strategies that can be directly applied in inclusive settings (Magirius, 2018).

**Social Learning Theory:** According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, learning occurs through observation, imitation, and interaction with others (Generoso, 2024). This theory highlights the importance of peer collaboration in professional development. Teachers can learn new instructional strategies by observing colleagues in action, and the social aspect of learning fosters a shared responsibility for improving teaching practices. For teachers in inclusive classrooms, the ability to engage in collaborative practices is essential for developing effective strategies that cater to students' diverse needs (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). Professional development programs that incorporate these social learning opportunities can help teachers refine their skills and adopt new techniques for creating inclusive learning environments (Germuth, 2016).

**Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy):** Andragogy, as articulated by Knowles (O'Neill, 2024), focuses on the distinctive needs of adult learners. Teachers, as adult learners, benefit from professional development that is self-directed, experience-based, and relevant to their teaching context (Chan & Uhlmann, 2020). In inclusive classrooms, this theory suggests that professional development programs should empower teachers to make informed decisions about their learning, encourage the application of theory to practice, and allow for reflection on their teaching practices. Tailored professional development experiences that recognize teachers' autonomy can lead to more effective pedagogical changes in inclusive education settings (Bouchrika, 2024).

**Theory of Change:** The Theory of Change provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how professional development can lead to measurable improvements in teaching practices (Goldsworthy, 2021). By focusing on the necessary steps to achieve long-term educational goals, the Theory of Change highlights how professional development can lead to both individual and systemic improvements in inclusive education. In the context of the Philippines, this framework is especially important for understanding how professional development initiatives, if well-designed, can enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and support inclusive education (Barkat, 2019). Teachers who undergo targeted professional development can be better prepared to address the needs of students with disabilities, thus improving educational outcomes for all students (Crispino & Rocha, 2021).

**Diffusion of Innovations Theory:** This theory explains how new ideas or practices spread across a community over time (Green & Senge, 2011). In the context of professional development, this theory helps explain how innovations in teaching practices, particularly those aimed at inclusivity, are adopted by teachers. The theory emphasizes that for effective change to occur, teachers must see the value in the new practice, and it must align with their existing beliefs and

classroom needs (Ferster, 2017). Teachers in inclusive classrooms often face challenges in adopting new teaching practices, so professional development programs must be designed to ensure that new strategies are easy to implement and relevant to their everyday teaching context (Funnell & Rogers, 2011).

**2.2 Conceptual Framework** The conceptual framework for this study integrates the aforementioned theories to *illustrate the relationship between professional development, teachers' pedagogical practices, and inclusive education*. The framework envisions a process where professional development leads to enhanced pedagogical practices, which, in turn, result in improved learning outcomes for students with diverse needs. This process involves the following key components:

**Professional Development Programs:** Professional development programs are the central element of this framework. For teachers in inclusive classrooms, professional development should focus on equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to address the diverse needs of students. *This includes training on differentiated instruction, the use of assistive technologies, and strategies for fostering inclusive learning environments* (Izak, 2024). These programs should be collaborative, reflective, and adaptable, drawing on constructivist, social learning, and adult learning principles (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

**Pedagogical Practices:** The enhancement of pedagogical practices is the primary outcome of effective professional development. The framework suggests that teachers who engage in well-designed professional development programs will adopt more inclusive teaching practices. This includes adapting instructional methods to support diverse learners, employing differentiated teaching strategies, and fostering an inclusive classroom culture that values all students' contributions (Almasa, 2020). *The application of the theories discussed—constructivism, social learning, and adult learning—facilitates the development of these pedagogical practices*.

**Inclusive Classroom:** The inclusive classroom is where these enhanced pedagogical practices are implemented. In this setting, teachers must use varied instructional methods that cater to students' individual learning needs, promoting equality and accessibility in education (Llego, 2022). The Theory of Change emphasizes that successful professional development must lead to concrete changes in the classroom, ensuring that teachers are better equipped to support all students, including those with disabilities or special educational needs (Reyes, 2023).

**Outcome for Students:** The ultimate goal of enhancing teachers' pedagogical practices through professional development is to improve student outcomes. The

framework suggests that as teachers adopt more inclusive and effective teaching strategies, the academic and social outcomes for students with diverse needs will improve. Students will benefit from learning environments that are tailored to their individual needs, fostering greater engagement, participation, and academic achievement (Alcoran-Alvarez et al., 2022).

This conceptual framework aligns with the *Philippine context, where educational reforms and laws, such as Republic Act 11650 (2022) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd, 2017)*, provide a foundation for the development of inclusive education policies. By drawing on these theories and practices, the framework offers a guide for understanding how professional development can lead to more effective teaching in inclusive classrooms, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

### 3. Legal Basis and Related Policies on Professional Development for Special Education Teachers in the Philippines

The legal framework supporting the professional development (PD) of educators in the Philippines is rooted in various legislative acts and policies designed to enhance the qualifications, welfare, and competencies of teachers. Among these, **Republic Act No. 4670 (The Magna Carta for Public School Teachers)**, enacted in 1966, serves as the foundational policy aimed at improving teachers' working conditions, securing their rights, and ensuring their professional growth. RA 4670 mandates the provision of continuing education opportunities for teachers, recognizing the necessity of professional development in enhancing instructional quality and teacher retention (Nazario, 2023). However, studies indicate that while this law has contributed to better social and economic status for teachers, challenges persist in areas such as inadequate salaries and excessive workloads, suggesting the need for further amendments to better support the welfare of educators (Alcoran-Alvarez et al., 2022).

Further strengthening the policy framework, **Republic Act No. 10533 (The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013)** mandates a comprehensive curriculum reform through the K-12 program, which emphasizes the need for continuous teacher development. This law requires ongoing PD initiatives to ensure that educators are well-equipped to meet the demands of the enhanced curriculum (ChanRobles Virtual Law Library). According to Violon (2024), the implementation of the K-12 program has been pivotal in improving the global competitiveness of the Philippine education system, though challenges remain, particularly in preparing educators for the expanded curriculum.

In addition, **Republic Act No. 9155 (The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001)** empowers local education

authorities and school leaders to take responsibility for the PD of teachers within their jurisdictions, fostering a decentralized governance structure that aims to improve education quality through locally tailored initiatives (Tiongzon et al., 2024). This decentralization is particularly relevant in ensuring that PD programs are aligned with local educational needs and priorities, fostering a more responsive education system.

The **DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017**, sets clear guidelines for the professional development of educators in the Philippines through the establishment of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The PPST framework focuses on enhancing teachers' competencies and aligns PD activities with national educational goals (Gepila, 2020). However, Banayo (2021) identifies challenges in the implementation of the PPST, such as gaps in resource allocation and the need for more robust training systems to ensure that PD is effectively implemented at the school level.

Moreover, **Republic Act No. 10912 (The Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016)** mandates that professionals, including educators, engage in ongoing professional development for the renewal of their licenses. This law underscores the importance of lifelong learning in maintaining professional competence and staying updated with contemporary trends and practices (Crispino, 2021). However, studies by Tulo and Lee (2022) highlight that while teachers recognize the value of PD, personal barriers, including time constraints and institutional limitations, often hinder full participation in PD activities.

***The role of PD in special education is critical due to the unique challenges faced by special education teachers, such as high job stress, resource scarcity, and student diversity.*** Research by Smith et al. (2023) underscores the positive impact of well-structured PD programs on improving instructional practices, especially when these programs are tailored to the specific needs of special education teachers. Additionally, Garcia et al. (2024) found that PD initiatives targeted at special education educators were instrumental in enhancing their competencies in managing diverse learning environments and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

*Studies further suggest that effective PD for special education teachers must be contextually relevant, incorporating active learning and peer collaboration to create a supportive environment that fosters continuous professional growth.* Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasize that PD programs which include hands-on, practical experience lead to more effective teaching practices and, consequently, improved student outcomes.

***Legal and policy frameworks provided by laws such as RA 4670, RA 10533, RA 9155, and RA 10912*** serve as vital

pillars in shaping the professional development landscape for educators in the Philippines. These policies ensure that teachers are not only legally supported but also equipped with the necessary resources and training to effectively meet the challenges of the classroom. Despite the progress made, there remains a need for ongoing reforms to address barriers to PD participation and resource gaps, especially in the context of special education. The future of teacher professional development in the Philippines lies in aligning these policies with the evolving educational needs and ensuring that PD programs are relevant, accessible, and inclusive for all educators.

#### **4 .Review of Related Literature**

**Professional development (PD)** plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' effectiveness and improving student outcomes globally. In the Philippines, several studies underscore the importance of tailored PD programs. Padillo et al. (2021) found that teachers who engage in contextually relevant PD activities tend to master various instructional competencies, which results in improved teaching practices. This observation is further supported by the work of Garcia et al. (2024), who note that PD initiatives aimed at addressing diverse learning environments are crucial for improving the instructional capabilities of teachers, particularly in the context of inclusive education. These studies emphasize that structured PD opportunities that focus on local educational needs can foster continuous teacher growth.

**Across Asia, the importance of PD for improving teacher quality is similarly recognized.** In a study conducted in India, Singh and Sukhpal (2020) highlighted that effective PD programs incorporating hands-on learning and collaborative experiences led to notable improvements in teachers' pedagogical approaches and student engagement. Furthermore, a study in Singapore by Tan and Chia (2018) demonstrated that PD focused on subject knowledge and pedagogical skills significantly improved classroom practices and teacher confidence, which in turn positively impacted student performance. These findings reflect a regional recognition of PD as essential to the professional growth of educators and the overall quality of education.

**On a broader scale, in the United States, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasized the essential components of PD, such as content-focused training, active learning, and collaboration among educators,** which have been shown to improve both teaching quality and student outcomes. Their research supports the notion that PD should be sustained over time and aligned with teachers' needs and school curricula. In addition, studies like those by Garet et al. (2001) and Desimone (2009) confirm that high-quality PD, which includes opportunities for collaboration and ongoing reflection, leads to significant improvements in teacher performance and student achievement. This research

suggests that PD, when effectively implemented, can be transformative for both educators and their students.

**Internationally**, the legal and policy frameworks governing PD also highlight its importance in ensuring educational equity and quality. In the U.S., for instance, the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA) mandates that teachers engage in professional development activities that enhance their knowledge and teaching skills. Similar policies exist in other countries, like **Republic Act No. 10912** in the Philippines, which mandates continuing professional development for educators to maintain their licenses. Despite the global recognition of PD's significance, challenges such as time constraints, lack of resources, and institutional barriers persist, as noted by Tulo and Lee (2022) in their study of CPD participation in the Philippines. These barriers are mirrored in global studies, which suggest that PD programs must be accessible, flexible, and relevant to the teachers' contexts to maximize engagement and impact.

### 5. Statement of the Problem

This research assessed the role of professional development in enhancing pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive education at *Mambaling National High School in the Division of Cebu City for school year 2024-2025 as basis for an action plan*.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. *What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:*

1.1. *age and gender,*

1.2. *highest educational attainment, and*

1.3. *attendance to trainings and seminars related to special education?*

2. *As perceived by the respondents, what is the extent of implementation of instructional improvement programs and services for learners with special needs in their school?*

3. *What is the level of respondents' pedagogical practices for the education of learners with special needs?*

4. *What is the level of challenges that the respondents encountered in accessing professional development program?*

5. *Is there a significant relationship between the:*

5.1 *implementation and pedagogical practices for the education of learners with special needs,*

5.2 *implementation and challenges in accessing professional development program?*

6. *Based on the study findings, what action plan may be proposed?*

### 5.1 Statement of Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**Ho1:** *There is no significant relationship between the implementation and pedagogical practices for the education of learners with special needs.*

**Ho2:** *There is no significant relationship between the implementation and challenges in accessing professional development program.*

### 6. Research Design and Flow of the Study

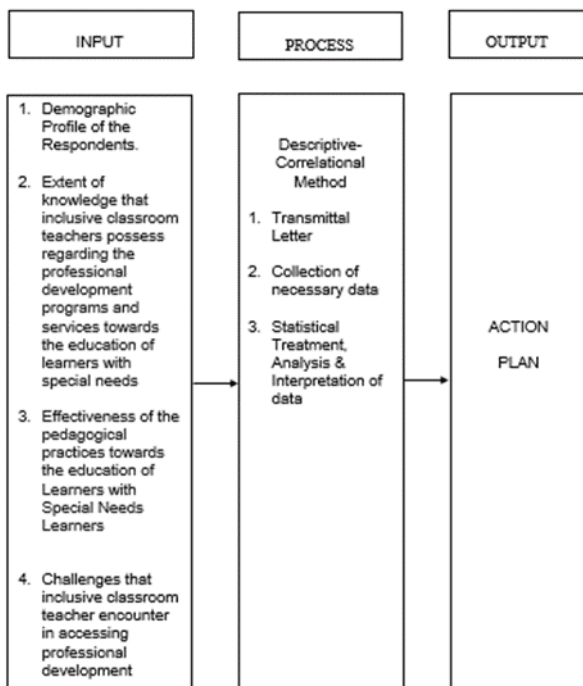
Research employs a **descriptive-correlational research design** to examine the relationship between professional development programs and the pedagogical practices of teachers in inclusive classrooms. A descriptive approach is used to assess the demographic profiles of teachers, including their age, gender, educational background, and teaching experience, as well as to describe the extent of their knowledge about professional development programs and their effectiveness in inclusive education. A **correlational design** will determine if there is a significant relationship between the teachers' knowledge of professional development programs and the effectiveness of their teaching methods for learners with special needs. By using this design, the study aims to gather data that will help identify areas for improvement in teaching practices and provide insights into how professional development initiatives can influence the pedagogical strategies employed in inclusive classrooms.

The **Input-Process-Output (IPO) model** will guide the flow of the study, ensuring a clear structure and methodology. The study's input phase will involve gathering essential data from teachers, including their demographic information and knowledge about professional development programs. This information will form the basis for understanding the context and participants' expertise in inclusive education. In the process phase, a modified questionnaire will be used to collect data from teachers, which will be analyzed using statistical methods. Finally, the output will include an action plan designed to enhance teachers' ability to effectively educate learners with special needs, based on the findings of the research. The action plan will provide targeted recommendations for improving professional development opportunities and pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms.

### 6.1 Instruments and Data Collection

The study will use a modified questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. This questionnaire will be designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on the teachers' demographic information, their familiarity with professional development programs, and their teaching practices for learners with special needs. The quantitative section will include Likert-scale items to assess the extent of teachers' knowledge about professional

development programs, while the qualitative section will explore their experiences and challenges with these programs. This combination of closed and open-ended questions will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing teachers' instructional practices in inclusive education.



The data collection process will involve administering the modified questionnaire to teachers at Mambaling National High School, Cebu City, after obtaining approval from the school administration. Teachers will be informed about the study's objectives and provided with sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. Once completed, the responses will be analyzed using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The data will be used to assess the effectiveness of professional development programs in improving teaching practices and to identify challenges faced by teachers in implementing these practices. The findings will be used to develop an actionable plan aimed at enhancing the teaching strategies and professional growth of educators in inclusive classrooms.

### 6.2 Ethical Considerations and Data Privacy

Ethical considerations and data privacy were prioritized in this study to protect participants' rights. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the study's purpose and voluntarily agreed to take part, with the option to withdraw at any time. The research was conducted fairly, ensuring participants' information remained confidential and anonymous. Data collection followed the guidelines of the National Privacy Commission under the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the protection of personal data. All personal information was handled carefully, following privacy rules to keep participants' data safe while promoting knowledge sharing

### 6.3 Statistical Treatment of Data

The data were analyzed using various statistical methods. **Frequency count** identified occurrences of specific variables, and **Simple Percentage** calculated the percentage of responses based on demographic details. **Weighted Mean** assessed teachers' knowledge and the effectiveness of their practices, while **Pearson Correlation** examined the relationship between professional development and teaching effectiveness. *Respondents completed a four-part questionnaire: demographics, implementation of training programs (rated on a four-point Likert scale), and their pedagogical practices (also rated on a four-point scale).* Rubrics were used to interpret responses on the extent of program implementation for learners with special needs.

### 7. Research Environment



The study was conducted at *Mambaling National High School, located in Cebu City, Philippines.* The school offers education from Grades 7 to 12, including specialized Senior High School tracks in General Academic Strands and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood programs, such as Home Economics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The school is committed to the principles of BESRA and "Education for All," with initiatives like the Alternative Learning System (ALS) to support out-of-school youth and provide opportunities for academic improvement through A&E Tests. Additionally, the school participates in various DepEd programs, including In-Service Training, Learning Action Cells (LAC), the Division of Responsibility Program (DORP), and the Child-Friendly School System, all aimed at



enhancing the quality of education. To support student performance, the school implements tutorial programs, ORV, and numeracy tests. In the most recent Quarterly Assessment, the school recorded strong performance in English, Filipino, and AP, though Science showed lower scores.

## 8. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of

### Data

**Table 1: Age and Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Age (in years)	Female (f)	Female (%)	Male (f)	Male (%)	Total (f)	Total (%)
Above 53	4	9.52	0	0.00	4	9.52
49–53	0	0.00	2	4.76	2	4.76
44–48	7	16.67	2	4.76	9	21.43
39–43	4	9.52	1	2.38	5	11.90
34–38	6	14.29	3	7.14	9	21.43
29–33	4	9.52	3	7.14	7	16.67
23–28	4	9.52	1	2.38	5	11.90
18–22	0	0.00	1	2.38	1	2.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>69.05</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>30.95</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data presented in **Table 1** highlights a gender imbalance in the inclusive education workforce at Mambaling National High School, with a predominant representation of female teachers (69.05%) compared to male teachers (30.95%). The most common age groups are **44–48 years** and **34–38 years**, comprising **21.43%** of the total respondents, with females outnumbering males in these categories. Conversely, younger teachers, particularly males aged **18–22 years**, are significantly underrepresented. These findings align with broader trends observed in previous studies, such as those by **Quadlin et al. (2023)**, which emphasize the persistence of gender disparities in education, particularly the underrepresentation of males in certain fields. Moreover, while women are increasingly pursuing education in diverse fields, challenges related to gender wage gaps and career advancement persist, suggesting that institutional and societal barriers may influence the recruitment and retention of male teachers in inclusive education. This data suggests a need for targeted strategies to promote gender balance and attract younger teachers, especially males, to ensure the sustainability and diversity of inclusive education programs.

**Table 2: Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents**

Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Doctorate Level	1	2.38
Master's Graduate	1	2.38
Master's Level	30	71.43
College Graduate	10	23.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2, The educational attainment of the inclusive education teachers at Mambaling National High School reflects a strong commitment to professional growth, with **71.43%** of respondents holding a **master's level** qualification. A significant portion, **23.81%**, are **college graduates**, and a small percentage, **2.38%**, have completed a **master's degree** and **doctorate-level** education, respectively. This distribution suggests that most teachers are dedicated to furthering their knowledge and expertise, particularly in the area of inclusive education. **Liu (2021)** highlights that higher educational attainment not only enhances personal human capital but also improves teaching effectiveness, including better classroom management, advanced instructional techniques, and creativity in delivering an inclusive learning experience. The data shows that these teachers are invested in their professional development, which is likely to positively impact their teaching practices and the quality of education they provide to students.

**Table 3: Respondents' Attendance to Training**

Attendance to Training	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Have Attended	10	23.81
Not Attended	32	76.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3 highlights the attendance to training sessions among the respondents. Only **23.81%** of the teachers have attended training programs, while a significant **76.19%** have not participated in any training. This suggests that a large proportion of teachers may not have sufficient access to professional development opportunities, which could limit their ability to incorporate innovative teaching methods and stay updated on effective practices, especially in the context of inclusive education. **According to Ahmed et al. (2021)**, training programs need to adapt to the changing educational landscape by offering practical and dynamic approaches. Teachers must be equipped with modern problem-solving strategies and tools to enhance student learning outcomes,

particularly in inclusive classroom settings. Therefore, there is a critical need to expand training opportunities for educators, particularly those involved in inclusive education, to enhance their readiness and ability to apply contemporary pedagogical strategies effectively.

**Table 4: Extent of Implementation of Instructional Improvement Programs and Services for Learners with Special Needs**

S/N	Indicators	W M	SD	Verbal Description
1	The school has academic interventions, curriculum adaptations, learning resource support, career and guidance counseling, and transition programs.	3.07	0.78	Implemented
2	The school has induction programs, career progression programs, and special programs through the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP).	3.19	0.86	Implemented
3	The school focuses on improving assessment strategies and content knowledge.	3.43	0.67	Highly Implemented
4	The school conducts workshops and seminars on inclusive education practices and strategies.	3.31	0.90	Highly Implemented
5	The school has programs specifically designed to equip teachers with skills to support learners with special needs.	2.24	0.85	Less Implemented
6	The school has training on effective behavior management techniques for students with special needs.	2.26	0.91	Less Implemented
7	The school has programs that introduce teachers to various assistive technologies to aid student learning.	2.86	0.98	Implemented

S/N	Indicators	W M	SD	Verbal Description
8	The school has training on how to adapt and differentiate the curriculum to meet diverse learning needs.	3.24	0.82	Implemented
9	The school has initiatives to enhance collaboration between teachers and parents for better student outcomes.	3.19	0.80	Implemented
10	The school conducts workshops focused on the mental health and well-being of both teachers and students.	2.79	0.81	Implemented
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		2.96		Implemented
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>		0.84		

Table 4 summarizes the extent of implementation of instructional improvement programs and services for learners with special needs at Mambaling National High School. The findings reveal that a majority of the programs are either **Implemented** or **Highly Implemented**, with the highest-rated programs being focused on improving assessment strategies and content knowledge (WM = 3.43) and conducting workshops on inclusive education practices (WM = 3.31). These areas reflect a strong commitment to enhancing inclusive education practices. However, the programs aimed at equipping teachers with the necessary skills to support learners with special needs (WM = 2.24) and behavior management techniques (WM = 2.26) are considered **Less Implemented**, indicating areas requiring improvement. The **aggregate mean score of 2.96** suggests that while the programs are generally being implemented, certain areas require more attention and enhancement to ensure effective support for all learners. These findings align with Paires et al. (2023), who emphasized the importance of structured collaboration and professional development opportunities for teachers in enhancing inclusive education practices. Improved collaboration and teacher training, as well as tailored programs for supporting students with special needs, are critical to fostering a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

**Table 5: Level of Respondents' Pedagogical Practices for the Education of Learners with Special Needs**



S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I implement academic interventions and curriculum adaptations for my students.	3.48	0.51	Highly Practiced
2	I apply improved assessment strategies and content knowledge in my classroom.	3.43	0.50	Highly Practiced
3	I support Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) using the skills I acquired from the trainings.	3.14	0.87	Practiced
4	I utilize the behavior management techniques that I learned.	3.24	0.79	Practiced
5	I integrate assistive technologies into my teaching practices.	3.10	0.88	Practiced
6	I adapt and differentiate the curriculum to meet diverse learning needs of my learners.	3.48	0.63	Highly Practiced
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		3.31		Highly Practiced
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>		0.70		

Table 5 outlines the respondents' self-reported pedagogical practices for educating learners with special needs. The data reveals that respondents exhibit a high level of competence in implementing pedagogical practices, especially in areas such as academic interventions (WM = 3.48), curriculum adaptations (WM = 3.48), and differentiating instruction (WM = 3.48), all of which were rated as "Highly Practiced." Other practices, such as applying improved assessment strategies (WM = 3.43) and utilizing behavior management techniques (WM = 3.24), were also rated highly, demonstrating a strong proficiency in these areas. While practices like supporting learners with special needs using acquired skills from training (WM = 3.14) and integrating assistive technologies (WM = 3.10) were categorized as "Practiced," they still reflect a notable level of application. The **aggregate mean score of 3.31** indicates that overall, the respondents' pedagogical practices for inclusive education are highly practiced, though areas for further development remain. These findings align with the work of Moon (2023), which underscores the need for continued

integration of evidence-based approaches, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), into teacher professional development to enhance both teacher readiness and student outcomes in inclusive classrooms.

**Table 6: Level of Challenges that Teachers Encountered in Accessing Professional Development Programs**

S/N	Indicators	W M	SD	Verbal Description
1	Insufficient time to participate in Professional Development Program regarding Inclusion of Learners with Special Needs	2.98	0.78	Challenged
2	Unavailable Professional Development Program opportunities for Special/Inclusive Education teachers	3.33	0.85	Extremely Challenged
3	Lack of financial resources to attend training on Inclusive Education program	3.36	0.73	Extremely Challenged
4	No access to information about relevant Professional Development Program for Inclusive/ Special Education teachers	2.93	0.78	Challenged
5	Irrelevant Professional Development Program to address my specific needs as a Special/Inclusive Education teacher	2.64	0.79	Challenged
6	Unprepared and unqualified to handle the workload involved in Inclusive Education program alongside my teaching responsibilities	2.90	0.85	Challenged
7	Difficulty obtaining permission or time off from my teaching duties to attend training	3.02	0.72	Challenged

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
8	Inadequate Professional Development Program supporting students with special needs in the classroom	3.10	0.79	Challenged
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		3.03		Challenged
<b>Aggregate Standard Deviation</b>		0.78		

Table 6 presents the level of challenges teachers face when accessing professional development programs related to inclusive education. The results highlight that the most significant challenges are related to the unavailability of relevant professional development programs (WM = 3.33) and the lack of financial resources (WM = 3.36), both categorized as "Extremely Challenged." Other barriers, such as insufficient time (WM = 2.98), limited access to program information (WM = 2.93), and difficulty obtaining permission to attend training (WM = 3.02), were also significant and categorized as "Challenged." The aggregate mean of **3.03** suggests that, overall, teachers face considerable barriers in accessing professional development programs. These challenges limit teachers' ability to improve their skills, particularly in the context of inclusive education. The study implies that addressing these obstacles is crucial for enhancing teachers' preparedness to meet the diverse needs of learners with special needs. Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasizes that teacher development is essential for equipping educators with the skills, attitudes, and competencies required to manage diverse classrooms and foster inclusive learning environments. The lack of access to relevant and financially feasible professional development opportunities may prevent teachers from fully embracing inclusive teaching practices, thereby impacting the educational outcomes for students with special needs.

**Table 7: Test of Relationship Between the Implementation and Pedagogical Practices for the Education of Learners with Special Needs**

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	P-value	Decision	Remarks
Implementation and Pedagogical Practices	0.577*	Moderate Positive	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)*

Table 7 presents the test of significance for the relationship between the implementation of instructional programs and pedagogical practices for the education of learners with special needs. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r-value) of **0.577** indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The p-value of **0.000**, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho), indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that as the implementation of instructional programs for learners with special needs improves, the quality of pedagogical practices also enhances. This positive relationship underscores the importance of continually improving instructional programs to better support teachers in developing effective teaching strategies for inclusive education. The result is consistent with Sharma et al. (2021), who highlight that effective pedagogical practices for inclusive education are crucial for fostering both academic and social development in learners with special needs. These practices provide learners with the necessary support to succeed, ensuring that their diverse needs are met and allowing them to engage with the curriculum in a way that promotes critical thinking and academic success.

**Table 8: Test of Relationship Between the Implementation and Challenges in Accessing Professional Development Program**

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Implementation and Challenges	-0.340*	Weak Negative	0.028	Reject Ho	Significant

*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)*

Table 8 presents the test of significance for the relationship between the implementation of instructional programs and the challenges in accessing professional development programs. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r-value) of **-0.340** indicates a weak negative relationship between the two variables. The p-value of **0.028**, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho), indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that as the implementation of instructional programs improves, the challenges teachers face in accessing professional development programs decrease, although this relationship is weak. The result implies that improving the implementation of instructional programs can help alleviate some of the barriers that hinder teachers' participation in professional development programs. However, the weak negative correlation indicates that other factors, such as resources, support systems, and institutional policies, also

play crucial roles in overcoming these challenges. This aligns with the work of Ellis (2024), who stresses that inclusive education faces complex challenges, which require a multifaceted approach, including better professional development opportunities and policies that support educators in meeting the diverse needs of learners. Addressing these challenges effectively can improve teachers' capacity to support inclusive education and enhance the quality of their pedagogical practices.

### Findings

The study at Mambaling National High School (SY 2024-2025) provides significant findings about the teachers' professional development and its relation to inclusive education. Among the 42 teachers, the majority were female (69.05%), with a significant portion aged 44-48 years and 34-38 years, each representing 21.43%. In terms of education, 71.43% had a master's level education. However, only 23.81% of teachers had attended professional development training on inclusive education, highlighting a gap in exposure to relevant learning opportunities. The study also found that instructional improvement programs, such as enhancing assessment strategies (WM = 3.43, SD = 0.67) and conducting workshops on inclusive education (WM = 3.31, SD = 0.90), were highly implemented. However, an overall mean score of 2.96 (SD = 0.84) suggests that more efforts are needed to meet the diverse needs of students.

Furthermore, the pedagogical practices for learners with special needs showed high competency in adapting the curriculum and providing academic interventions (WM = 3.48, SD = 0.51), with an overall mean score of 3.31 (SD = 0.70). However, challenges were noted, particularly the unavailability of relevant professional development opportunities (WM = 3.33, SD = 0.85) and lack of financial resources (WM = 3.36, SD = 0.73), which were categorized as "Extremely Challenged." These results emphasize that while teachers have demonstrated competence in implementing inclusive education practices, further efforts are needed to overcome barriers related to professional development and resource limitations. The statistical analyses revealed a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.577$ ) between the implementation of instructional programs and teachers' pedagogical practices, which signifies a significant relationship.

Additionally, there was a weak negative relationship ( $r = -0.340$ ) between instructional programs and challenges in accessing professional development. This suggests that addressing the lack of relevant training opportunities and financial support for teachers is crucial to improving inclusive education practices and supporting the diverse needs of students with special needs in the classroom. Therefore, this issue needs to be addressed as it is directly related to the enhancement of pedagogical practices, which will ultimately

lead to more effective inclusive education for students with special needs.

### Recommendations

In light of the findings, *it is most striking that the study revealed a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship between the implementation of instructional programs for inclusive education and teachers' pedagogical practices.* This finding highlights the critical importance of enhancing the school's instructional programs to improve teaching effectiveness for learners with special needs. It underscores the need for continuous focus on refining and expanding these programs to better equip teachers in delivering inclusive education. The study also identified challenges teachers face in accessing professional development opportunities, which were found to have a statistically significant negative relationship with the successful implementation of these instructional programs.

Given these findings, it is recommended that Mambaling National High School (MNHS) adopt a comprehensive approach to enhance inclusive education.

This can be summarized in the **I-CARE** framework:

**Increase Access to Training:** Offer more opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development programs focused on inclusive education.

**Collaborate for Financial Support:** Secure funding from local government units or private organizations to support teachers' participation in relevant training.

**Allocate Time for Development:** Ensure flexible schedules so teachers can attend training without disrupting their teaching duties.

**Refine Instructional Programs:** Continually evaluate and improve instructional programs to ensure they meet the diverse needs of students, particularly those with special needs.

**Enhance Teacher Competency:** Implement mentorship and peer collaboration programs to foster continuous learning and improvement in inclusive teaching practices.

By following the **I-CARE approach**, Mambaling National High School can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. These actions are essential for equipping teachers with the skills and resources needed to teach all students effectively, especially those with special needs.

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### Author contributions

**Percedita Benemireto** conceptualized the study, developed the research framework, and supervised the data collection process at Mambaling National High School. **Emerson D. Peteros** contributed to the study design, data analysis, and interpretation of findings, providing critical insights into the pedagogical practices and professional development aspects of the study. **Raymond C. Espina** played a key role in the literature review, ensuring that the study was grounded in current educational research, while also contributing to the writing and revision of the manuscript. **Niña Rozanne T. Delos Reyes** was responsible for reviewing educational policies relevant to inclusive classrooms and contributed to the development of survey instruments. **Regina E. Sitoy** provided significant input in survey design, coordinated the involvement of teachers and staff, and assisted in the finalization of the manuscript. **All authors** collaboratively contributed to the drafting, revising, and final approval of the manuscript, ensuring its accuracy and relevance to the field of inclusive education.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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