

Barriers and Enablers of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities: The Case of Philippine Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the barriers and enablers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities (LWDs) in primary schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) Camarines Norte, for School Year 2024–2025. It examined the respondents' profiles, the barriers they encountered, significant differences based on their profiles, and enabling factors. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the study involved 114 SPED and receiving teachers from 20 elementary schools implementing the Special Needs Education. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Chi-square test, and correlation analysis. Most respondents were Teacher I–III (73.7%) with over seven years of experience (57%), but only 12.3% had SPED specialization. Physical and learning disabilities were the most commonly handled. Barriers were mostly perceived as significant, particularly family and community-related barriers, followed by policy barriers, resource barriers, and attitudinal barriers. Physical and environmental barriers registered the lowest. The results revealed no significant differences in perceived barriers when respondents were grouped according to teaching position, years of experience, area of specialization, or type of learners with disabilities they worked with. As for enablers, collaborative school culture emerged as the strongest, followed by inclusive curriculum and teacher training and professional development, family and community engagement, access to resources and infrastructure, and specialized support services recorded the lowest. The study concluded that while teachers are generally experienced, a lack of SPED training limits inclusive practices. Common challenges include teacher reluctance, inadequate infrastructure, policy gaps, limited resources, and social stigma. However, enablers such as collaboration, training, and flexible curricula help support inclusion. Recommendations include hiring more SPED-trained teachers, conducting awareness campaigns and training, improving infrastructure accessibility, ensuring clear policy guidelines, and institutionalizing comprehensive teacher training programs focusing on individualized education plans, differentiated instruction, and collaborative leadership approaches to better support inclusive education implementation.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Learners with disabilities, Special Needs Education, Barriers and Enablers, Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion has become a growing advocacy in society, aimed at advancing the goal of quality education for all. It promotes educational diversity by addressing barriers faced by learners, such as disabilities, gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, language preferences, and other factors. Inclusive education is a global pedagogical approach that seeks to ensure equity and social justice by providing all learners, including those with disabilities, access to quality education regardless of their social, cultural, or linguistic backgrounds. Rooted in the principle that diversity should be valued and celebrated, inclusive education emphasizes full participation through accommodations and support services that enable learners to thrive in mainstream settings. Global commitments to inclusive education are firmly established through key international frameworks, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Sustainable Development Goal 4, all reinforcing the principle of "All means All."

The Philippines has significantly advanced the objective of inclusive education, particularly through the

enactment of Republic Act (RA) 11650 in March 2022. This legislation mandates that no student be denied admission due to a disability and provides a framework for establishing Inclusive Learning Resource Centers (ILRCs) in all school districts. It ensures reasonable accommodations, individualized educational programs, and teacher training to enhance schools' capacity to support learners with disabilities. Complementary policies like DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 (Child Find Policy), and DepEd Orders No. 44, s. 2021, and No. 21, s. 2019 focus on identifying learners with disabilities, providing appropriate support services, and promoting inclusive practices in classrooms. However, significant challenges remain in rural and underserved areas, such as insufficient resources, inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, and societal attitudes, which hinder the realization of inclusive education's goals.

Several studies on inclusive education have explored the barriers and enablers influencing teachers' perceptions and the integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream settings. Alzemaia (2019) identified inadequate teacher training and negative societal attitudes as significant obstacles, while Llanos et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of addressing teacher preparation and professional development. De Arao (2023) highlighted challenges in DepEd Camarines Norte, such as insufficient parental cooperation, financial constraints, stereotypes, and a lack of vocational skills, with SPED teachers' profiles directly impacting their competence. The increasing enrollment in Special Needs Education (SNED) programs in DepEd Camarines Norte emphasizes the growing demand for inclusive education. Despite global research, there remains a limited focus on how local cultural attitudes, resource constraints, teacher preparedness, and policy implementation affect inclusive education in division primary schools, highlighting the need for further research.

Scope And Limitation

This study focused on implementing inclusive education for learners with disabilities in primary schools during SY 2024-2025. The study was conducted in elementary schools of Bicol and Tagalog-speaking areas with SNED programs in DepEd Camarines Norte. The participants of the study included teachers of learners with disabilities.

The study employed quantitative methods, using surveys to gather data. The study have the following delimitations: 1) the study focused on primary schools only and did not include other levels of education, such as Junior and Senior High School or tertiary education; 2) the study focused on learners with disabilities only, both diagnosed by medical professionals and with manifestations; 3) it was conducted in primary schools with SNED Program, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts; 4) it employed quantitative research methods, which may limit the ability to make generalizations about the population; and 5) it was limited to the perspectives of teachers and did not include the perspectives of parents, learners with disabilities, other stakeholders. Despite these delimitations, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in primary schools and to inform policy and practice in this area.

Objectives Of the Study

This study explored the barriers and enablers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities (LWDs) in primary schools under the Department of Education (DepEd) Camarines Norte, for School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives:

- 1) Describe the profile of the respondents in terms of position, years of experience in handling learners with disabilities, area of specialization, and type of learners with disabilities handled.
- 2) Evaluate the barriers encountered in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in terms of attitudinal barriers, physical and environmental barriers, policy barriers, resource barriers, and family and community barriers.
- 3) Analyze the significant difference in the barriers encountered by the respondents when grouped according to profile.
- 4) Identify the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in terms of

teacher training and professional development, access to resources and infrastructure, collaborative school culture, inclusive curriculum, specialized support services, and family and community engagement.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the quantitative method using a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the profile of respondents and the barriers and enablers in the implementation of inclusive education. The descriptive method was used to systematically describe the respondents' profiles, including their years of experience in handling learners with disabilities, area of specialization, and types of learners handled, as well as the barriers and enablers they encountered. The correlational aspect was used to test the relationships between variables, particularly the respondents' profiles and the barriers encountered in the implementation of inclusive education, in line with definitions by Creswell (2008) and Jhangiani et al. (2019). A total enumeration sampling technique was employed, involving all 156 teachers from 20 primary schools implementing the SNEd program in Camarines Norte. However, only 114 teachers participated, as the rest were unavailable during data collection. The respondents included both SPED and regular teachers of learners with disabilities in the primary school levels, offering diverse insights into inclusive education practices.

A researcher-made questionnaire, validated by five inclusive education experts, was used as the primary data collection tool. It included respondent profiles, barriers, and enablers. The instrument underwent pilot testing in Naga City and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .979, indicating excellent reliability. Several items were later revised for clarity and alignment with study goals. Data gathering followed ethical protocols, including consent and coordination with school heads. For data analysis, descriptive and correlational statistics were employed. Frequency and percentage described respondent profiles; weighted mean assessed barriers and enablers; Kruskal-Wallis H Test identified differences in barriers by profile; and Chi-square tests. The study's analytical approach ensured accurate interpretation of inclusive education challenges and supports within Camarines Norte.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The study examined the profiles of 114 SPED and receiving teachers in DepEd Camarines Norte to understand the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Table 1 shows that most respondents were Teacher I–III (73.70%) with seven or more years of experience (57.00%) and came from general education backgrounds (82.50%). The most frequently handled disabilities were physical (28.90%) and learning disabilities (28.10%). The predominance of general education teachers handling LWDs highlights a pressing need for targeted training and support. Results also indicated that more experienced teachers demonstrated greater awareness of enablers such as professional development and access to resources, reinforcing the importance of teacher background in shaping effective inclusive practices.

table 1 Profile of SPET and Receiving Teachers in DepEd Camarines Norte

| Teaching Position | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Teacher I – III | 84 | 73.7 |
| Master Teacher | 15 | 13.2 |
| Special Education Teacher | 15 | 13.2 |
| Total | 114 | 100 |

| Years of Experience | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Less than 1 year | 12 | 10.5 |
| 1 – 3 years | 23 | 20.2 |
| 4 – 6 years | 14 | 12.3 |

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| 7 or more years | 65 | 57 |
| Total | 114 | 100 |

| Area of Specialization | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Special Education | 14 | 12.3 |
| General Education | 94 | 82.5 |
| Others | 6 | 5.3 |
| Total | 114 | 100 |
| Types of LWDs | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
| Physical Disabilities | 33 | 28.9 |
| Intellectual Disabilities | 18 | 15.8 |
| Sensory Disabilities | 18 | 15.8 |
| Emotional or Behavioral Disorders | 9 | 7.9 |
| Learning Disabilities | 32 | 28.1 |
| Others | 4 | 3.5 |
| Total | 114 | 100 |

Barriers Encountered in the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

Table 2 shows that attitudinal barriers continue to hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities. The highest-rated concern was the lack of teachers' willingness to accommodate learners with disabilities, with a weighted mean of 4.51 interpreted as Strongly Agree. Other significant barriers included limited peer acceptance with a weighted mean of 4.45 interpreted as Strongly Agree, doubts about learners' academic potential with a weighted mean of 4.33 interpreted as Strongly Agree, and lack of parental and community support with a weighted mean of 4.41 interpreted as Strongly Agree. The lowest-rated indicator was the presence of negative stereotypes or bias from school staff, which received a weighted mean of 3.39, interpreted as Neutral. The overall weighted mean of 4.22, interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicates that while most respondents recognize the presence of attitudinal barriers, there is also a strong acknowledgment of the need to address them. These findings reflect how negative beliefs, social stigma, and institutional culture contribute to the exclusion of learners with disabilities. Viewed through the Social Model of Disability by Oliver 1996 the barriers are not inherent to the learners but are created by rigid environments and attitudes. Supporting studies by Maingi et al 2022 and De Arao and Fontanilla 2024 also emphasize that these barriers, particularly low expectations and limited family engagement, remain central challenges to creating inclusive schools.

Table 2. Attitudinal Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Lack of teachers' willingness to accommodate learners with disabilities. | 4.51 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. Limited peer acceptance of learners with disabilities in classrooms. | 4.45 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Presence of negative stereotypes or bias towards learners with disabilities from school staff, including the School Head, Teaching and non-teaching personnel. | 3.39 | Neutral |
| 4. Doubts or negative beliefs about the academic potential of learners with disabilities. | 4.33 | Strongly Agree |

| | | |
|--|------|----------------|
| 5. Lack of parental and community support towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools. | 4.41 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.22 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 3 presents the physical and environmental barriers that hinder inclusive education for learners with disabilities, with an overall weighted mean of 4.13 interpreted as Agree. The highest-rated concern was the inaccessibility of toilets and other essential facilities for children with mobility impairments, with a weighted mean of 4.25 interpreted as Strongly Agree, while the lowest-rated was poor lighting or noisy environments that affect learners with visual or hearing impairments with a weighted mean of 3.96 interpreted as Agree. These findings imply that while some structural improvements may exist, schools continue to face challenges related to infrastructure, transportation, and sensory environments. The results highlight the need for comprehensive planning and retrofitting aligned with inclusive education standards. According to the Social Model of Disability by Oliver 1996, these barriers are not caused by the learners' impairments but by environmental obstacles that fail to meet diverse needs. Supporting studies by Maingi et al 2022, Hunt 2021, and Maguvhe 2022 emphasized the importance of barrier-free infrastructure, proper lighting, and environmental supports to ensure equitable access and participation for learners with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Table 3. Physical and Environmental Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | WM | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. Absence of ramps and wheelchair-accessible facilities in school buildings. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 2. Inaccessibility of toilets and other essential facilities for children with mobility impairments. | 4.25 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Inadequate classroom space for learners using assistive devices like wheelchairs. | 4.16 | Agree |
| 4. Difficulty in transportation for learners with disabilities reaching the school. | 4.18 | Agree |
| 5. Poor lighting or noisy environments affect learners with visual or hearing impairments. | 3.96 | Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.13 | Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|----------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |

1 1.0 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 4 presents the policy-related barriers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities, with an overall weighted mean of 4.27 interpreted as Strongly Agree. Among the indicators, the highest weighted mean of 4.33 was for inadequate teacher training policies on inclusive education practices, indicating a strong agreement that the lack or inadequacy of policy-driven training for teachers is a critical barrier. The lowest-rated indicator was weak government monitoring of schools' compliance with inclusive education mandates, with a weighted mean of 4.11 interpreted as Agree. These findings highlight a gap between policy intent and actual practice, as mandated interventions under DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021. This suggests perceived gaps in accountability mechanisms at the national or division level. Respondents recognized that although inclusive education policies exist, their implementation remains inconsistent and lacking in support systems. These findings align with Salcedo and Chua 2023, who emphasized the role of leadership, professional development, and school structures in successful inclusion. As highlighted in DepEd Order No. 44 s. 2021, all teachers must be capacitated to address learner diversity through various training interventions such as the Teacher Induction Program, In-Service Trainings, LAC sessions, coaching, mentoring, and other self-directed learning initiatives to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education.

Table 4. Policy Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Lack of awareness of the DepEd policies promoting inclusive education. | 4.32 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. Absence of school-based programs that address the needs of learners with disabilities. | 4.32 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Poor implementation of anti-discrimination policies in schools. | 4.29 | Strongly Agree |
| 4. Inadequate teacher training policies on inclusive education practices. | 4.33 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. Weak government monitoring of schools' compliance with inclusive education mandates. | 4.11 | Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.27 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 5 presents the resource barriers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities, with an overall weighted mean of 4.26 interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that respondents strongly perceive a lack of essential resources such as trained personnel, learning materials, technology, and funding as a major obstacle. The highest-rated indicator was inadequate teacher support in handling learners with diverse needs in the classroom, with a weighted mean of 4.46 interpreted as Strongly Agree, suggesting that teachers feel overwhelmed due to the absence of support mechanisms such as co-teachers or aides. The indicator insufficient funding to support inclusive education initiatives received the lowest weighted mean of 3.98 interpreted as Agree, reflecting concerns over funding being present but often inadequate or inconsistently allocated. These findings align with the studies of Jugan et al. 2023, Malata et al. 2022, and Cahapay 2020, all of which emphasize that while inclusive education is supported in principle, a lack of resources remains a

persistent barrier. Dube 2024 emphasized the importance of localized funding strategies, while Starks and Reich 2023 and Kenneth and Sales 2019 further confirmed that resource shortages hinder implementation despite strong teacher commitment. These observations reinforce the gap between inclusive education policies and the actual support provided to teachers and schools.

Table 5. Resource Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Unavailability of trained special education teachers in schools. | 4.36 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. Lack of access to learning materials and resources for learners with different disabilities. | 4.32 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Insufficient funding to support inclusive education initiatives. | 3.98 | Agree |
| 4. Lack of access to assistive technologies and devices for learners with disabilities. | 4.21 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. Inadequate teacher support in handling learners with diverse needs in the classroom. | 4.46 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.26 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 6 presents the Family and Community Barriers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities, with an overall weighted mean of 4.36 interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that respondents strongly recognize the significant influence of family and community factors. The highest-rated indicator was lack of family support for sending learners with disabilities to mainstream schools, with a weighted mean of 4.51 interpreted as Strongly Agree, suggesting that despite inclusive education policies, families may still hesitate due to fears, misconceptions, or concerns about stigma. The lowest-rated indicator was the presence of stigma in the community towards learners with disabilities attending regular schools, with a weighted mean of 4.09 interpreted as Agree, highlighting that stigma remains a challenge even when structural and familial supports are improving. These findings align with the Social Model of Disability by Oliver 1996, which views barriers as socially constructed through prejudice, misinformation, and exclusionary norms. Supporting studies by Banks et al. 2019, Madarang and Martin 2022, and Francia and Siy 2023 reinforce that stigma, miscommunication, and limited parental involvement continue to hinder inclusive education efforts and stress the importance of collaboration among schools, families, and local leaders to build a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Table 6. Family and Community Barriers to Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Lack of family support for sending learners with disabilities to mainstream schools. | 4.51 | Strongly Agree |

| | | |
|--|------|----------------|
| 2. Low community awareness about inclusive education and its benefits. | 4.40 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Presence of stigma in the community towards learners with disabilities attending regular schools. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 4. Limited parental involvement in school activities that promote inclusion. | 4.46 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. Inadequate support from local leaders in advocating for inclusive education in the community. | 4.35 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.36 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Test for Significant Difference in the Barriers Encountered in the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities when Grouped According to Profile

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test revealed no significant differences in the perceived barriers to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities when respondents were grouped according to teaching position, years of experience, area of specialization, or the type of learners with disabilities they handle.

Table 7 presents the Kruskal-Wallis H Test results examining whether significant differences exist in the perceived barriers to inclusive education based on respondents' positions. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in the perceived barriers to inclusive education across different teacher positions. All five domains—Attitudinal ($p = 0.458$), Physical and Environmental ($p = 0.075$), Policy ($p = 0.782$), Resource ($p = 0.888$), and Family and Community ($p = 0.398$)—had p -values above 0.05, indicating that Teacher I–III, Master Teachers, SPED Teachers, and Head Teachers face similar challenges. This suggests that the barriers are systemic in nature and not dependent on job designation.

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Result on Barriers Encountered in Inclusive Education by Respondents' Position

| Barriers | Test Statistics | | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Chi-Square | Asymp. Sig | |
| Attitudinal Barrier | 1.560 | 0.458 | Not Significant |
| Physical and Environmental Barriers | 5.187 | 0.075 | Not Significant |
| Policy Barriers | 0.492 | 0.782 | Not Significant |
| Resource Barriers | 0.237 | 0.888 | Not Significant |
| Family and Community Barriers | 1.842 | 0.398 | Not Significant |

Table 8 presents the Kruskal-Wallis H Test results examining whether significant differences exist in the

perceived barriers to inclusive education based on respondents' years of experience in handling learners with disabilities. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across experience groups. All five domains—Attitudinal ($p = 0.848$), Physical and Environmental ($p = 0.242$), Policy ($p = 0.166$), Resource ($p = 0.627$), and Family and Community ($p = 0.484$)—had p values above 0.05, indicating that both newly assigned and experienced teachers perceive similar challenges. This suggests that the barriers are systemic in nature and not influenced by years of teaching experience.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results on Barriers Encountered Based on Years of Experience in Handling Learners with Disabilities

| Barriers | Test Statistics | | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Chi-Square | Asymp. Sig | |
| Attitudinal Barrier | 0.808 | 0.848 | Not Significant |
| Physical and Environmental Barriers | 4.190 | 0.242 | Not Significant |
| Policy Barriers | 5.081 | 0.166 | Not Significant |
| Resource Barriers | 1.747 | 0.627 | Not Significant |
| Family and Community Barriers | 2.454 | 0.484 | Not Significant |

Table 9 presents the Kruskal-Wallis H Test results examining whether significant differences exist in the perceived barriers to inclusive education based on teachers' specialization. The results revealed no statistically significant differences across specialization groups. All five categories—Attitudinal ($p = 0.395$), Physical and Environmental ($p = 0.159$), Policy ($p = 0.636$), Resource ($p = 0.704$), and Family and Community ($p = 0.220$)—had p values greater than 0.05, indicating that teachers from different areas of specialization perceive the barriers similarly. This suggests that the challenges are systemic and not significantly affected by a teacher's field of specialization.

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results on Barriers Encountered Based on Area of Specialization

| Barriers | Test Statistics | | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Chi-Square | Asymp. Sig | |
| Attitudinal Barrier | 1.856 | 0.395 | Not Significant |
| Physical and Environmental Barriers | 3.672 | 0.159 | Not Significant |
| Policy Barriers | 0.905 | 0.636 | Not Significant |
| Resource Barriers | 0.702 | 0.704 | Not Significant |
| Family and Community Barriers | 3.031 | 0.220 | Not Significant |

Table 10 presents the Kruskal-Wallis H Test results examining whether significant differences exist in the perceived barriers to inclusive education based on the type of learners with disabilities handled by teachers. The results showed no statistically significant differences across all five domains. The p values—Attitudinal ($p = 0.413$), Physical and Environmental ($p = 0.153$), Policy ($p = 0.756$), Resource ($p = 0.193$), and Family and Community ($p = 0.749$)—were all greater than 0.05, indicating that teachers, regardless of whether they handle learners with cognitive, physical, behavioral, or sensory disabilities, perceive the barriers similarly. This suggests that the challenges are systemic and not significantly influenced by the specific type of learner with disabilities.

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results on Barriers Encountered Based on the Type of Learners with Disabilities Handled

| Barriers | Test Statistics | | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Chi-Square | Asymp. Sig | |
| Attitudinal Barrier | 5.023 | 0.413 | Not Significant |
| Physical and Environmental Barriers | 8.053 | 0.153 | Not Significant |
| Policy Barriers | 2.634 | 0.756 | Not Significant |
| Resource Barriers | 7.393 | 0.193 | Not Significant |
| Family and Community Barriers | 2.684 | 0.749 | Not Significant |

Enablers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

Table 11 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in terms of Teacher Training and Professional Development, with an overall weighted mean of 4.31 interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating strong consensus among respondents on the importance of teacher training in supporting inclusive practices. The highest-rated indicator was teachers receive formal training on inclusive education strategies, with a weighted mean of 4.39 interpreted as Strongly Agree, reflecting respondents' confidence in having foundational knowledge in inclusive pedagogy. The lowest-rated indicator was teachers receive ongoing support in handling inclusive classrooms, with a weighted mean of 4.24 interpreted as Strongly Agree, suggesting the need for sustained mechanisms such as coaching or mentoring. These findings are supported by Salcedo and Chua 2023, who emphasized the role of professional development and system-wide support in effective inclusion. Raguindin et al. 2020 also highlighted that workshops and seminars help teachers develop inclusive strategies despite challenges. However, Muega 2019 identified a gap in understanding among some general education teachers, underlining the need for continuous and focused training. These findings confirm that teacher training and professional development are crucial for the success of inclusive education and must be systematic, consistent, and accessible to all teachers.

Table 11 Teacher Training and Professional Development as Enablers of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. Teachers receive formal training on inclusive education strategies. | 4.39 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. The school conducts workshops or seminars to raise awareness and share best practices in special education. | 4.32 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Teachers are trained to adapt teaching methods for learners with different needs. | 4.26 | Strongly Agree |
| 4. Professional development opportunities focus on understanding disabilities. | 4.33 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. Teachers receive ongoing support in handling inclusive classrooms. | 4.24 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.31 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|------------|----------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------|
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 12 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities in terms of access to resources and infrastructure, showing five indicators with their weighted means and corresponding interpretations. All indicators received ratings between a weighted mean of 3.89 to 4.13, interpreted as Agree. The highest-rated indicator is "Well-lit and quiet learning environments support learners with visual or hearing impairments" with a weighted mean of 4.13, interpreted as Agree, suggesting a positive perception of classroom design. This is followed by "Availability of ramps and wheelchair-accessible facilities in school buildings" and "Accessibility of toilets and other essential facilities for children with mobility impairments," both with a weighted mean of 4.09, interpreted as Agree, reflecting progress in physical accessibility. The adequacy of classroom space for learners using assistive devices like wheelchairs, with a weighted mean of 3.96, and accessible and inclusive transportation services, with a weighted mean of 3.89, interpreted as Agree, reveals areas needing further improvement. The overall weighted mean is 4.03, interpreted as Agree, indicating that while schools are making progress in providing inclusive infrastructure, enhancements are still needed, particularly in the consistent provision of assistive technologies, adaptive materials, and barrier-free environments.

Table 12. Access to Resources and Infrastructure as Enablers of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. Availability of ramps and wheelchair-accessible facilities in school buildings. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 2. Accessibility of toilets and other essential facilities for children with mobility impairments. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 3. Adequacy of classroom space for learners using assistive devices like wheelchairs. | 3.96 | Agree |
| 4. Accessible and inclusive transportation services ensure that learners with disabilities can reach school safely and conveniently. | 3.89 | Agree |
| 5. Well-lit and quiet learning environments support learners with visual or hearing impairments. | 4.13 | Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.03 | Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 13 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education with disabilities in terms of Collaborative School Culture, showing five indicators, their weighted means, and interpretations. The highest-

rated indicator is “Teachers and school staff work together to support learners with disabilities” with a weighted mean of 4.58 interpreted as Strongly Agree, highlighting the critical role of collective effort and shared responsibility in addressing diverse learner needs. This is closely followed by “Inclusive practices are discussed during school LAC sessions, meetings or planning sessions” with a weighted mean of 4.51 interpreted as Strongly Agree and “There is a team approach to solving challenges related to inclusive education” with a weighted mean of 4.35 interpreted as Strongly Agree, demonstrating the value of structured and informal collaboration. “Peer support among students helps children with disabilities feel included” with a weighted mean of 4.46 and “School leadership promotes a collaborative culture focused on inclusion” with a weighted mean of 4.45 were also rated as Strongly Agree, showing that inclusivity extends beyond staff and is embedded in the broader school culture. The overall weighted mean of 4.47 interpreted as Strongly Agree confirms strong agreement that collaboration among teachers, school staff, leadership, and students significantly supports inclusive education. This finding aligns with the study of Francia and Siy (2023), which emphasized collaborative partnerships among administrators, SPED teachers, and general education teachers as essential in addressing challenges, supported by their proposed SNED Model. Hunt (2021) also underscores the importance of transdisciplinary teams in maximizing the effectiveness of assistive technologies. In Deped Camarines Norte, such collaboration is evident in how receiving teachers coordinate with SPED teachers and guidance advocates. Additionally, Judilla et al. (2023) and Masana et al. (2022) highlight the importance of peer collaboration and family involvement, reflected in local practices like peer tutoring, home-school partnerships, and parent orientation sessions.

Table 13. Collaborative School Culture as an Enabler of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Teachers and school staff work together to support learners with disabilities. | 4.58 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. Inclusive practices are discussed during school LAC sessions, meetings or planning sessions. | 4.51 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. There is a team approach to solving challenges related to inclusive education. | 4.35 | Strongly Agree |
| 4. Peer support among students helps children with disabilities feel included. | 4.46 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. School leadership promotes a collaborative culture focused on inclusion. | 4.45 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.47 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 14 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education with disabilities in terms of Inclusive Curriculum, showing five indicators, their weighted means, and interpretations. The highest-rated indicator is “The curriculum allows for flexibility to accommodate different learning styles” with a weighted mean of 4.46 interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicating that both SPED and receiving teachers in the division value adaptable

approaches suited to diverse learner needs. Other indicators also received high ratings, including “Teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with disabilities” with a weighted mean of 4.41 interpreted as Strongly Agree, “There are alternative ways for learners with disabilities to demonstrate their learning (e.g., projects, oral exams)” with a weighted mean of 4.40 interpreted as Strongly Agree, and “Lessons are designed to include all learners, regardless of ability” with a weighted mean of 4.32 interpreted as Strongly Agree. “Learning materials are available in different formats (e.g., visual, auditory)” received a slightly lower rating with a weighted mean of 4.12 interpreted as Agree, suggesting room for improvement in diversifying instructional materials. The overall weighted mean is 4.34 interpreted as Strongly Agree, confirming that SPED and receiving teachers in DepEd Camarines Norte primary schools view the inclusive curriculum positively. These results reflect the principles of the Universal Design for Learning framework, which emphasizes curriculum accessibility and responsiveness through varied instructional methods and materials. The findings are consistent with the study of Cecilio and Saenz (2025), which highlighted the importance of a localized curriculum in enhancing learner engagement, particularly for Learners with Special Educational Needs. However, they also identified challenges related to limited instructional material diversity and the need for stronger teacher preparation—areas mirrored in the current results. This underscores the need for continued curriculum development, expanded access to inclusive materials, and sustained teacher professional development to fully support learners with disabilities.

Table 14. Inclusive Curriculum as an Enabler of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. The curriculum allows for flexibility to accommodate different learning styles. | 4.46 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. Learning materials are available in different formats (e.g., visual, auditory). | 4.12 | Agree |
| 3. Lessons are designed to include all learners, regardless of ability. | 4.32 | Strongly Agree |
| 4. Teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. | 4.41 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. There are alternative ways for learners with disabilities to demonstrate their learning (e.g., projects, oral exams). | 4.40 | Strongly Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.34 | Strongly Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 15 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education in terms of Specialized Support Services. Among the five indicators, the school provides specialized support staff, such as special education teachers and aides, obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.12, interpreted as Agree, suggesting that staffing support is relatively well-established in many schools. Counseling services are provided to support the emotional well-being of learners with disabilities, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.92, interpreted as Agree followed Behavioral support plans are in place for learners with special needs, with a weighted mean of 4.07, interpreted as Agree. On the other hand, access to occupational or physical therapy for learners who require it with a weighted mean of 3.55 interpreted as Agree and speech therapy or other therapeutic services are available for

learners who need them with a weighted mean of 3.39 interpreted as Agree received the lowest scores, implying that these critical services are not consistently available or accessible. The overall weighted mean of 3.81 interpreted as Agree, indicates that schools are making moderate efforts to provide necessary specialized support services.

Table 15 . Specialized Support Services as Enablers of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. The school provides specialized support staff (e.g., special education teachers and aides). | 4.12 | Agree |
| 2. Speech therapy or other therapeutic services are available for learners who need them. | 3.39 | Agree |
| 3. Counseling services are provided to support the emotional well-being of learners with disabilities. | 3.92 | Agree |
| 4. Behavioral support plans are in place for learners with special needs. | 4.07 | Agree |
| 5. There is access to occupational or physical therapy for learners who require it. | 3.55 | Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 3.81 | Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

Table 16 presents the enablers in the implementation of inclusive education with disabilities in terms of Family and Community Engagement. The school encourages communication between families and teachers regarding inclusive practices received the highest weighted mean of 4.39 interpreted as Strongly Agree suggesting that active dialogue between school and home is strongly promoted. This is followed by the school provides information sessions for families on how to support learners with disabilities with a weighted mean of 4.25 interpreted as Strongly Agree and parents are actively involved in planning and decision-making for their child's education with a weighted mean of 4.24 interpreted as Strongly Agree indicating that parental engagement is generally well-established in inclusive education practices. Meanwhile, the local community supports inclusive education initiatives through outreach and advocacy with a weighted mean of 4.10 interpreted as Agree and community organizations help the school with resources or services for inclusive education with a weighted mean of 4.04 interpreted as Agree reflect slightly lower scores suggesting that while school-family connections are strong broader community participation still has room for growth and improvement. The overall weighted mean of 4.20 interpreted as Agree indicates that efforts to involve families and the community are present and generally positive but not yet fully maximized.

Table 16. Family and Community Engagement as an Enabler of Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities

| Enablers | WM | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| 1. Parents are actively involved in planning and decision-making for their child's education. | 4.24 | Strongly Agree |

| | | |
|--|------|----------------|
| 2. The school provides information sessions for families on how to support learners with disabilities. | 4.25 | Strongly Agree |
| 3. Community organizations help the school with resources or services for inclusive education. | 4.04 | Agree |
| 4. The school encourages communication between families and teachers regarding inclusive practices. | 4.39 | Strongly Agree |
| 5. The local community supports inclusive education initiatives through outreach and advocacy. | 4.10 | Agree |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 4.20 | Agree |

Legend:

| Scale | Range | Interpretation |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4.21 – 5.0 | Strongly Agree |
| 4 | 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree |
| 3 | 2.61 – 3.40 | Neutral |
| 2 | 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree |
| 1 | 1.0 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree |

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

1. The profile of the respondents reveals a workforce that is predominantly composed of generalist teachers holding Teacher I–III positions, many of whom have substantial experience in handling learners with disabilities. However, there remains a noticeable lack of teachers with special education specialization, which may limit the depth of inclusive practices being implemented. The range of disabilities handled—primarily physical and learning disabilities—suggests that teachers are managing diverse and complex needs despite limited specialized training. This underscores the need for continuous professional development and recruitment of SPED-trained educators.

2. Several barriers hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education in DepEd schools in Camarines Norte. Among the attitudinal barriers, the most prominent is the lack of teacher willingness to accommodate learners with disabilities, while the presence of negative stereotypes or biases toward these learners is the least significant in terms of physical and environmental barriers, inaccessibility of toilets and other facilities for children with mobility continues to pose challenges, along with inadequate lighting, excessive noise, and insufficient space for assistive devices. These issues negatively affect the comfort and learning experience of students with disabilities and emphasize the need for more inclusive, sensory-friendly infrastructure. In terms of policy barriers, although inclusive education policies exist, their implementation remains inconsistent. Teachers report a strong demand for clearer guidelines, more effective training, and reliable mechanisms to monitor compliance, without which the policies' intended impact may not be fully realized.

In terms of resource barriers, the lack of essential resources—including trained personnel, assistive technologies, and instructional materials—significantly hinders inclusive education delivery. The shortage of SPED professionals and therapists further restricts individualized support, highlighting the urgency of increased budgetary and logistical assistance. In terms of family and community barriers, although families and communities generally support inclusive education, persistent social stigma and misconceptions about disabilities remain. These results indicate a strong need for targeted interventions, especially in addressing family and community barriers, to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for learners with disabilities.

3. There are no statistically significant differences in the perceived barriers encountered by teachers when grouped according to their profile (e.g., teaching position, years of experience, specialization, and type of learners handled). This implies that barriers to inclusive education are systemic and similarly experienced across different teacher groups. Thus, solutions must be systemic and school-wide, focusing on policy reform, attitudinal change, infrastructure development, resource enhancement, and community engagement.

4. The study identified several enablers that positively influence the implementation of inclusive education in DepEd schools in Camarines Norte. Teacher Training and Professional Development is highly valued by teachers, with strong agreement on the importance of formal training in inclusive strategies, though ongoing support in managing inclusive classrooms needs improvement. Access to Resources and Infrastructure was rated positively, particularly for sensory-friendly learning environments; however, challenges remain in providing accessible and inclusive transportation services. The strongest enabler was Collaborative School Culture, marked by high levels of teamwork among teachers and school staff, although there is still room to strengthen team-based approaches to solving inclusive education challenges. The Inclusive Curriculum was found to be flexible and responsive to diverse learning needs, yet the availability of learning materials in various formats needs further enhancement. Specialized Support Services received the lowest overall rating among the enablers, with limited access to therapy and counseling services despite the presence of some specialized staff. Lastly, Family and Community Engagement was viewed positively, especially in terms of communication between families and teachers, but support from community organizations in providing additional resources and services requires further development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions, the following are the recommendations aimed at implementation:

1. To address the lack of teacher specialization, the Department of Education is encouraged to recruit and deploy more SPED-trained teachers to strengthen inclusive education. It should also offer scholarships, incentives, and study leaves to generalist teachers willing to pursue SPED specialization. In addition, regional and division offices may organize regular and targeted professional development programs focused on inclusive pedagogy and disability-specific strategies.

2. To overcome attitudinal and environmental barriers, schools and LGUs may implement sustained awareness and sensitivity campaigns that challenge stereotypes and promote empathy toward learners with disabilities. These may include values formation sessions, inclusive education orientations, and community-based forums. Furthermore, school heads and barangay councils may collaborate to upgrade school infrastructure by improving mobility, lighting, and sensory conditions in line with accessibility standards. Adequate funding allocations may be ensured to support these improvements.

3. To resolve policy and resource barriers, the implementation of inclusive education policies may be strengthened through the development of clear guidelines, standardized monitoring mechanisms, and the designation of focal persons at the school level to ensure adherence. The Department of Education, in coordination with LGUs, may allocate financial and logistical support for the procurement of assistive devices, learning materials, and SPED-related technologies. Moreover, SPED professionals, therapists, and support staff may be assigned to schools to provide specialized assistance to learners with disabilities. To overcome family and community barriers, school administrators and teachers may launch information campaigns and advocacy activities, and organize community forums, outreach activities, and partnership programs with relevant agencies.

4. To enhance teacher training and professional development, DepEd regional and division offices should institutionalize continuous learning programs focused on IEP writing, differentiated instruction, and inclusive classroom management. These topics may be regularly included in LAC sessions and INSET trainings. To ensure access to inclusive resources, school heads may enforce compliance with accessibility standards, provide

dedicated budgets, and acquire tools and materials that support inclusion. Shared leadership and joint planning among educators and stakeholders may be promoted to build a collaborative school culture. Mentoring systems between SPED and generalist teachers may be implemented to foster professional growth and peer support. The curriculum should be made inclusive by offering instructional materials in diverse formats and by developing flexible assessment tools. Teachers may be empowered to adapt lessons and assessment methods based on individual learner needs. Specialized support services can be strengthened by partnering with LGUs and private organizations to provide therapy, counseling, and diagnostic services through mobile support units or district-based therapy teams.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division Office of Camarines Norte to conduct a survey among teachers handling learners with disabilities. The Education Program Supervisor (EPS) for Special Education (SPED) was also consulted to ensure adherence to the division's standards and protocols. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the respective school heads and principals to ensure the smooth implementation of the data-gathering process. Prior to the administration of the survey questionnaire, the researcher sought permission from the respondents through an informed consent form. The respondents' information was kept confidential. Before the tabulation of data, each name was replaced with a respondent number to maintain anonymity. Moreover, the research upholds gender and cultural sensitivity, treating all participants with the utmost respect for their diverse perspectives. The data collected was used solely for academic purposes and handled in strict compliance with the Data Privacy Act and the ethical protocols of the schools involved.

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