

Assessment of Special Education Program in The Division of Aurora, Philippines

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Abstract: This study focused on the assessment of the Special Education programs in the Division of Aurora, Philippines particularly those offerings of special education classes in the Districts of Dipaculao, Maria Aurora and Baler.

The Special Education teachers and heads were young, mostly female, with SPED Teacher I item, young in service, master's degree holders, most of them did not specialized special education program in their undergraduate studies and with limited trainings attended.

In terms of curriculum, the over-all weighted mean was 3.33 with verbal description of "Observed", instructional material obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.68 which can be interpreted as "Sometimes Observed". In terms of facilities described as "Sometimes Observed" with the over-all weighted mean of 3.65 and financial resources indicated as "Strongly Observed". Community involvement with an over-all mean was 3.13 described as "Observed". Teachers perform community mapping at the end of school year in looking for pupils/students with disabilities and talking to the parents of the pupil/student with disability". Baler Central School obtained the highest number of enrolment with 46 pupils. Most of the schools used checklists to categorize the students according to their needs. Most SPED students are slow learner or with learning disability followed by hearing impaired and Down syndrome.

The most common problems encountered by the school heads and teachers were the parents in the in-denial stage and the availability of instructional materials.

Conducting orientation to the parents and tapping the Local Government Units for the financial assistance to support the program were strategies in addressing the problems encountered in the SPED programs.

All the profiles on the curriculum implementation, instructional material, facilities of the SPED programs were found not significantly related. Training was the only profile significantly related to the financial resources with a correlation value of 0.582 with a significance value of 0.014. With regard to the community involvement, sex found significant with correlation value of 0.494 with significant value of 0.044.

Status of implementation on "Curriculum" ($t=17.909$) and "Facilities" ($t=11.8$) obtained significantly different when the schools were grouped into elementary and secondary schools.

Key Words: Special Education, Special Education Programs, SPED teachers, Curriculum, Instructional Materials, Facilities Financial Resources and Community Involvement

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education mandated DO No. 26, s. 1997, which is the Institutionalization of SPED Programs in all Schools to support the implementation of the Republic Act 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) and to achieve the target set for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) that 75 percent of the four million children with disabilities should be provided equal educational opportunities. Hence, special needs education shall be institutionalized in all schools.

The institutionalization aims to provide access to basic education among children with special needs, namely, the gifted/talented, the mentally retarded, the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the orthopedically handicapped, the learning disabled, the speech defectives,

the children with behavior problems, the autistic children and those with health problems through the formal system and other alternative delivery services in education.

Children need to obtain education and literacy not only to learn basic academic study but also to survive in this globally competitive environment. It is unquestionable that it is the key to success in different fields of study. During childhood, different aspects of development are expected to see in a child, but inevitably there are children who were not developed normally like typical children, there are children who do not have the ability to cope with their academic work, thus, need a determined focus by their teachers, those students are called children with special needs.

In the memorandum (DO No. 26, s. 1997), it was stated that all divisions shall organize at least one SPED Center which will cater children with special needs. Programs organized shall adopt the inclusive education concept or the different types of SPED programs suited to the needs of the learners.

In response to this, the researcher decided to assess the Implementation of the Special Education Program of the Department of Education in the Division of Aurora, which is considered as a remote area, with limited access and increasing population of children with special needs.

According to Department of Social Welfare and Development, in DICADI (Dilasag, Casiguran, Dinalungan) there are increasing number of children who have been observed of having disabilities without diagnosis from the medical practitioner with lack of program to cater to the students' needs. This situation motivates the researcher to assess the implementation of the SPED program in the Division of Aurora so that implementation of SPED program also be conceptualized in the Northern part of Aurora.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study was designed to assess the status of implementation of Special Education (SPED) programs in the Division of Aurora. Specifically, this research answered the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the teachers in SPED programs in the Division of Aurora in terms of: age, sex, position, number of years in service, highest educational attainment, field of specialization, and relevant trainings attended?
2. How may the implementation of SPED Programs be assessed in terms of: curriculum, instructional materials, facilities, financial resources, community involvement, pupils/students recruitment, students enrolment, and categories of children with special needs?
3. What were the problems encountered by the teachers in the implementation of SPED Program?
4. What solutions do the teachers offer to address the problems in the implementation of the SPED Program?
5. How did the teachers assess the needs of the students with special needs?

6. What is the relationship between the profile of respondents and the status of implementation of the SPED programs?

7. Is there a significant difference in the school's implementation of the SPED programs when classified as elementary and secondary schools?

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Legal Bases of Special Education

Commonwealth Act No. 3203 legislated in 1935; this provision is the act for the care and protection of disabled children. Articles 356 and 259 of the Civil Code of the Philippines quoted that "the right of every child to live in an atmosphere conducive to his physical, moral and intellectual development", and the concomitant duty of the government to "promote the full growth of the faculties of every child."

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, affirmed that mankind owes to the child the best it has to give. One of the principles concerned with the education of children with special needs runs: "The child who is physically, mentally or visually handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education that are required of his particular condition."

Republic Act No. 3562, an act to promote the education of the blind in the Philippines enacted June 21, 1963 and Republic Act No. 5250, An act of establishing a ten-year training program for teachers of special and exceptional children in the Philippines, enacted June 15, 1968. These Acts provided that teachers, administrators, and supervisors of special education should be trained by the Department of Education.

Presidential Decree No. 603 (PD 603) The Child and Youth Welfare Code, Article 3, Rights of the Child. Equally important is Article 74 which provides for the creation of special classes. The Article reads: "Where needs warrant, there shall be at least one special class in every province, and if possible, special schools for the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, the emotionally-disturbed and the specially gifted."

The 1987 Philippine Constitution Article 13, Section 13, stated that "The state shall establish a special agency for disabled person for their rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance, and their integration into the mainstream of society.

Batas Pambansa 232, Education Act of 1982, Chapter 2, Section 3 stated that "The State shall promote the right of every individual to relevant quality education, regardless of sex, age, creed, socio-economic status, physical and mental conditions, racial or ethnic origin, political or other affiliation. The State shall therefore promote and maintain equality of access to education as well as the enjoyment of the benefits of education by all its

citizens." However, Section 24 also stated that "Special Education," the education of persons who are physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or culturally different from the so-called "normal" individuals that they require modification of school practices/services to develop them to their maximum capacity."

PD 603 (The Child and Youth Welfare Code), Article 3. Article 3. Rights of the Child. - All children shall be entitled to the rights herein set forth without distinction as to legitimacy or illegitimacy, sex, social status, religion, political antecedents, and other factors. (3) Every child has the right to a well-rounded development of his personality to the end that he may become a happy, useful and active member of society. The gifted child shall be given opportunity and encouragement to develop his special talents. The emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted child shall be treated with sympathy and understanding, and shall be entitled to treatment and competent care. The physically or mentally handicapped child shall be given the treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

Republic Act 7277, Approved on January 22, 1992, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons affirms the full participation and total integration of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of our society.

These laws enacted are the bases of establishing the Special Education (SPED) programs of the Department of Education. The Department of Education clearly states its vision for children with special needs in consonance with the philosophy of inclusive education, thus:

The State, community and family hold a common vision for the Filipino child with special needs. By the 21st century, it is envisioned that he/she could be adequately provided with basic education. This education should fully realize his/her own potentials for development and productivity as well as being capable of self-expression of his/her rights in society. More importantly, he/she is God-loving and proud of being a Filipino.

Profile of the SPED Teachers

Dapudong (2013) studied the teachers' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education: basis for an enhanced professional development program. Findings revealed that SPED teachers were female dominated, maturing age, with bachelor's degrees, more British, general educators, young in service,

In the study conducted by Roxas (2018), he disclosed that teachers in Aurora were comprised of more one than third (88 or 68.21%) of the respondents and were below 40 years old, female teachers dominated (94 or 72.97%) and more than half were married (84 or 65.12%). Half of them were with units in MA/MS (66 or 51.16%) and 39 or 30.23% were with BS degree. Only 81 or 62.79% were Teacher I, and 10 or 7.74% were head teachers.

Implementation of SPED Programs

According to Department of Education (2017), the instructional programs that the SPED teachers shall implement are the following:

1. Self-contained/Special Class – a separate class for only one type of exceptionality which serves moderate to severe types of disabilities;

2. Itinerant Teaching – a traveling teacher reaches out to children with special needs in other schools or at home to provide direct and consultative services;

3. Resource Room – a designated place where the child with special needs enrolled in the regular school program goes to in order to make use of the specialized equipment, either in a tutorial situation or in a small group session handled by a SPED teacher;

4. Pull-out – a kind of program where the child enrolled in the regular class reports to the resource room for a period of time for special instructions by the SPED teacher;

5. Integration/Mainstreaming – refers to the enrolment of a child with special needs in a regular class with support services. There are two degrees of integration: Partial Integration and Full Integration. In Partial Integration/Mainstreaming, a child with special needs enrolled in a special class is integrated with regular children in non-academic activities like work education, physical education, arts, school programs, etc, then gradually integrated in the academic subjects if qualified. Meanwhile, in Full Integration/Mainstreaming, a child with special needs sits in the regular class in all academic and non-academic subjects; and

6. Inclusion – all children with disabilities, regardless of the nature and severity of their disability and need for related services, receive their total education within the regular education classroom.

Lai (2002) conducted a study to analyse the classroom management techniques of special education teachers in the Division City Schools Manila. She used the descriptive method to analyse the classroom management technique. Results showed that special education teachers varied classroom management when setting-up the physical environment, establishing routine activities and other activities. Special education teachers teach the different children with special needs but they differ when it comes to equipment and teaching aids used, space provisions, and utilization and type of instructional materials.

Strategies in Implementing Special Education Program

Ingersoll, et. al, (2006) claimed that parent training is a very effective method for promoting generalization and maintenance of skills in children with autism. However, despite its well-established benefits, few public school programs include parent training as part of the early childhood special education (ECSE) curriculum. Barriers to the provision of parent training include the need for parent education models that can be easily implemented in ECSE programs and the need for preparation of special educators in parent education strategies.

According to Deno (2003), Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is an approach for assessing the growth of students in basic skills that originated uniquely in special education. CBM effectively use to gather student performance data to support a wide range of educational decisions - screening to identify, evaluating referral interventions, determining eligibility for and placement in remedial and special education programs,

This study used the descriptive and correlational research designs. Respondents of the study included the seven schools offering the SPED programs during the School Year 2017 -2018. The schools are located in the Central Aurora such as the districts of Baler, Maria Aurora and Dipaculao, Aurora, Philippines. It utilized the questionnaire as the main data gathering tool with the aid of interview and observation.

III. METHODOLOGY

The data gathered from the questionnaire was organized, classified, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the frequency distribution, percentage, Spearman rho correlation and t-test.

V. RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Age		
Below 29 years old	3	27.27
30 – 39 years old	6	54.54
40 – 49 years old	1	9.09
50 – 60 years old	1	9.09
Sex		
Female	10	91.9
Male	1	9.09
Position		
SPET I	7	63.6
Teacher I	3	27.3
Teacher II	1	9.1
Number of Years in Service		
1-9 years	8	72.72
10-19 years	2	18.18
20-29 years	1	9.09
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor Degree	5	45.5
With Master’s Units	4	36.36
Master’s Graduate	1	9.09
With Doctoral Units	1	9.09
Field of Specialization		
Special Education	5	45.5
TLE	1	9.09
Math	3	27.3
Social Studies	1	9.09
Kindergarten Education	1	9.09
Relevant Trainings Attended		
No seminar Attended	3	27.3
1-3 seminars Attended	6	54.54
More than 4 Seminars Attended	2	18.18

Table 2. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Curriculum of the Respondents

CURRICULUM	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. There is a SPED curriculum available in the school	3.53	Sometimes Observed
2. The competencies in the curriculum are attainable by the students	3.06	Observed

3. The curriculum consists of skills which are result- oriented	3.29	Observed
4. The objectives in the individualized educational plan are set within the specified time- frame	3.35	Observed
5. The curriculum is planned in such a way that would provide opportunities, activities and experiences for the education of the special needs	3.41	Sometimes Observed
6. The curriculum is specially designed to address the specific learning needs (activity-based learning)	3.35	Observed
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.33	Observed

Table 3. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Instructional Materials of the Respondents

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	WEIGTED MEAM	VERVAL DESCRIPTION
1. The IMs used by teachers are relevant to the objectives of the curriculum	3.94	Sometimes Observed
2. The type of IMs used match the needs of the individual student	3.88	Sometimes Observed
3. The IM's are durable and in good quality	3.47	Sometimes Observed
4. The IM's catches and holds the interest of the students	3.76	Sometimes Observed
5. There are varied learning tools (manipulative objects, assistive technology and etc.,)	3.35	Observed
OVERALL WEIGTED MEAN	3.68	Sometimes Observed

Table 4. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Facilities of the Respondents

FACILITIES	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The classrooms used by the students are:		
1.1. Well-ventilated	3.71	Sometimes Observed
1.2. Properly lighted	3.71	Sometimes Observed
1.3. Appropriate interior appearance (Color, safety, etc.)	3.76	Sometimes Observed
1.4. Appropriate to the age of the students	3.53	Sometimes Observed
1.5. There is availability of comfort rooms	3.71	Sometimes Observed
1.6. The area of the classroom is suitable to the number of students	3.53	Sometimes Observed
1.7. First aid kit is provided for students to use in case of emergency	3.65	Sometimes Observed
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.65	Sometimes Observed

Table 5. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Financial Resources of the Respondents

FINANCIAL RESOURCES	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The Department of Education allocated fund for Special Education Classes	3.24	Observed
2. The Local Government unit provides fund to support the needs of the students	3.35	Observed
3. Travel expenses is provided for teachers attending trainings/ seminars/ workshops to expand their knowledge in handling students with special needs	3.76	Sometimes Observed
3. Funds are allocated for assessment tool to evaluate the level of development of the students	3.53	Sometimes Observed
4. There is fund allocated for learning tools(manipulative objects, assistive technology and etc.,) to address the needs of the students	3.00	Observed
5. There is fund allocated for office supplies intended for the preparation of reports related to special education classes	3.18	Observed
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.64	Sometimes Observed

Table 6. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Community Involvement of the Respondents

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The parents play a vital role in the education of their children by working in partnership with the teacher	3.12	Observed
2. The parents regularly attend meetings and conferences to monitor the progress of their child	3.00	Observed
3. The barangay officials in the community where the school is situated are well- oriented on the implementation of the special education program by conducting seminar on the disability awareness	2.65	Observed
4. The Municipal social welfare works in partnership with the school to conduct orientation on disability awareness to the community	3.47	Sometimes Observed
5. The LGU supports the program through allocating budget needed for the Special education classes	3.41	Sometimes Observed
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.13	Observed

Table 7. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Pupils/Students Recruitment of the Respondents

PUPILS/STUDENTS RECRUITMENT	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. The teachers perform community mapping at the end of school year in looking for pupils/students with disabilities.	5.00	Strongly Observed

2. The teachers make appointment with the DSWD to look for the pupils/students with disabilities.	4.09	Sometimes Observed
3. The teachers talk to the parents of the pupil/student with disability.	5.00	Strongly Observed
4. Teachers in regular classes referred their pupils/students with observable learning disability.	4.73	Strongly Observed
5. Parents enrolled their special pupil/student during the enrolment.	4.55	Strongly Observed
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	4.67	Strongly Observed

Table 8. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Pupils/Student Enrolment of the Respondents

PUPILS/STUDENTS ENROLLMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Baler Central School	46	21.59
Borlongan Elementary School	23	10.79
Dinadiawan Elementary School	26	12.21
Dipaculao National High School	35	16.43
Dipaculao Central School	26	12.20
Maria Aurora Central School	42	19.72
Wenceslao National High School	33	15.49
TOTAL	231	100

Table 9. Status of Implementation of SPED Programs in Terms of Categories of Pupils/Students with Special Needs of the Respondents

SCHOOL	CATEGORIES OF PUPILS/STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS												
	LD	Hi	VI	MR/ID	MIH	BP/A DHD	OC/CHSP	AU	SD	CP	DS	GD	TOTAL
Baler CS	16	3	1	7	4	0	1	7	3	0	4	0	46
Borlongan ES	14	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	23
Dinadiawan ES	17	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	26
Dipaculao NHS	16	1	9	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	35
Dipaculao CS	11	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	0	26
Maria Aurora CS	17	8	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	2	6	1	42
Wenceslao NHS	28	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	33

TOTAL	119	18	17	15	9	2	12	11	6	3	18	1	231
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Legend: LD – Learning Disabilities; HI - Hearing Impaired; VI - Visually Impaired; MR - Mentally Retarded; ID - Intellectual Disability; BP - Behavior Problem; ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; AU - Autism; CP - Cerebral Palsy; DS - Down Syndrome; OC - Orthopedically challenged; and GDD - Global Developmental Delay

Table 10. Problems encountered on the implementation of SPED Program by the Respondents

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED	FREQUENCY	RANK
Discrimination among identified students	11	1.5
Denial parents	11	1.5
Fund	10	3
Instructional materials	9	4
Continuity of the SPED program in High School	8	5

* - Multiple Responses

Table 11. Solutions Used to the Problems Encountered by the Respondents

SOLUTION USED*	FREQUENCY	RANK
Orientation to the Parents and community	11	2
Conducted series of conference to the parents and other school personnel	11	2
Solicitation of fund to the LGU and Provincial government	11	2

*Multiple Response

Table 12. Assessment used on the needs of the students of the Respondents* (N = 11)

ASSESSMENT USED*	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Checklist as observation tool	11	100
Consultation to the municipal health officer	8	72.72
Consultation with licensed psychometrician	3	27.27
Used standardized assessment tool	3	27.27

* - Multiple Responses

Table 13. Summary of the relationship between profile and status of implementation using Spearman rho set at 0.05 level of significant.

Profile		Curr	IM	Fac	FR	CI
Age	Correlation Coefficient	-0.03ns	-0.219ns	0.000ns	0.193ns	-0.29ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.909	0.398	1.000	0.457	0.249
Sex	Correlation Coefficient	-0.07ns	0.363ns	-0.075ns	0.038ns	0.339ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.773	0.152	0.775	0.886	0.183
Position	Correlation Coefficient	-0.35ns	-0.419ns	-0.163ns	-0.08ns	-0.39ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.163	0.094	0.533	0.751	0.113
Number of Years in Service	Correlation Coefficient	0.031ns	-0.166ns	0.016ns	0.173ns	-0.13ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.907	0.523	0.953	0.507	0.596
Education	Correlation Coefficient	-0.24ns	-0.136ns	-0.149ns	-0.30ns	-0.11ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.346	0.602	0.568	0.235	0.673
Field of Specialization	Correlation Coefficient	-0.35ns	-0.421ns	-0.384ns	-0.19ns	-0.36ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.163	0.093	0.128	0.451	0.155
Trainings	Correlation Coefficient	0.082ns	-0.009ns	-0.029ns	0.274ns	0.047ns
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.755	0.972	0.913	0.288	0.858

Legend: ns – not significant
 Curr –curriculum
 IM – Instructional Materials
 Fc – Facilities
 FR – Financial Resources
 CI – Community Involvement

Table 14. Summary of the differences on the status of Implementation of SPED Programs by school using ANOVA set at 0.05 level of significance.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION	F VALUE	p VALUE
Curriculum	7.514*	0.408
Facilities	0.365ns	0.724
Training	0.872ns	0.408
Financial Resources	1.777ns	0.324
Community Involvement	1.594ns	0.150

Legend: * - significant; ns – not significant

VI. DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the SPED Teachers

More than one third of the respondents were young, females dominated, more than half were holding a Special Education Teacher item, young in service, more than half earned graduate degrees, 45.5% were graduates of

special education as specialization and all respondents attended seminars related to special education.

2. The Status of the Implementation of SPED Programs

Status of implementation of SPED Programs in terms of Curriculum obtained an Overall Weighted Mean (OWM) of 3.33 which is described as “observed.” This result implied that there is an available curriculum where the

teachers are able to address the learning needs of the students with special needs. The curriculum on special education was implemented in support of Republic Act 7277 known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and Department of Education issued the DO 26, s. 1997 in support to the act.

In terms of instructional materials, OWM was 3.68 described as “sometimes observed.” “The IMs used by teachers are relevant to the objectives of the curriculum” described as “sometimes observed”. Instructional materials used by the teachers are still lacking and still in need to be addressed in order to improve the SPED students’ performance and enhance the basic skills.

Facilities were described as “sometimes observed.” There is a need for the improvement of facilities. The same findings were obtained by Claire (2012) that school facilities are also the problem in public and private schools.

Financial resources described as “sometimes observed.” These results implied that “school fund” is the fundamental needs to operate the school or particularly the program. It shows that most of the schools with special education program needed fund to purchase the assessment tool to evaluate the needs of the student. It also shows that the fund allocated to the program was used for travel expenses of the teachers because not all teachers handling the program are trained or specialized in handling students with special needs.

Community involvement was “observed”, it implies that the school leaders should tap the LGU and NGO’s in order to support the program by allocating budget in order to start the program and also the parents should communicate and participate in the school during the conduct of the orientation program in the community.

“The teachers perform community mapping at the end of school year in looking for pupils/students with disabilities” and “The teachers talk to the parents of the pupil/student with disability” obtained a weighted means of 5.00 described as “Strongly Observed”. It implied that SPED teachers always doing community service especially during the end of the school year in looking for possible pupils/students with special concern and learning disabilities. Other teachers in the regular classes endorsed their pupils/students once they observed if the pupils/students with learning disabilities.

The older school which handles SPED classes obtained the highest enrolment. Baler Central School SPED class was opened in 1996. Maria Aurora Central School was operated for six years. Few enrolments were newly opened SPED classes.

Highest numbers of enrollees with 118 are those children with learning disability. Most observed students are slow learners or with learning disabilities. These students have difficulty in coping activities and lessons given to regular students. Further, these children came from poor families according to their teachers. One of the reasons is

poverty, wherein their parents are not capable to give enough nutrition to their children, which is very important aspect in the human development from infancy to adulthood.

3. Problems Encountered by the Teachers in the Implementation of SPED Program

“Discrimination among identified students” and “denial parents” were the problems. These results manifested that there was lack of orientation regarding the program and most of the community people especially parents with identified students with special concern deny the condition of their child.

4. Solutions Used to the Problems Encountered in the Implementation of SPED programs.

Solutions used were “Orientation to the parents and community”, “Conducted series of conference to the parents and other school personnel”, and “Solicitation of fund to the LGU and provincial government”.

5. Teachers’ Assessment on the Needs of the Pupils/Students with Special needs.

All the schools with special education program in the Division used checklist to identify the needs of the students, some used “Standardized assessment tool” and “Consultation with the licensed psychometrician”.

6. Significant Relationship between the Profiles of Respondents on the Status of Implementation of the SPED Programs

All the profiles on the implementation of the SPED programs were found not significantly related. These results implied that all whatever the age, sex, position, experience, education and trainings of the respondents; they have the same perception with regards to the implementation of the SPED program. This result supported the findings of Dapudong (2014) that there are no differences in attitudes among the international school teachers when grouped according to seven variables such as age, degree held, years of teaching experience, area of specialization, experience in teaching students with disabilities in the classroom, and training in special education.

7. Significant Differences on the Implementation of the SPED Program when Classified as Elementary and Secondary Schools.

There was a significant difference on the curriculum between the elementary and secondary schools in the implementation of the SPED program with t value of 7.514. This result implied that the curriculum in the SPED program in elementary schools was fully implemented as compare to secondary schools. This attributed to the newly opened status in the implementation of Special Education Program for secondary school in the Division.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The SPED teachers and the school heads were young, mostly female, with SPED Teacher I item, young in service, master's degree holders, most of them did not specialize special education program in their undergraduate studies and with limited trainings attended.

2. In the status of implementation, the condition of financial resources and pupil/student recruitment are existing and functioning according to standard (Strongly observed).

3. The most common problems encountered by the school heads and teachers were the in-denial mental state of parents and the insufficient instructional materials.

4. Conducting orientation to the parents and tapping the LGU for financial assistance to support the program were strategies in addressing the problems encountered in the SPED programs.

5. Checklist and standardized assessment tools were the common teacher's assessment techniques to categorize the students according to their needs.

6. Age and number of years in service were significantly related with financial resources while position is significantly related to pupil/students special needs.

7. Elementary school differs in terms of the implementation of curriculum, facilities and financial resources from secondary school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. It is recommended that school heads should retool SPED teachers especially those who are not major in special education. Encourage them also to enrol in the Master's degree program with specialization in Special Education.

2. Procurement of standardized assessment tools to categorize the students is highly recommended. Psychometrician and physician may be consulted in diagnosing the students and in identifying their needs.

3. Local seminars on SPED is highly recommended in the Division level so that teachers will not spend their own financial resources. In-service training in the district is a possible alternative. Encourage teachers to do community involvement by encouraging and recruiting children with special concerns to enrol in SPED programs.

4. Community and home scanning is vital way of searching children with special concerns. The Office of the Person with Disability (PWD) under the Department of

Social Welfare Development is the best agency to be consulted in looking for special children.

5. Tapping the school stakeholders is the best strategy in evaluating the needs of SPED children. Consultation with the psychometrician or psychologist is recommended.

6. Problems regarding the in-denial mental state of the parents of the children with special concern, must be addressed by inviting the parents and discuss with them the importance of education to their special children and how to harness their hidden talents and abilities.

7. Different ways of solving problems call for different strategies. The use of various strategies in dealing and addressing problems is recommended. Praying is the best strategy for those who seek help for their children.

8. Follow-up studies are encouraged for those researchers with the heart on this field of specialization. Such topics are recommended: tracer study of the graduates of special education programs, the SPED teachers' morale, and the indicators and best practices successful SPED schools.

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