

Assessing the Influence of Pre-Service Teachers' Knowledge And Skills on Their Attitudes Towards Inclusion

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Abstract: This research assessed the knowledge, skills and attitudes of fourth year BSNEED students at Cebu Technological University Main campus in Cebu City for school year 2024-2025 as basis for a proposed teacher skills development plan. There were 80 respondents who participated in the study and were identified using the total enumeration technique due to their small population. The respondents were asked to answer a three-part survey questionnaire which measure their knowledge, skills and attitudes towards inclusion. The data gathered were treated using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r . The results revealed that the respondents were highly knowledgeable about inclusion and highly skilled in handling inclusive classes. Interestingly, they have positive attitudes towards the inclusive education implementation. Moreover, there was a significant strong positive relationship between their knowledge and attitudes towards inclusion. On the other hand, there was a significant moderate positive correlation between the respondents' skills and attitudes towards inclusion. The results underscore the sufficient trainings that they acquire in the special education program of the university and validate the hypothesis that attitudes of the pre-service teachers are related on their knowledge and skills of inclusion. Thus, it is highly recommended that the proposed teacher skills development plan be adopted.

Keywords: Special Education, Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Descriptive- correlational Design, Cebu City, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the basic rights of every individual aims to lift people out of poverty, level inequalities, and ensure sustainable development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2025). Every individual has a right to education regardless of their status in life such as gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities (Dioso et al., 2022; Siason et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2020). Education is emphasized in international agreements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulating that education shall be free in fundamental stages and shall be compulsory and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities proclaiming the rights to inclusive education to children with disabilities (Buchner et al., 2021; Molkizadeh et al., 2019).

One of the sectors of the society which has been less prioritized in terms of providing education are the learners with special educational needs (LSEs) (Donato & Lovitos, 2023; Mawila, 2023). It is implied, even in pre-history, that education is meant only for individual in capable of developing, and LSEs are not recognized and prioritized as individuals who can be properly educated and trained (Zegeye, 2022). However, in the recent years there has been significant improvement providing LSEs with opportunities to educated in the normal setting (Mosia & Kotelo, 2024). At some schools, LSEs having barriers when it comes to learning are moved to their respective classes for learners with special educational needs (LSEs), depending on the degree of their barriers and subject to specific conditions (Chhabra et al., 2010; Rens & Louw, 2021; Sargeant & Berkner, 2015). Thus, opening the opportunity to upheld to an education system that include and provide educational practices that caters to the various needs of all learners (Harkins & Fletcher, 2015).

In education, inclusion is a promising approach in educating the learners ensuring that every one of them has a right to education (Pasha et al., 2021). Inclusion is defined as providing all students including those with severe disabilities, equal opportunities to receive effective educational services in preparation for productive lives as members of the society (Dioso et al., 2022; Francisco et al., 2020; Haider, 2008). The main stakeholders of the inclusive education system are LSEN's, their parents, typically developing children and their parents, teachers, representatives of school administrative body and others that are involve to their learning (Yarullin & Nasibullov, 2018). Inclusion education is the educational method by which all children are learning collectively, irrespective of race, gender, faith, learning needs of the individuals, and martial and social backgrounds of the same classroom (Massouti, 2019; Pasha et al., 2021). Different countries around the world promote the inclusion of LSENs in regular classrooms. Countries like China, Canada, and the Netherlands promote inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSENs) in regular classrooms through legislative frameworks, though challenges such as teacher training and resource availability persist, impacting effective implementation of inclusive education (Agrawal et al., 2019).

Moreover, some schools lack skilled teachers who handle inclusive classes. One of the variables leading to the growth and development of education is the teacher contributing to educational reform that has been failed (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017; Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022). One of the main barriers in the practice of inclusive education is characterized by the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and its principles. These attitudes are influenced by several factors such as: the degree of children' difficulties, the nature of children' disabilities, the teachers' experience with children with special educational needs, the trust in their own capabilities to implement inclusive or the expectations towards the children no matter what are the differences between them and the curriculum (Okoye & Ifi, 2020; Unianu, 2012; Zegeye, 2022). Thus, attitudes towards inclusive education can be determined by the teacher's knowledge and skills.

Preparedness of prospective teachers about inclusive education should be a general training for all throughout as it will enhance the knowledge about LSEN's (Adeniyi et al., 2016). Because of the difficulties and specific demands of this field, LSENs are still in short supply of teachers despite the growing need for them. Unfortunately, many teachers have had little training in inclusive or special education, which means they would have to master their skills during the teaching process (Aldabas, 2020). To ensure effective teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom, teachers must possess skills and competencies on how to teach LSENs and also requires preparedness in pedagogical techniques that make for its success (Okoye & Ifi, 2020). Determining the level of preparedness of teachers will therefore play a major role in success fully planning the implementation of inclusive education (Hay et al., 2001)

This has been a prevalent issue in the Philippines despite its implementation of inclusion over the years. The importance of teachers and their readiness matter in overall effectiveness of the implementation of inclusive education (Dioso et al., 2022; Ecoben, 2019). Furthermore, teachers' awareness, attitudes, and skills had been found to affect the process and the outcome of inclusion to a great extent (Dapudong, 2014; Pil et al., 2022). Notably, there are universities providing courses relevant to special education but the skills of the graduates in these universities has not been assessed (Rodriguez & Aboejo, 2018; Siason et al., 2022).

Similarly, it has been observed in a state university in Cebu City, Philippines in which some of the graduates specializing in special education seem to have lack of knowledge about inclusion. Although they have been exposed to handling inclusive classes during their practice teaching course, there is still a need to assess their knowledge and skills in handling inclusive classes to assure that they are prepared in dealing with LSENs enrolled in regular classes. It can be noted that the lack of knowledge and skills of the pre-service teachers towards inclusion could affect their attitudes (Adeniyi et al., 2016; Pasha et al., 2021; Zegeye, 2022).

Hence, it is in this context that the researcher was encouraged to assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the fourth pre-service teachers taking up Bachelor of Special Needs Education (BSNED) in Cebu Technological University Main Campus for school year 2024-2025 as basis for a proposed teacher skills development plan. The findings of this study will serve as the bases for proposed skills development to support the goals of the Department of Education's (DepEd) towards providing high quality education to all learners of the country.

II. THE PROBLEM

This research assessed the knowledge, skills and attitudes of fourth year BSNEC students at Cebu Technological University Main campus in Cebu City for school year 2024-2025 as basis for a proposed teacher skills development plan.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of knowledge of the respondents towards inclusion?
2. What is the level of skills of the respondents towards inclusion?
3. What is the level of attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the:
 - 4.1 knowledge and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion,
 - 4.2 skills and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion?

III. METHODOLOGY

Design

This study utilized descriptive correlational research design which aimed at testing the relationship of the respondents' knowledge, skills and their attitudes towards inclusion. According to Devi et al. (2022), correlational research is a non- experimental research design which investigates the relationship between two variables without manipulating them. In this study, it was hypothesized that the knowledge of the respondents are related with their attitudes towards inclusion while their skills are also related to their attitudes towards inclusion. Based on the data gathered in this study, these hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical tools.

Flow of the Study

The first step is the level of knowledge of the respondents towards inclusion which are crucial in the input of the study as they will help in understanding the influence of knowledge towards the respondents attitudes towards inclusion. Assessing the level of skills of the respondents towards inclusion can help provide the insights on how skills affects the attitude of pre-service teachers towards inclusion. In addition, this study also places the importance on the respondents' level of attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion as it is the dependent variable of the study. The researchers also investigated the significance of the relationship of knowledge and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion and skills and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion to determine if both knowledge and skills influence the attitudes towards inclusive education.

The procedure starts with seeking an approval for the transmittal letter to school heads such as the superintendent and the principals of the selected schools to obtain their consent and assistance on the study. A descriptive correlation design was used to investigate the connection between knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards inclusion. To execute this, validated questionnaires were administered on the students in the data collection, which were prepared beforehand. The data were treated logically to carefully extract analysis and interpretation of the findings for the purpose of making appropriate recommendations in accordance with the outcome of the study.

The output of this study is a Teacher Skills Development Plan, targeting strategies to improve knowledge and skills of the pre-service teachers upon influencing their attitudes towards inclusive education. The plan will also incorporate specific strategies, such as workshops on knowledge that further enhance understanding about inclusive education, and developing necessary skills upon teaching in inclusive education setting. Such measures may help schools establish and uphold better attitude in students towards inclusive education.

IV. Environment

The study will be conducted on a state university in Cebu City. This school is selected to help the researcher assess the relationship of the respondents' knowledge, skills and their attitudes towards inclusion.

Cebu Technological University-Main Campus (CTU-MC) in Cebu City was established as one of the earliest vocational schools in the country having its main purpose was to develop technical skills. Through Proclamation No. 180 on August 20, 1928, it acquired its present site at the corner of M.J. Cuenco Avenue, and R Palma Street. It became a state university by virtue of Republic Act No. 9744 back in 2009.

The state university provide leading-edge degree programs, innovative professional, entrepreneurial, and technical instruction as well as research and extension programs that address both needs of the region and the nation in the context of the global knowledge economy, Fourth Industrial Revolution, and sustainability. Currently, CTU-MC provide degree programs such as Education, Engineering, Technology, Arts and Sciences, Management and Entrepreneurship, and Computer, Information, and Communication Technology.

In the College of Education, the university offers a program called Bachelor of Special Needs Education (BSNEd) that prepares pre-service teachers to work with students with diverse learning needs. The program has two majors: BSNEd-Generalist and BSNEd with specialization in Teaching Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners (BSNEd-TDHHL), making it suitable as an environment for this study. Now, it is working on to be a premier, inclusive, globally- recognized research and innovation, smart, community-responsive, and sustainable technological university..

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the fourth year BSNEd pre-service teachers. They have two specializations, namely: the generalist and teaching deaf and hard of hearing learners. The distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Distribution of the Respondents

Course	n	%
BSNEd-Generalist	39	48.75
BSNEd-TDHHL	41	51.25
Total	80	100.00

These respondents were appropriate to answer the questionnaires of this study because they have been trained already by the university on the basic teaching principles which they can apply in their profession particularly on handling learners with special educational needs. Moreover, the fourth-year pre- service teachers were exposed to handling learners with special educational needs and handled inclusive classes during their practice teaching. Hence, these experiences can help them evaluate their readiness towards handling inclusive classes.

Instrument

This research used three sets of adopted survey questionnaires for the respondents. The questionnaires consist of the following:

Part I. This part elicited information about the respondents' knowledge about inclusion. The questionnaire is adopted from Pasha et al. (2021) which consists of 17 items.

Part II. This part utilized the same questionnaire which assessed the respondents' skills in handling inclusion.

Part III. This part utilized a questionnaire containing statements that describe the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, which is adopted from Adeniyi et al. (2016).

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure that the research was conducted properly, there were three stages of data gathering process that were carried out. These stages guarantee that the findings of the researchers were both valid and reliable.

Preliminary stage. In the initial step in data gathering, the researcher asked for permission and sought the approval from the dean of the College of Education at CTU-Main campus. This was appropriate since it ensured their understanding and support to have a smooth process in conducting the survey and there were no complications regarding the university policies and regulations implemented. The researcher thoroughly explained to the dean the purpose and significance of the study.

Data Gathering Stage. After the permission was given, the researcher conducted an orientation to the fourth-year pre-service teachers on the objectives of the study and their role in the study. The researcher guided students in answering the questionnaires. Subsequently, the researcher secured an informed consent to ensure their willingness to voluntarily participate in the process of gathering the data. Afterward, the questionnaires were given to the pre-service teachers, and they were enough time to finish answering without feeling pressured. Once the respondents completely answered the questionnaires, the researcher collected the questionnaires and ensured 100% retrieval of the questionnaires.

Post Data Gathering Stage. The data gathered were sorted, tallied, summarized, and treated according to the objectives of the study. Moreover, the data were stored appropriately while observing the ethical standards of data handling procedure.

V. Statistical Treatment of Data

This part of this study ensured that the data gathered from the respondents were processed according to the objectives of the study. The researcher asked the assistance of a statistician to ensure that the data were treated appropriately. The following statistical tools were used.

Frequency Count. This tool was used mainly in determining the number of respondents who fall on the category of the profile assessed in the study.

Percentage. This tool was used to calculate the proportion of the profile of the selected participants in relation to the total number of respondents.

Weighted Mean. This tool was used to determine to determine the respondents level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards inclusion.

Standard Deviation. This tool was used to measure the spread of the responses of the items measuring the variables of this study.

Pearson's r. This tool was used to test the significance of the relationship between respondents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards inclusion.

VI. Results and Discussions

This part of the study provides the interpretation, analysis, and implications from the data that were acquired from the fourth year BSNE pre-service teachers enrolled in a state university located in Cebu City. The academic environment of the university and the respondents are chosen to give an appropriate representation of the study determining the levels of knowledge and skills and their respective correlation towards attitudes about inclusive education. Given the respondents' response to the questionnaires provided, the results and findings of the study are presented and discussed as follows.

LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION

This portion interprets and discusses the level of knowledge of the BSNE pre-service teachers, in which it assesses the acquired learning of the respondent about the concept of inclusion. The indicators include the fundamental information about the term inclusion and its relation in the context of education.

The pre-service teachers' preparedness encompasses the important role of fostering knowledge in which it contains

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the acquired learning from knowing classroom instruction to progressing evaluation that essentially influence their idea and knowledge about inclusion (Dioso et al., 2022a; Pasha et al., 2021). Table 2 shows the level of knowledge of the respondents towards inclusion.

Table 2
Level of knowledge of the respondents towards inclusion

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1 I have clear concepts of the term "Inclusion".	4.74	0.55	Highly Knowledgeable
2 Every child regardless of disabilities has the right to be educated in the regular class.	4.63	0.82	Highly Knowledgeable
3 Students with special needs can best be served in the general education classroom.	4.76	0.86	Highly Knowledgeable
4 The inclusion of students with special needs in the class can be beneficial for students without disabilities.	4.51	0.73	Knowledgeable
5 Students with special needs benefit both academically and socially from being placed in an inclusive setting.	4.64	0.66	Highly Knowledgeable
6 Inclusive teaching is a successful education system to address learners' needs.	4.68	0.65	Highly Knowledgeable
7 Inclusive teaching requires collaboration among teachers (General & special).	4.81	0.58	Highly Knowledgeable
8 Successful implementation of inclusive education requires special training for teachers.	4.78	0.53	Highly Knowledgeable
9 Teachers should use different methods of teaching to satisfy the needs of disabled students.	4.75	0.54	Highly Knowledgeable
10 Teachers should have opportunities to adapt the syllabus and teaching materials while teaching in inclusive classes.	4.76	0.53	Knowledgeable
11 The teachers should encourage cooperative learning to make all students support each other.	4.75	0.63	Highly Knowledgeable
12 The teacher must design the individualized education plan (IEP) for children with special needs.	4.75	0.58	Knowledgeable
13 Inclusive teaching makes the teacher feel more responsible for students with special needs.		Teaching strategies (Task Analysis, shaping,	
14 Teacher should manage the classroom layout and setting plan for the children with special needs.			
15 Teachers should use differentiated instruction in an inclusive classroom.			
Teachers should collaborate with other professionals in designing individualized educational plans (IEP) for students with disabilities.			

0.59	Highly Knowledgeable	4.69	0.67	Highly Knowledgeable
0.57	Highly Knowledgeable			
0.60	Highly Knowledgeable		Highly	
			4.69	0.65 Knowledgeable

17 Chaining Prompting, Fading) should use in an inclusive classroom.

Aggregate Weighted Mean	4.69	Highly
Aggregate Standard Deviation	0.63	
Knowledgeable		

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Knowledgeable, 3.41-4.20-Knowledgeable, 2.61-3.40-Moderately Knowledgeable, 1.81-2.60-Less Knowledgeable, 1.00-1.80-Not Knowledgeable

acquired about inclusion giving a weighted mean of 4.6 and a standard deviation of 0.63 which signifies that the respondents are consistent about their knowledge about inclusion and comprehends the different aspects of inclusion.

The respondents indicate that inclusive teaching requires collaboration among teachers both in general and special education having the highest weighted mean of 4.81 and a standard deviation of 0.58. This implies that the respondents pre-conceived notion of inclusive education is the collaborative effort of the teachers regardless if they are teaching general or special since the idea of inclusion in education emphasizes the participation of LSENs in a general education environment. However, the respondents may not slightly believe that students with special needs can best served in general education classroom having the statement with the lowest mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.86. This means that with the knowledge of the respondents indicating that inclusion requires the hand-on-hand effort of general and special education teachers, LSENs alone may not be served the best care they need in a general education classroom in comparison to the care that of a special education environment.

The pre-service teachers are highly knowledgeable when it comes to understanding the fundamental concepts about inclusion in education. The results are consistent with previous studies about the knowledge of pre-service teachers about inclusion. (Adeniyi et al., 2016) revealed that the pre-service teachers had high knowledge of inclusive education and one reason in which the short compulsory of subjects dealing with the information of inclusive education. (Pasha et al., 2021) measured the knowledge of pre-service teachers about inclusion in which they are knowledgeable having a mean score above 3.50 and believed that professional experience remains a leading method for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education (Pasha et al., 2021). However, (Hay et al., 2001) contradicts the results which low number of their respondents have an idea about the concepts of inclusive education and only below 50% could describe inclusive education. Hence, the knowledge of pre-service teachers is strengthened by acquiring information through lessons and experiences about inclusive education.

LEVEL OF SKILLS OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION

This segment reveals and implies the level of skills of the BSNE pre- service teachers, in which it measures the level of skills being possessed by the respondents. The indicators include the preparation and competence of pre- service teachers towards inclusive education.

The pre-service teachers' preparations are essential for the adoption of inclusive education and one of which is their skills and competencies ensuring effective teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom that make for its success (Aldabas, 2020; Okoye & Ifi, 2020). Table 3 reflects that the pre-service teachers possess the necessary competencies and preparations that indicates the highly skilled result with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.39 with a standard deviation of 0.67 imposing that they acquire the necessary skills and somehow, they acquired diverse skills that they can utilize

in the inclusive education environment.

Table 3
Level of skills of the respondents towards inclusion

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I can use different approaches (e.g. Response to intervention & inquiry-based learning) for the support of students with diverse learning needs.	4.38	0.66	Highly Skilled
2	I am prepared to use reinforcement strategies in an inclusive classroom.	4.41	0.65	Highly Skilled
3	I can provide an alternate explanation for example when students are confused.	4.44	0.65	Highly Skilled
4	I am confident in designing learning tasks for the individual needs of students with disabilities.	4.38	0.68	Highly Skilled
5	I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., portfolio, assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessment, etc.).	4.40	0.65	Highly Skilled
6	I am prepared to deal with students who are behavioral problems in an inclusive classroom.	4.28	0.73	Highly Skilled
7	I am confident in my ability to get students to work together in pairs or small groups with peers.	4.43	0.63	Highly Skilled
Weighted Mean		4.39		Highly Skilled
Standard Deviation			0.67	

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Highly Skilled, 3.41-4.20-Skilled, 2.61-3.40-Moderately Skilled, 1.81-2.60-Less Skilled, 1.00-1.80-Not Skilled

The third statement having the highest weighted mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.65 signifies that pre-service teachers' when it comes to providing explanation believe they can provide alterations when their students get confused. Given the result, pre-service teachers are highly skilled when providing variety of explanations since in the special education environment have

LSEs with diverse learning need and such skill being possessed will be helpful in showing their capabilities in adaptability.

On the other hand, the statement with the lowest weighted mean of 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.73 state that the respondents are varied when talking about their preparedness to deal with students who are behavioral problems in an inclusive education. Such idea means that the pre-service teachers are not yet physically and emotionally prepared when dealing with different behavioral dilemma since LSEs are prone to possess different behavioral attributes and such skill to cater each learner can brought a lot of pressure upon dealing their behaviors.

The highly skilled result of the pre-service teachers of their skills towards inclusion implies that they acquire the abilities and competencies and prepared both in cognitive and behavioral attributes. (Pasha et al., 2021) supports such result having each statement score above the mean of 3.50 indicating they are skilled such that well-trained pre-service teachers are required for effective and quality education for all learners. (Okoye & Ifi, 2020) also found out that that special education pre-service teachers are prepared in terms of teachers' skills needed for the adoption of inclusive education possessing the skills needed for an inclusive classroom and that they have holistic, comprehensive, detailed experience about uniqueness of teaching in an inclusive environment (Okoye & Ifi, 2020). Additionally, (Dioso et al., 2022b) implies that skill such that basic sign language increases the teachers' tolerance in facilitating a classroom that carry the ideas of inclusive special education.

Meanwhile, (Aldabas, 2020) despite highlighting that the majority of the study's respondents showed a higher level of confidence in the collaboration and teamwork skills dimension, they had lower confidence in skills for the implementation

of an inclusion dimension indicating that participants' preparation programs may have covered more about the collaborative approaches than content on how to implement inclusion. Thus, the skills of the pre-service teachers are crucial in shaping their capability to handle inclusive classes that is essential since it requires handling diverse learning needs and behavioral capacity.

LEVEL OF ATTITUDES OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION

This section interpret and discuss pre-service teachers under the BSNEED course which tackle their individual perspectives to the topic of inclusion. The statements possess their perception towards inclusive education that shaped by their knowledge and skills of the concept.

Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusion vary across the educational field across numerous studies it has many terms such as integration or mainstreaming, whereas others used inclusion referring to a situation in which a class, a school, or an educational system tries to meet the needs of LSENs (Chhabra et al., 2010; VanCleaf, 2019). The respondent perceived very positive attitude towards inclusion as presented in Table 4 with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.58 and an aggregate standard deviation of 0.73.

Table 4
Level of attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	Inclusive educational practice in the school system makes me like teaching.	4.50	0.81	Very Positive
2	Coping with special needs students might be difficult but I believe it is a task that must be done.	4.61	0.68	Very Positive
3	If I have my way, inclusive educational practice would be given more priority than any other educational practices.	4.46	0.73	Very Positive
4	I respect students with disabilities as individuals with differences as I respect other students.	4.78	0.59	Very Positive
5	I am comfortable communicating with special education teachers to gain more knowledge of people with special needs.	4.68	0.61	Very Positive
6	I think you need to be a special kind of teacher to teach students that are special needs.	4.50	0.90	Very Positive
7	I would prefer to teach in special school if I have the choice because it has more facilities than regular schools.	4.29	0.92	Very Positive
8	I just love people with special needs because they are human beings who have potentials and unique abilities.	4.68	0.65	Very Positive
9	There is nothing wrong being a friend of person with special needs or even marry him/her.	4.63	0.68	Very Positive
10	As a teacher, my duty is to look after the interest of the students and not their disabilities.	4.71	0.73	Very Positive
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.58		
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.73	Very Positive

Legend: 4.21-5.00-Very Positive, 3.41-4.20-Positive, 2.61-3.40-Neutral, 1.81-2.60-Negative, 1.00-1.80-Very Negative

perceptions towards LSEs through the nature of their course and the essence of showing respect to individuals with special needs. With a weighted mean of 4.78 and a standard deviation of 0.59 the fourth statement has the highest mean stating that the respondents respect students with disabilities as individuals with differences as they respect other students. This means that the respondents value respect to every student regardless their differences as an essential aspect of the nature of their study and the less deviates indicating that most of the respondents does value diversity in the education.

In contrast, with a weighted mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.92 not all of the respondents would prefer to teach in special school if they have the choice because it has more facilities than regular schools. This means that the BSNE students does not believe that the special schools may have more facilities than regular schools since there is more chance that the capability of a school to have more facilities is highly offered for regular classes limiting the chance for having facilities for special school. The facilities of a particular school also depends on the support of its environment most especially if LSEs is valued enough to establish an environment suitable for their care.

The respondents demonstrates a very positive perception and attitudes towards inclusive education. This is well supported by studies that also values positive view towards inclusion. (Chhabra et al., 2010) supports the result of the study indicating the respondents of their study showing positive attitudes towards inclusive education and shows a significant correlation found between the respondents who had a close friend with a disability and previous teaching experience making it appear that the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms necessitates the need for paraprofessionals in the classroom. (Haider, 2008) also found out that the efforts to implement the inclusive program received a positive response from the teachers. More specifically, it was found that teachers with experience in working with LSEs held more positive attitudes towards their inclusion than their colleagues without relevant experience (Haider, 2008).

However, (McNamee, 2016) studied that based on their survey, their results received, 40% of preservice teachers indicated that integrating students with disabilities is a burden and 17% have no opinion on the topic at all depending on the survey question that preservice teachers' attitudes seemed to change on inclusion based on the benefit to students. However, such results was interpreted because their respondents have few service-learning opportunities to learn about integrating students with disabilities, and many current teachers in the field who have negative attitudes towards integrating students with disabilities into the general education classroom, preservice teachers do not have enough experiences to form a positive attitude. (McNamee, 2016). Therefore, the attitudes of the pre-service teachers depends on the influence of their learning environment most importantly the influence of knowledge and skill that shapes their perception towards inclusion.

TEST OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION

This component presents the test of the relationship between the variables knowledge and attitudes using Pearson's r correlational analysis. This will measure the linear association between the two variables in which the respondents' knowledge shows influence towards their attitudes on inclusive education.

Table 5 shows the result of the significant relationship between knowledge that influence the attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion showing an R- value of 0.862 with a p-value of 0.001. The p-value of the relationship in comparison to the level of significance of 0.05 is highly significant. Statistically, this means that there is a strong positive correlation between the knowledge and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5
Test of relationship between the knowledge and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Knowledge and Attitudes towards Inclusion	0.862*	Strong Positive	0.001	Reject H ₀	Significant

*significant at p<0.05 (two tailed)

The result suggest having a significant relationship, knowledge influence the respondents' attitude towards inclusion. The findings is consistent with previous studies having knowledge brings forth the positive attitude towards inclusion. (Adeniyi et al., 2016) study revealed high knowledge and positive attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusive education greatly improved by few courses undertaken in special education which is attributed to the length of campaign, advocacy, and contact with students with disabilities and a welcome development in this era global inclusiveness. Furthermore, (Dioso et al., 2022a) implies that the teachers are highly prepared and able to motivate learners, with and without special needs to engage in learning in an inclusive special education setting if given the chance to handle a class in this type of setting having enough readiness to handle students in an inclusive special education.

In contrast, (Hay et al., 2001) showed a marked lack of knowledge on issues related to inclusive education considering the lack of experience and training that the respondents had had in dealing with children with special educational needs. The teachers furthermore felt unprepared and unequipped to teach integrated classes, and ascribed this to a lack of training, lack of time, large classes, lack of facilities, and lack of teacher experience but willing to learn more about these issues, provided that it led to a diploma or certificate.

Theoretically, this study highlights the connection of knowledge and attitudes towards inclusive education that is supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior providing a useful conceptual framework for dealing with complexities of human social behavior in a way that permits prediction and understanding of particular behaviors in specified contexts (Ajzen, 1991). Studies of (Gilor & Katz, 2019) implies also that knowledge that influences the attitude to engage in inclusive teaching must be considered to the relationship between these variables and the beliefs that lead to their formulation. Moreover, the findings also supported by the Vygotsky's Constructivist Learning Theory suggesting that learning comes before development, opportunities to practice and learn from more knowledgeable persons become even more significant having experiences becomes an influence of attitudes of pre-service teachers (Jamero, 2019).

Practically, The findings emphasize the importance of comprehensive teacher education programs that integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experience to foster inclusive practices effectively and address gaps in training (Pasha et al., 2021). Furthermore, the need for teacher training programs to improve knowledge related to inclusive education, as well as the importance of fostering inclusive attitudes to ensure the successful integration of diverse learners in mainstream classrooms (Siason et al., 2022).

TEST OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONDENTS' SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION

This element reveals the test of the relationship between the variables skills and attitudes using Pearson's r correlational analysis. This will measure the linear association between the two variables in which the respondents' skills shows impact towards their attitudes on inclusive education.

Table 6

Test of relationship between the skills and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Skills and Attitudes towards Inclusion	0.645*	Moderate Positive	0.001	Reject H0	Significant

*significant at p<0.05 (two tailed)

Skills and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion shows a significant correlation towards each other with an R-value of 0.645 and a p-value of 0.001 as gleamed in Table 6. The result is highly significant as shown that the p-value of the relationship in comparison to the level of significance of 0.05. This indicates that there is a moderate positive correlation between the skills and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion. Thus, the relationship of skills and attitudes is significant rejecting the null hypothesis.

The significant relationship implies that skills influences the respondents attitudes towards inclusive education. Such findings corroborate with other studies implying that skills affects the attitudes of pre-service teachers about inclusion. (Ecoben, 2019) shows the results of the skill level of public-school teachers in handling inclusive education. Skill in handling inclusive education is important to every mainstream teacher because they needed to master the general regular classroom course content indicating that they are highly skilled regarding their personal attitudes (Ecoben, 2019). (Zegeye, 2022) highlight thetremendous influence that the knowledge and skills teachers obtain from teacher training programs exert on the perceptions of teachers' preparedness for inclusive education. Furthermore, (Dioso et al., 2022b) also find positive correlations between skills and attitudes, emphasize the interconnectedness of these dimensions suggesting skill levels among teachers, with professional development programs play an important role in enhancing flexibility and learner- centered approaches. Meanwhile, (Aldabas, 2020) highlight lower confidence in skills for the implementation of an inclusion dimension indicating that participants' preparation programs may have covered more about the collaborative approaches than content on how to implement inclusion.

Theoretical frameworks like the Theory of Planned Behavior corroborates with the findings of this study underscoring the impact the of beliefs and preparedness on educators' attitudes. Bronfenbrenner's' Theory of Planned Behavior indicated that teachers' everyday practices in diverse classrooms are also significantly predicted by their attitudes towards inclusion as well as by their perceptions of their school management's expectations concerning inclusive education (Hellmich et al., 2019). In addition, (Nurhasnah et al., 2024) highlighted that by CLT having impact on pre-service teachers' skills are crucial in shaping their behaviors towards inclusion as teaching LSENs in terms of goals, curriculum, learning, assessment, and instruction delivery.

Lastly, focusing on longitudinal studies assessing the development of these competencies is important to enhance pre-service teacher preparation and inclusive practices effectively (Harkins & Fletcher, 2015). The need for adequate

support and tailored training to improve inclusive teaching practices in variety of settings, identifying gaps in current strategies and areas for fostering collaboration and teacher preparedness (Shoulders & Krei, 2016).

Overall, inclusion encompasses an environment which general and special needs learners have the chance to learn on that same environment. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the respondents influence their understanding, capabilities, and perceptions upon teaching in an inclusive education environment. It is highly evident in the results gathered that knowledge and skills influence also the attitudes of the pre-service teachers towards their preparedness on inclusion. This validates the idea that comprehensive teacher education programs of the pre-service teachers are vital in order to properly implement a school environment where teachers share their knowledge to both general students and LSENs at the same time on a same classroom.

VII. SUMMARY

This study ought to find out the influence of knowledge and skills to the attitude of the pre-service teachers towards inclusion from a state university located in Cebu City. The respondents are consists of BSNED pre-service teachers major in Generalist and TDHHL of academic year 2024-2025. The respondents' profile was acquired to be an aid in interpreting the results of the study. After while, respondents completed survey questionnaires indicating the levels of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards inclusion.

The data that were gathered was analyzed statistically utilizing frequency count and percentage in providing the data associated with the profile of the respondents. Weighted mean and standard were used in analyzing the level and spread of the responses of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the respondents. In addition, upon drawing a conclusion based on the response from the survey questionnaires, a test on the significance of both knowledge and skills to attitudes of the respondents

was undertaken using Pearson's r correlation analysis indicating the linear association of the variables.

VIII. FINDINGS

The following findings were found from the analyzed results from the data gathered that were acquired and statistically treated.

Pre-service teachers' knowledge was being assessed and the result indicated that they are highly knowledgeable when it comes to the concept of inclusion. The pre-service teachers understands that in inclusion, LSENs alone may not be served with the appropriate care needed in a general classroom with a general education teacher alone. The collaboration of both general and special education teachers is essentially needed when the idea is about implementing inclusion with LSENs. Pre-service teachers were deemed as highly skilled individuals upon measuring their skills towards inclusion imposing that they acquire the necessary skills to utilize on an inclusive education environment.

However, the respondents were not yet ready both in their physical and emotional attributed when dealing with behavioral problems of LSENs despite the readiness in being adaptable in delivery of instruction towards the diverse learning needs of LSENs. Furthermore, the respondents perceived inclusion in a very positive manner as a result in evaluating their attitudes about inclusion. Pre-service teachers values diversity valuing respect in every individual to their unique way to behave and understand in contrast to their belief that schools have limited facilities to cater LSENs depends on the environment they are being implemented lacking their self-belief in teaching on such environment.

A strong positive correlation between knowledge and attitudes and a moderate positive correlation between skills and attitudes of the respondents upon treating the correlation matrix of the variables. Highly knowledgeable teachers with a positive attitude are an ongoing development that prepares them to engage to learners with diverse needs in an inclusive education setting.

Moreover, skills influence the attitudes of the pre-service teachers such that it is important since they both need to have capabilities in teaching both general education and special education indicating they are highly skilled resulting to their very positive personal attitudes. Both skills and knowledge signify the pre-service teachers' preparedness to handle inclusion and the interconnectedness of the two variables plays an important role in attitude and enhancing flexibility on a learner-centered approach.

IX. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the influence of knowledge and skills of pre-service teachers to their attitudes towards inclusion. It is clear in the findings that the pre-service teachers are highly knowledgeable when it comes the idea towards inclusion. The knowledge emphasizes the pre-service teachers' awareness how inclusion works in their context. Teachers are pivotal aspect of inclusion requiring them to be adaptable, flexible, and knowledgeable when dealing with learners with special needs. The global trends today advocate inclusive practices and highlight the need for sustained support to optimize teacher readiness to handle inclusive environment susceptible for learning.

Pre-service teachers are also highly skilled when it comes to the capabilities possessed towards inclusion. Through the knowledge acquired, skills were honed such that providing diversity in every process of learning and being able to provide reinforcement strategies to let students work with their peers. The ability to let students work together especially in an environment where inclusion is implemented is vital for progress of learners working hand in hand regardless of the diversity of needs. Furthermore, respect and responsibility go together for a very positive attitudes of pre-service teachers. Respect for every individual regardless of disability is important as it values the essence of inclusion. Responsibility as crucial as treating every learner with the duty of looking after their interest and ensuring they are being able to acquire the right to be educated.

This highlights the necessity for policymakers to prioritize intensive teacher training and resource allocation to facilitate the effective implementation of inclusive education policies. Furthermore, the need for teacher training programs is highly rampant to improve knowledge and skills related to inclusion, as well as the importance of fostering inclusive attitudes to ensure the successful integration of diverse learners in mainstream classrooms. Thus, the importance of comprehensive teacher education programs should be implemented in work integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experience to foster

inclusive practices effectively and address gaps in training.

While inclusive education is largely seen as beneficial, challenges such as limited resources and training continue to hinder its progress. Future research should address these gaps to ensure effective frameworks that enhance the inclusion process. Also, understanding pedagogical strategies that enhance inclusion still persist as a gap and must be studied to better assess the development of competencies necessary for effective teacher readiness.

RECOMMENDATION

In consideration to the study's conclusion, it is highly suggested that adequate support and tailored training to improve inclusive teaching practices be implemented since it is meant to develop and mold the knowledge and skills that will further improve the preparedness of the pre-service teachers and foster effective inclusive learning environment.

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