

Assessment of Inclusive Education Implementation in Secondary Schools in SOCCSKSARGEN: Basis for Strategic Plan

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Abstract

This study assessed the implementation of inclusive education in public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN, Philippines, as a basis for developing strategic interventions to strengthen inclusive educational practices. Anchored in DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, the study employed a descriptive quantitative research design using a structured survey questionnaire administered to 585 respondents, comprising 391 teachers and 194 school administrators, selected through stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that inclusive education was Mostly Implemented ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.99$) across Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. Similarly, institutional roles during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases were Mostly Implemented ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.99$). Significant differences were identified among teachers in selected assessments of Program Options and Assessment according to demographic characteristics, whereas no significant differences were observed among school administrators or in respondents' implementation-phase roles. Despite existing inclusive practices, challenges persisted in learner identification, specialized assessment services, teacher preparedness, resource availability, and parental engagement. The study concluded that strengthening existing initiatives through targeted program enhancement, continuous professional development, improved SPED/SNED services, and stakeholder collaboration was necessary. The findings support Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by promoting inclusive learning opportunities, educational equity, and institutional collaboration. The study contributes to educational, social, and institutional sustainability by providing an evidence-based foundation for responsive educational management, continuous improvement, and sustainable inclusive education implementation.

Keywords: Assessment, Child Find; Curriculum Modifications; Inclusive Education; Parental Involvement; Program Options; School Administrators; Teacher Professional Development

1. Introduction

Inclusive education is a fundamental approach to ensuring equitable access, meaningful participation, and quality learning opportunities for all students, particularly learners with disabilities and diverse educational needs. Its effective implementation requires appropriate instructional practices, continuous assessment, competent teachers, supportive school leadership, and collaboration with families and communities. Recent research emphasizes that sustainable inclusion depends not only on policy adoption but also on systematic institutional improvement and coordinated leadership (Ketikidou & Saiti, 2022; Kivirand et al., 2022). In this context, the present study assessed

the implementation of inclusive education in public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN, Philippines, to identify areas requiring improvement and provide an empirical basis for a strategic plan.

Inclusive education promotes an educational environment in which learners with diverse abilities and needs can participate meaningfully in learning activities. It extends beyond the physical placement of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms by emphasizing accessible instruction, individualized support, equitable assessment, and institutional responsiveness. Ketikidou and Saiti (2022) emphasized that effective inclusion requires supportive school cultures, coordinated leadership, and organizational practices that recognize learner diversity. Despite international commitments to inclusive education, implementation remains challenging because of inadequate teacher preparation, insufficient instructional resources, inaccessible learning environments, and inconsistent institutional support. Kivirand et al. (2022) demonstrated the importance of professional development involving school leaders, teachers, and support personnel in strengthening institutional capacity for inclusion. Similarly, Almeqdad et al. (2023) identified Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a promising approach to improving instructional accessibility, although the reviewed evidence varied considerably across educational settings. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) strengthened the legislative framework for inclusive education by providing for Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, individualized education planning, appropriate support services, and capacity-building for educational stakeholders. Nevertheless, the existence of legislative and institutional frameworks does not automatically ensure consistent implementation. Assessing inclusive education practices remains essential for identifying operational limitations, determining institutional needs, and developing responsive improvement strategies.

Recent literature identifies four interconnected dimensions influencing inclusive education implementation: instructional preparedness, educational management, assessment practices, and strategic institutional development. Teacher preparedness and instructional flexibility are essential to accommodating diverse learning needs. Almeqdad et al. (2023), through a systematic review and meta-analysis, reported promising outcomes associated with UDL-based interventions, emphasizing the potential of accessible instructional design. In the Philippine context, Jimenez (2025) identified continuing challenges related to infrastructure, teacher awareness, and policy implementation, despite positive assessments of inclusive education practices. Educational management and leadership also influence institutional readiness. Ketikidou and Saiti (2022) emphasized that sustainable and systemic leadership supports collaborative school cultures and inclusive organizational practices. Kivirand et al. (2022) further demonstrated how school-team professional development can facilitate institutional improvement. Similarly, UNESCO (2024) highlighted the responsibilities of educational leaders in establishing institutional priorities, supporting teachers, promoting collaboration, and strengthening inclusive learning environments. Assessment and stakeholder participation constitute another important dimension. Effective inclusive education requires systematic identification of learner needs, appropriate instructional adjustments, and continued monitoring of educational participation. Musendo et al. (2023), in their systematic review, identified the potential benefits of interventions supporting parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities, while emphasizing the need for stronger evidence in low- and middle-income countries. Finally, institutional assessment provides a foundation for strategic improvement. Javier (2023) identified challenges experienced by teachers and school administrators in implementing inclusive education and developed an action plan based on the findings. Siriban (2025) likewise identified limitations related to teacher competence, resources, environmental conditions, and community collaboration. Collectively, these studies establish the importance of evidence-based planning, continuing professional development, adequate resource allocation, and sustained stakeholder engagement.

Globally, inclusive education remains central to educational equity and sustainable development. UNESCO (2023) emphasized that educational technologies should improve accessibility and participation while considering differences in learner needs, institutional capacity, and resource availability. UNESCO (2024) further recognized educational leadership as an important factor in strengthening institutional responsiveness, professional development, and inclusive school environments. At the national level, Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) established an expanded policy framework for supporting learners with disabilities in Philippine basic education. The Department of Education (2024) also incorporated learner well-being, inclusive education, and teacher support into its MATATAG Agenda and Basic Education Development Plan. These initiatives highlight the need for schools to translate national policies into operational practices responsive to different educational contexts. In SOCCSKSARGEN, inclusive education implementation has been examined in selected secondary school settings. Catolico and Cabanlit (2023) assessed inclusive education among four mega high schools in the region and reported a high level of implementation alongside challenges affecting institutional practices. Furthermore, Turnos (2024) documented the regional Department of Education's commitment to inclusive curriculum implementation, teacher training, and monitoring under the MATATAG reforms. Although these developments indicate continuing efforts to strengthen inclusive education, differences in school capacity, instructional resources, personnel preparedness, and stakeholder support warrant further investigation. A broader assessment involving secondary school teachers and administrators can provide region-specific evidence for improving implementation and developing coordinated strategic interventions.

The study adopted a policy-based operational framework anchored in DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, which identifies essential components of inclusive education implementation. These components include Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, Parental Involvement, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Child Find concerns the identification and referral of learners with special educational needs, while Assessment determines their learning strengths, needs, and appropriate educational support. Program Options address suitable educational arrangements, including inclusive classrooms and specialized support services. Curriculum Modifications involve adapting instructional approaches, learning materials, and assessments to accommodate learner diversity. Parental Involvement emphasizes family participation in supporting learners, while Monitoring and Evaluation facilitates institutional accountability and continuing improvement. These components are consistent with the contemporary legislative direction established by Republic Act No. 11650 (2022), which emphasizes inclusive services, learner assessment, individualized educational planning, family participation, and coordinated institutional support. The framework also reflects recent scholarship emphasizing comprehensive school development, instructional accessibility, and inclusive leadership (Almeqdad et al., 2023; Kivirand et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2024). In the present study, these dimensions served as the basis for assessing implementation practices, alongside teachers' and administrators' roles during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases. The resulting assessments provided inputs for developing a strategic plan responsive to identified institutional needs.

Although recent studies have examined inclusive education implementation, institutional challenges remain evident across different educational settings. Jimenez (2025) identified limitations in infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and policy implementation, while Martin (2026) documented differences in the perspectives of school heads and teachers regarding inclusive education and the continuing challenges associated with teacher competencies and transition programs. Within SOCCSKSARGEN, Catolico and Cabanlit (2023) provided important evidence concerning inclusive education implementation in four mega high schools. However, their institutional coverage underscores the value of further assessment across a broader range of public secondary school settings and administrative contexts. The present study addresses this contextual need by examining inclusive education implementation in relation to Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. It further evaluates the roles of teachers and administrators during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases and examines differences in their assessments according to position, educational attainment, and years of professional experience. By integrating these dimensions, the study provides an empirical basis for identifying implementation gaps, prioritizing institutional interventions, and formulating a strategic plan for strengthening inclusive education in SOCCSKSARGEN. Its contribution lies primarily in regional implementation assessment and evidence-based educational management rather than establishing causal relationships or evaluating individual learner outcomes.

The study primarily supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by examining institutional practices that promote inclusive and equitable learning opportunities. Its assessment of learner identification, instructional modifications, educational support, and stakeholder participation contributes to understanding how secondary schools can strengthen inclusive education implementation. These concerns are particularly relevant to SDG Targets 4.5 and 4.a, which emphasize educational equity and inclusive, accessible learning environments (UNESCO, 2024). The research also aligns with SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by addressing educational barriers affecting learners with disabilities and diverse educational needs. Identifying weaknesses in school practices and developing targeted improvement strategies can support more equitable access to educational services and participation (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). Additionally, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is relevant to the study's emphasis on cooperation among school administrators, teachers, families, communities, and education authorities. Stronger collaboration can support coordinated interventions, institutional capacity-building, and the sustained implementation of inclusive education initiatives (Musendo et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024).

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability primarily through educational, social, institutional, and governance dimensions. From an educational sustainability perspective, assessing inclusive education implementation provides information for strengthening teaching practices, learner support, and continuous professional development. Sustainable improvement requires schools to institutionalize inclusive practices rather than rely solely on isolated initiatives (Kivirand et al., 2022). From a social sustainability perspective, inclusive education promotes equitable participation, respect for learner diversity, and opportunities for students with disabilities. Supporting meaningful educational participation can help reduce exclusion and strengthen social inclusion, consistent with the objectives of Republic Act No. 11650 (2022). From an institutional and governance perspective, the study supports evidence-based decision-making, strategic resource allocation, professional development planning, and institutional accountability. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that effective educational leadership and collaboration are important for sustaining quality education and organizational improvement. Furthermore, the study highlights the value of community participation through collaboration among educational institutions, families, and other stakeholders. By translating assessment findings into proposed strategic interventions, the research provides a basis for strengthening inclusive educational systems and supporting long-term institutional development in SOCCSKSARGEN. Ultimately, the study's multidisciplinary sustainability

contribution lies in its potential to inform educational planning, strengthen institutional capacity, improve equity-oriented practices, and promote a more responsive and inclusive secondary education system.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design employing a quantitative survey method to assess the implementation of inclusive education among teachers and school administrators in public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN. According to Calderon & Gonzales (2018), descriptive research involves systematically describing, analyzing, and interpreting existing conditions, while Best (1981) emphasized its suitability for examining educational practices. The survey method facilitated the collection of respondents' perceptions and experiences without manipulating the study environment (Creswell, 2012). A structured questionnaire adapted from the Schools Division of Malabon's Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for Inclusive Education, aligned with DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, was employed to assess implementation practices and institutional roles. The findings provided an empirical basis for developing a strategic plan to strengthen inclusive education in the region.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public secondary schools across SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII), Mindanao, Philippines, covering the provinces of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani, including General Santos City. The region was selected to assess inclusive education implementation across different geographical and educational settings. These schools served learners with diverse educational needs, including learners with disabilities and special educational needs. The study focused on the implementation practices of public secondary schools under the Department of Education.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents comprised 585 public secondary school personnel directly involved in implementing inclusive education, consisting of 391 teachers (66.84%) and 194 school administrators (33.16%). School administrators included principals, assistant principals, school heads, and teachers-in-charge. The target population consisted of 17,378 teachers and 378 school administrators. Respondents were selected based on their geographical location and involvement in inclusive education implementation. Their profiles were examined according to position or role, highest educational attainment, and years of experience in education.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed stratified random sampling to ensure representation across geographical locations and personnel categories. This probability sampling technique involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups and randomly selecting respondents from each group (Hayes, 2024). Approximately 20% of the respondents were allocated to each of the five geographical areas covered by the study, with consideration given to the involvement of teachers and school administrators in inclusive education. The sample size was determined using the simplified formula of Yamane (1967), expressed as $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, where n represents the sample size, N represents the population, and e represents the allowable margin of error. A 5% margin of error was adopted in determining the required sample (Israel, 2022). The resulting study sample comprised 391 teachers and 194 school administrators, yielding 585 respondents.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured survey questionnaire adapted from the Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for Inclusive Education developed by the Schools Division of Malabon and anchored in DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009. Groves et. al., (2011) described surveys as instruments for systematically gathering information from a defined group of respondents. The questionnaire assessed inclusive education implementation across five components: Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. It also examined the roles of teachers and administrators during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases. A five-point Likert scale was used, with responses ranging from 5 (Fully Implemented) to 1 (Not Implemented). Mean scores were interpreted as Fully Implemented (4.20–5.00), Mostly Implemented (3.40–4.19), Partially Implemented (2.60–3.39), Minimally Implemented (1.80–2.59), and Not Implemented (1.00–1.79). The instrument underwent content and construct validity assessments involving experts in education, special education, educational leadership, and inclusive education practices. A pilot test involving 30 public secondary school personnel, comprising 20 teachers and 10 administrators from a comparable educational setting, was conducted to assess clarity and reliability. Internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha, with 0.70 established as the acceptable threshold. The 39-item instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.975, indicating excellent internal consistency. Identified ambiguities were addressed before the final administration.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection commenced after securing the necessary institutional authorization and formal approval from the Department of Education Regional Office and concerned Schools Division Offices. Following approval, the

researcher administered the structured questionnaire online to selected public secondary school teachers and administrators across SOCCSKSARGEN. Google Sheets was utilized as the primary platform for gathering and organizing survey responses. Online administration was adopted because of practical accessibility and internet connectivity considerations, particularly in urbanized areas and medium-to-large schools. Before participating, respondents were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, confidentiality safeguards, and voluntary nature. Informed consent was obtained, and respondents were assured that their information would be used exclusively for academic purposes. After data collection, responses were organized, tallied, and prepared for quantitative analysis to assess inclusive education implementation and identify institutional areas requiring improvement.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency counts and percentages were employed to summarize respondents' demographic profiles, while weighted means were used to determine the assessed levels of inclusive education implementation and the roles of teachers and administrators. Mean scores were interpreted using the established five-point Likert-scale ranges. Inferential statistics, particularly independent-group t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were employed to examine significant differences in respondents' assessments according to their demographic characteristics, including position or role, educational attainment, and years of professional experience. The t-test was used to compare two groups, while one-way ANOVA was used for comparisons involving more than two groups. The resulting analyses provided the basis for identifying implementation strengths, institutional gaps, and priority areas for the proposed strategic plan.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles governing educational research, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and protection of respondents' identities. Participants received information regarding the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Identifying information was excluded or replaced with codes or pseudonyms, and research data were securely maintained with access restricted to the researcher. The information collected was used solely for academic purposes, consistent with the ethical requirements of the institution.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 Distribution According to Position or Role

The study involved 585 respondents, comprising 391 teachers (66.84%) and 194 school administrators (33.16%). Teachers represented the majority of participants, while administrators accounted for approximately one-third of the sample. Both groups were directly involved in implementing inclusive education in public secondary schools across SOCCSKSARGEN. The participation of teachers and school administrators provided perspectives from both instructional and institutional management contexts. Ketikidou and Saiti (2022) emphasized that inclusive education requires coordinated leadership and collaborative practices across educational institutions. Similarly, Kivirand et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of involving teachers, school leaders, and support personnel in developing inclusive school practices. These studies support the relevance of examining implementation from both teaching and administrative perspectives.

3.1.2 Educational Attainment and Professional Experience

Regarding educational attainment, 302 respondents (51.62%) held master's degrees, 219 (37.44%) held bachelor's degrees, and 64 (10.94%) held doctoral degrees. In terms of professional experience, 156 respondents (26.67%) had served for 5–10 years, 122 (20.85%) for less than five years, 106 (18.12%) for more than 20 years, 101 (17.26%) for 16–20 years, and 100 (17.09%) for 11–15 years. The distribution represented educators with varying academic qualifications and professional experience. The variation in respondents' educational backgrounds and teaching experience provided a basis for examining differences in inclusive education implementation. Sabanal et al. (2025) reported associations between educational attainment, professional training, and teachers' readiness for inclusive education in a Philippine secondary school setting. Donath et al. (2023) likewise demonstrated that professional development can strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills in inclusive education. These findings emphasize the importance of professional competencies and continuing development when interpreting institutional implementation practices.

3.2 Level of Inclusive Education Implementation

The overall implementation of inclusive education was rated Mostly Implemented, with a grand mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.99. All five assessed components received the same verbal interpretation, indicating that most implementation strategies were applied but certain practices required further improvement.

3.2.1 Child Find

Child Find obtained an overall mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.98), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated school advocacy and networking with local health workers at 3.877, while administrators rated the same indicator at 3.897. However, teachers assigned a lower mean of 3.661 to partnerships with barangay officials for special education advocacy, compared with 3.938 among administrators. The identification and documentation of out-of-school children with special needs also received comparatively lower teacher assessments, with a mean of 3.709. These findings indicate that learner identification and community advocacy were established practices, although their consistent implementation required strengthening. Catolico and Cabanlit (2023) similarly documented inclusive education implementation and associated institutional challenges among selected secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN. Furthermore, Vlcek et al. (2024) identified collaboration among families, schools, and community stakeholders as an important consideration in supporting learners with disabilities. Strengthening community partnerships and learner identification mechanisms is therefore relevant to improving the implementation of Child Find activities.

3.2.2 Assessment

Assessment obtained an overall mean of 3.81 (SD = 1.01), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated the availability of professional assessment results at 3.628, compared with 3.990 among school administrators. Assistance from SPED or SNED centers in regular school assessments received means of 3.683 and 3.804, respectively. Support provided by SPED or SNED learning centers during assessment procedures obtained means of 3.688 among teachers and 4.036 among administrators. These ratings reflected differences in respondents' perceptions of the availability and coordination of assessment services. The findings suggest that assessment and learner placement services were being implemented but required greater consistency and coordination. Almeqdad et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of instructional approaches that accommodate learner diversity, while Vlcek et al. (2024) highlighted collaboration among educational and support professionals. These perspectives support the need for coordinated assessment procedures, accessible professional services, and appropriate educational interventions for learners with diverse needs.

3.2.3 Program Options

Program Options obtained an overall mean of 3.83 (SD = 1.01), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated the availability of educational services for children with special needs at 3.706, compared with 3.814 among administrators. Inclusive placement in regular classrooms received means of 3.724 and 3.840, respectively. Resource room programs obtained relatively lower ratings of 3.598 among teachers and 3.784 among administrators. The findings also indicated that schools maintained instructional and monitoring records, although implementation ratings varied across specific documentation and service indicators. These findings indicate that different educational arrangements were available, but specialized support and resource room provision required further development. Kivirand et al. (2022) emphasized school-wide professional development and collaboration in improving inclusive education practices. Donath et al. (2023) also demonstrated the effectiveness of professional development in strengthening teachers' knowledge and instructional competencies. Accordingly, improving program options requires attention to personnel preparedness, institutional support, and the availability of appropriate learning resources.

3.2.4 Curriculum Modifications

Curriculum Modifications obtained an overall mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.97), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers and administrators rated collaborative service delivery options at 3.834 and 3.871, respectively. The provision of support services from professionals, parents, volunteers, and peers received means of 3.771 among teachers and 3.912 among administrators. Comprehensive curriculum modification planning obtained corresponding means of 3.791 and 3.943. All indicators were classified as Mostly Implemented. These findings reflect existing efforts to adapt instruction and provide learning support for students with diverse educational needs. Almeqdad et al. (2023) demonstrated the potential of Universal Design for Learning in accommodating learner differences and improving instructional accessibility. Similarly, Fu et al. (2026) highlighted the contribution of professional development programs to inclusive pedagogical knowledge and practices while noting limitations in evidence concerning sustained classroom transformation. The results therefore support continued teacher development, collaborative lesson planning, and systematic instructional adaptation.

3.2.5 Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement recorded the highest component mean of 3.86 (SD = 1.00), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated parental participation in monitoring learners' performance and supporting classroom activities at 3.962, compared with 3.799 among administrators. Regular parental orientations and meetings received means of 3.769 and 3.861, respectively. The provision of information and resources concerning special educational needs received means of 3.839 among teachers and 3.897 among administrators. The findings indicate that parental engagement was an established component of inclusive education, although regular communication and participation required further strengthening. Musendo et al. (2023) identified generally positive outcomes from interventions promoting parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities, while

acknowledging limitations in the available evidence. Similarly, Vlcek et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of collaboration among families, educational institutions, and community stakeholders. These studies reinforce the relevance of sustained school–home partnerships in inclusive education implementation.

3.3 Roles in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

The respondents assessed their roles across the initial, transition, and inclusion phases of inclusive education. The overall mean was 3.88 (SD = 0.99), interpreted as Mostly Implemented, indicating that institutional responsibilities were generally performed across all three phases.

3.3.1 Initial Phase

The initial phase obtained an overall mean of 3.89 (SD = 0.97), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated school administrators' roles as catalysts for change at 3.940, compared with 3.912 among administrators. Integration of inclusive education into school vision, mission, and improvement planning received means of 3.819 and 3.856, respectively. The participation of special education teachers as consultants obtained means of 3.729 among teachers and 4.000 among administrators. These results indicate that school leadership, institutional planning, and teacher participation were established during the initial implementation phase. Kivirand et al. (2022) identified collaborative professional development as a mechanism for strengthening inclusive school practices. Ketikidou and Saiti (2022) likewise emphasized the importance of systemic leadership in developing inclusive institutional cultures. These findings support the continued involvement of school leaders and teaching personnel in planning and coordinating inclusive education initiatives.

3.3.2 Transition Phase

The transition phase obtained an overall mean of 3.86 (SD = 1.00), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. School administrators' conduct of in-service training received means of 3.869 among teachers and 3.959 among administrators. Inspection and modification of school facilities obtained means of 3.756 and 3.959, respectively. Assistance from special education teachers in assessing learners' behavioral and academic development received comparatively lower means of 3.706 among teachers and 3.809 among administrators. These findings suggest that schools implemented transitional activities involving teacher orientation, environmental preparation, and instructional collaboration, although specialized assessment support required further improvement. Donath et al. (2023) found that professional development positively influenced teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs related to inclusive education. Furthermore, Fu et al. (2026) emphasized that professional development initiatives can support inclusive pedagogy, particularly when accompanied by appropriate instructional practices and sustained implementation support. These findings highlight the relevance of continuing capacity-building during the transition phase.

3.3.3 Inclusion Phase

The inclusion phase obtained an overall mean of 3.88 (SD = 0.99), interpreted as Mostly Implemented. Teachers rated the use of instructional strategies and skills development activities at 3.925, while administrators reported a mean of 4.021. Coordination between regular and special education teachers for curriculum modifications received means of 3.734 and 3.856, respectively. Monitoring of services provided by teachers, school personnel, and parents received means of 3.719 among teachers and 3.912 among administrators. The findings indicate that instructional adaptation, learner acceptance, and service monitoring were implemented, although greater coordination and consistency remained necessary. Almeqdad et al. (2023) emphasized accessible instructional design in addressing learner diversity, while UNESCO (2024) highlighted school leadership's responsibilities in fostering collaboration and inclusive learning environments. These perspectives support the continuing improvement of instructional coordination, teacher support, and institutional monitoring during the inclusion phase.

3.4 Differences in Inclusive Education Implementation According to Demographic Profile

3.4.1 Differences in Implementation Levels

The analysis revealed statistically significant differences in selected teachers' assessments of inclusive education implementation at the 0.05 significance level. Program Options differed significantly according to position or role ($F = 2.484$, $p = 0.031$) and educational attainment ($F = 3.837$, $p = 0.022$). Years of experience also showed significant differences in Assessment ($F = 3.926$, $p = 0.004$) and Program Options ($F = 2.814$, $p = 0.025$). Other assessed components showed no statistically significant differences across the examined demographic groupings. Among school administrators, no significant differences were identified in any of the five components according to position, educational attainment, or years of experience. These results indicate that teachers' assessments of selected implementation practices differed across specific demographic groups, particularly in assessment and program options. Sabanal et al. (2025) similarly identified relationships between teachers' educational qualifications, relevant training, and inclusive education competencies in a Philippine secondary school setting. However, the significant differences in the present study do not establish causal relationships or identify which demographic groups performed better, as the reported results did not include post hoc comparisons. The findings

nevertheless support examining differentiated professional development needs and implementation experiences among teaching personnel.

3.4.2 Differences in Institutional Roles Across Implementation Phases

No statistically significant differences were reported in teachers' and administrators' assessments of their roles during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases when grouped according to position or role, educational attainment, and years of experience. The reported significance values for the comparisons were generally above the 0.05 threshold, and the study interpreted the results as not statistically significant. These findings indicate that the analysis did not establish demographic differences in respondents' assessments of their implementation-phase responsibilities. Ketikidou and Saiti (2022) emphasized the importance of collaborative institutional leadership, while UNESCO (2024) highlighted shared responsibilities in educational management and school improvement. The absence of statistically significant differences does not prove that all groups were identical in practice, but the findings are consistent with the importance of coordinated roles in implementing inclusive education.

3.5 Proposed Program Development and Implementation Enhancement

The overall findings indicated that inclusive education was Mostly Implemented across the five assessed components and three implementation phases. Consequently, the dissertation proposed strengthening existing initiatives through a Program Development and Implementation Enhancement for Inclusive Education rather than introducing an entirely new strategic framework. The proposed program focused on Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. This approach is consistent with the findings of Catolico and Cabanlit (2023), who documented inclusive education implementation and associated challenges in selected SOCCSKSARGEN secondary schools. Kivirand et al. (2022) also demonstrated the importance of collaborative institutional development in strengthening inclusive education practices. These studies support using implementation assessments to identify areas for targeted organizational improvement.

3.5.1 Enhancement of Child Find and Assessment Services

The proposed program prioritized strengthening community-based identification of out-of-school children with disabilities through partnerships among schools, local government units, barangay officials, health workers, and social welfare offices. It also included improving SPED/SNED assessment services through personnel development, standardized procedures, appropriate assessment instruments, professional support, and improved learning resource facilities. The recommended activities included continuous learner identification, school-community advocacy, regular assessment of service capacity, and training for personnel involved in screening and documentation. These interventions address the identified needs for stronger community participation, coordinated learner identification, and accessible assessment support. Vlcek et al. (2024) emphasized collaboration among educational, family, and community stakeholders in supporting learners with disabilities. Their findings provide support for strengthening coordinated identification and assessment mechanisms while recognizing the importance of context-specific institutional arrangements.

3.5.2 Improvement of Program Options and Curriculum Modifications

The proposed enhancement program included continuous professional development for regular and special education teachers, mentoring, collaborative teaching, strengthened resource room services, and targeted instructional support. It recommended in-service training, learning action cell activities, training re-echo sessions, classroom-level assessment of learner needs, and improved access to specialized teaching materials. Curriculum modifications were to be strengthened through collaborative lesson planning, differentiated instruction, teacher coaching, and regular monitoring of learners' progress. These proposed interventions respond to implementation gaps involving specialized personnel, instructional collaboration, and curriculum adaptation. Donath et al. (2023) demonstrated that professional development can improve teachers' inclusive education knowledge and skills, while Almeqdad et al. (2023) provided evidence supporting accessible instructional design. Fu et al. (2026) further emphasized that sustainable instructional improvement requires attention to professional development design, implementation quality, and continuing support. Together, these studies provide an evidence base for strengthening teacher competencies and instructional responsiveness.

3.5.3 Strengthening Parental Involvement and Community Collaboration

The proposed program included parental awareness campaigns, regular orientations, strengthened home-school communication, learner progress monitoring, and parental participation in educational planning. The recommended interventions emphasized improving parents' understanding of their children's educational needs and encouraging continued collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and relevant support organizations. These initiatives reflect the importance of parental participation in sustaining inclusive educational support. Musendo et al. (2023) identified promising outcomes from parental involvement interventions for children with disabilities, although further research in low- and middle-income settings was recommended. Vlcek et al. (2024) similarly emphasized the value of coordinated engagement among families, schools, and communities. Strengthening these relationships can support continuity of educational assistance and more responsive institutional practices. Overall, the proposed Program Development and Implementation Enhancement provides

a structured response to the identified implementation gaps in SOCCSKSARGEN secondary schools. Its emphasis on institutional capacity-building, coordinated support services, teacher development, curriculum responsiveness, and parental engagement is aligned with the broader objectives of inclusive and equitable quality education under Sustainable Development Goal 4.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that inclusive education in public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN was Mostly Implemented, with an overall mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.99) across Child Find, Assessment, Program Options, Curriculum Modifications, and Parental Involvement. Similarly, the roles of teachers and school administrators during the initial, transition, and inclusion phases were Mostly Implemented (M = 3.88, SD = 0.99). Although these findings reflect the implementation of existing inclusive education initiatives, challenges involving learner identification, SPED/SNED assessment services, specialized teacher availability, instructional preparedness, and parental engagement remain consistent with concerns identified by Catolico & Cabanlit Jr., 2023, Magos & Rebamonte, (2019), and SEAMEO INNOTECH, (2020). Significant differences were observed among teachers in selected assessments of Program Options and Assessment when grouped according to demographic characteristics, while no significant differences were found among school administrators. Furthermore, assessments of implementation roles across the three phases showed no significant demographic differences. These findings demonstrate the need to strengthen existing inclusive education initiatives through targeted institutional improvements and sustained stakeholder collaboration.

The study recommends strengthening the implementation of inclusive education in SOCCSKSARGEN through continuous professional development, teacher capacity-building, and enhanced administrative support. The Department of Education should reinforce standardized monitoring and evaluation, improve SPED/SNED assessment services, and support further investigations into specialized learning centers and learner placement. Teachers should receive sustained training, coaching, mentoring, and appropriate instructional resources to improve differentiated instruction and classroom management, while school administrators should prioritize resource allocation, accessible facilities, institutional planning, and regular performance monitoring. Regional education authorities and schools should strengthen community partnerships, parental engagement, individualized learner support, and evidence-based program enhancement. Future research should examine the contribution of assistive technologies, accessible learning environments, specialized assessment services, and the experiences of learners with special needs and their parents to further improve inclusive education implementation.

The study was limited to public secondary schools in SOCCSKSARGEN, and its findings may not be generalizable to regions with different educational, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions. Data were obtained through self-reported questionnaires using a Likert scale, reflecting the assessments of teachers and school administrators rather than direct observations of educational practices. Furthermore, the study did not examine individual disabilities or learner-specific cases, and the perspectives of students with special needs and their parents were not directly included. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings and applying the proposed program enhancements to other educational settings.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The author declare no conflicts of interest related to this study. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for human-participant research, with the necessary institutional authorization and approvals obtained from the University, the Department of Education Regional Office, and the concerned Schools Division Offices before data collection. Informed consent was obtained from participating public secondary school teachers and administrators in SOCCSKSARGEN, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and confidentiality measures. As the study assessed inclusive education implementation through structured online questionnaires, the procedures were non-invasive and involved no direct participation of learners with special educational needs. Respondents' identities were protected through anonymization, secure data management, and restricted access to research information. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes and reported in aggregated form to safeguard participants' privacy and confidentiality.

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