



The Effectiveness of Inclusive Education Practices on Social Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

Janice Labra¹ ✉

Lilibeth Pinili²

Lindley Saladaga³

Veronica Calasang⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Labangon Elementary School Cebu Technological University, Philippines.

Email: janicelabra@gmail.com

(✉ Corresponding Author)

Abstract

This study assessed the relationship between inclusive education practices and the social outcomes of students, including sense of belonging, collaboration skills, and conflict resolution. Inclusive education practices assessed include teaching strategies, classroom modifications, and support services. Data from students were analyzed to determine the significance of these practices in influencing social outcomes. The findings revealed no significant relationship between the level of inclusive education practices and the measured social outcomes. Teaching strategies, classroom modifications, and support services showed weak or negligible correlations with students' sense of belonging, collaboration skills, and conflict resolution. Despite these results, the study highlights the critical role of inclusive education in promoting accessibility and participation for all students. The lack of measurable impact on social outcomes suggests that factors beyond the assessed practices, such as peer interactions, family influence, or school culture, may play a more prominent role in shaping social skills. Based on these findings, the study recommends targeted interventions, such as social skills training, fostering supportive school cultures, integrating social-emotional learning (SEL), and enhancing teacher training in managing social dynamics. These strategies aim to bridge the gap between inclusive education practices and social development. The study emphasizes the need for holistic approaches that combine academic support with intentional efforts to nurture students' interpersonal growth, ensuring both academic success and social well-being in inclusive educational settings.

Keywords: Inclusive Education Practices, Social Outcomes, Special Education, Students with Disabilities.

1. Introduction

The goal of inclusive education is to provide equitable classroom environments that meet the needs of all students, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses. Its core principles include celebrating student diversity and providing individualized support in mainstream classrooms (Florian et al., 2010; Volker et al., 2023). A true inclusive education does not only mean that students with disabilities and their peers should learn side by side, but the developing learning environment should indeed engage and support students in ways that nurture their individual differences for successful engagement both academically and socially (Florian et al., 2010), (Kumari,2022)

Behind much of this international push towards inclusive education are frameworks coming out of the United Nations like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and legislation similar to America's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). All children, and especially those living with a disability, have the right to access quality education as noted in these policies (Russell et al., 2021). Having all children learn together in the same classes is a first step towards, and an intrinsic part of, the process of (Sengupta et al., 2019), inclusive education which is aimed at promoting more universal aspirations to build societies that understand non-discrimination and facilitate maximum participation for every student in society (Shaeffer, 2019)

The social outcomes—such as positive peer relationships, social skills, and emotional wellbeing needed for students with disabilities to develop holistically Building vital life skills and minimizing isolation are important contributions of positive social experiences for students with hearing impairments or who are deaf-mute in inclusive settings (Obiakor et al., 2022). Social interaction leads to better self-esteem and interpersonal skills of the students, thus supporting their social and emotional growth (Page et al., 2021).

Although academic success is the highlight of education, social outcomes are equally vital. Though they help students be ready for the real world, skills including collaboration, conflict resolution, and belonging cannot be taught from a textbook and conventional classroom. Collaboration is a team activity that trains students to interact with one another, exchange ideas and minimize disputes necessary for fulfilling academic/scholar as well

as individual objectives (Tang et al. Also, Conflict resolution is essential (Lithoxoidou et al. 2021; Kyamko et al., 2024) Also, belonging has been associated with positive social and emotional outcomes aiding confidence and participation in school. According to Møgelvang and Nyléhn (2023), students who have a feeling of belonging are more likely to participate in class and connect with their peers, which can lead to improved social skills. Such abilities are crucial in providing a comprehensive educational experience that goes beyond academics and cultivates resilience, empathy, and problem-solving skills required for life after school (Fisher & Frey 2019).

Despite previous exploration in the inclusive education, there is little evidence on the effectiveness of inclusive teaching practices and classroom changes geared explicitly at promoting social outcomes such as a sense of belonging, collaborative skills, and conflict resolution among students who have challenges. More research is needed to determine the long-term effects of support services and educational changes on these essential social dimensions (Lawrie et al., 2017). For students at Cebu Technological University specializing in Special Education, engaging in studies on inclusive education practices provides valuable insights into diverse teaching strategies and classroom management skills. These skills are crucial for implementing effective inclusive practices and creating supportive environments for all learners, particularly those with disabilities.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research method to examine how inclusive education practices impact social outcomes for students with disabilities at Cebu Technological University Main Campus. Data collected will be analyzed using statistical software, applying a 0.05 level of significance. Findings from this analysis will serve as the foundation for developing a support program aimed at fostering a globally competitive environment within the university's special education setting. This program will enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of educational practices, ultimately benefiting students by promoting skills and experiences aligned with global standards in special education. This research included the INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT approach. The respondents of the study will be the students taking Special Education. The questionnaire of the study was adapted from the study of Haug (2017), Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) and Friend & Bursuck (2019). The constructs and indicators were selected and identified in a common theme that cover a range of topics that addresses inclusive education practices and social outcomes for students with disabilities. This study used the 5-point Likert scale to level of inclusive education practices and level of social outcomes.

Table 1. Teaching Strategies.

Teaching Strategies	Mean	VD
Availability of varied instructional approaches (visual aids, hands-on activities).	4.25	SA
Teachers' self-reported use of adaptive pacing (slower or accelerated) for different students.	4.28	SA
Access to assistive devices (e.g., tablets with adaptive apps, speech-to-text software).	4.25	SA
Availability of digital resources or alternative media for all students.	4.32	SA
Multiple options for students to demonstrate understanding (presentations, projects).	4.25	SA
Grand Mean	4.27	SA

3. Results and Discussion

The data in Table 1 presents participants' perceptions of various teaching strategies, rated on a scale where "4.00-4.49" corresponds to "Strongly Agree". All strategies evaluated received a high mean score, indicating positive feedback. The availability of digital resources or alternative media received the highest rating (4.32), showing strong agreement with its importance and use. Teachers' adaptive pacing (4.28) and other strategies, such as varied instructional approaches, assistive devices, and multiple options for demonstrating understanding, all received similar high ratings (4.25). The grand mean of 4.27 reflects consistent agreement across all strategies, emphasizing their effectiveness and relevance in supporting diverse learners.

Table 2. Class Modifications.

Class Modifications	Mean	VD
Seating arrangements that accommodate diverse needs, including mobility aids.	4.20	A
Availability of clear, accessible pathways in the classroom.	4.26	SA
Availability of sensory tools (e.g., fidget toys, weighted blankets) for students.	4.15	A
Teachers' use of sensory-friendly lighting and noise control (e.g., dimmed lights, headphones).	4.05	A
Monitoring and adapting environmental factors (temperature, noise level) for comfort.	4.06	A
Grand Mean	4.14	A

The data in Table 2 presents participants' perceptions of class modifications to support diverse student needs. The availability of clear, accessible pathways received the highest mean score of 4.26, rated as "Strongly Agree", indicating strong support for this modification. Other class modifications, such as accommodating seating arrangements (4.20), sensory tools (4.15), sensory-friendly lighting and noise control (4.05), and monitoring environmental factors (4.06), were rated as "Agree". The grand mean of 4.14 suggests general agreement that these class modifications are implemented and valuable, though there is room for improvement in some areas.

Table 3. Support Services.

Support Services	Mean	VD
Teacher and staff access to specialized training and professional development.	4.80	SA
Frequency of in-class support provided by special education teachers or aides.	4.28	SA
Observed integration of special education staff into daily classroom routines.	4.54	SA
Regular review and adjustment frequency of IEPs based on student progress.	4.54	SA
Teachers' adherence to specific IEP accommodations and modifications.	4.28	SA
Weighted mean	4.49	SAA

The data in Table 3 presents perceptions of the effectiveness of support services in education. The highest-rated item is the availability of specialized training and professional development for teachers and staff, with a mean of 4.80, rated as "Strongly Agree" (SA). Both the integration of special education staff into daily routines and the regular review of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) received high scores of 4.54, also rated as "Strongly Agree," indicating strong support for these practices. The frequency of in-class support by special education teachers or aides and adherence to specific IEP accommodations both scored 4.28, also in the "Strongly Agree" range. The weighted mean of 4.49 indicates an overall "Strongly Agree" assessment, highlighting the perceived importance and effectiveness of these support services in promoting inclusive education.

Table 4. Sense of belonging.

Sense of Belonging	Mean	VD
Reports of feeling valued and accepted by classmates and teachers.	4.48	SA
Consistency of inclusion in class activities without exclusion.	4.24	SA
Demonstrated comfort and confidence in expressing their opinions.	4.32	SA
Willingness to engage in school events or extracurriculars.	4.24	SA
Positive teacher observations of increased comfort in the classroom.	4.24	SA
Weighted mean	4.30	SA

The data in Table 4 presents perceptions of their sense of belonging in the educational environment. The highest-rated aspect is the feeling of being valued and accepted by classmates and teachers, with a mean score of 4.48, indicating strong agreement. Other aspects, such as inclusion in class activities (4.24), comfort in expressing opinions (4.32), engagement in school events or extracurricular activities (4.24), and positive teacher observations of increased comfort (4.24), also received high ratings. The weighted mean of 4.30 reflects an overall "Strongly Agree" assessment, suggesting that students generally feel a strong sense of belonging and inclusion in their school community.

Table 5. Collaboration Skills.

Collaboration Skills	Mean	VD
Willingness to share resources and take turns with peers.	3.86	A
Frequency of positive cooperation in group activities and joint tasks.	4.20	A
Ability to follow group norms and respect peers' opinions.	3.85	A
Demonstrated ability to compromise during group work.	4.20	A
Teacher observations of improved teamwork skills over time.	4.10	A
Weighted mean	4.04	A

The data in Table 5 presents perceptions of their collaboration skills within the educational setting. The highest-rated aspects are the frequency of positive cooperation in group activities and the ability to compromise during group work, each scoring 4.20, indicating "Agree". Teacher observations of improved teamwork skills also received a positive rating of 4.10. Slightly lower ratings were observed for willingness to share resources (3.86) and the ability to follow group norms and respect peers' opinions (3.85), though both are still rated as "Agree." The weighted mean of 4.04 reflects overall agreement, suggesting that students exhibit collaborative behaviors but may benefit from additional support to further develop these skills.

Table 6. Conflict Resolution.

Conflict Resolution	Mean	VD
Use of appropriate language and strategies to resolve disagreements.	4.20	A
Ability to apologize and make amends after conflicts.	4.26	A
Frequency of self-initiated conflict resolution (without adult intervention).	4.15	A
Positive peer feedback on handling conflicts constructively.	3.62	A
Use of assertive rather than aggressive language in conflict situations.	3.80	A
Weighted mean	4.00	A

The data in Table 6 presents perceptions of their conflict resolution skills. The highest-rated aspect is the ability to apologize and make amends after conflicts, with a mean score of 4.26, indicating "Agree". Other positively rated skills include the use of appropriate language and strategies to resolve disagreements (4.20) and self-initiated conflict resolution without adult intervention (4.15). The use of assertive rather than aggressive language scored 3.80, while positive peer feedback on handling conflicts constructively received the lowest rating at 3.62, though still within the "Agree" range. The weighted mean of 4.00 reflects overall agreement, suggesting that while students generally demonstrate constructive conflict resolution skills, there is room for improvement, particularly in gaining peer recognition for handling conflicts effectively.

Table 7. Significant relationship between level of inclusive education practices and sense of belonging.

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Teaching Strategies	-0.05266	-0.5658	0.525235	Not Significant	Do not reject
Classroom Modifications	-0.02031	-0.20119	0.820961	Not Significant	Do not reject
Support Services	-0.0123	-0.14121	0.88265	Not Significant	Do not reject

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$.

The data in Table 7 shows the analysis of the relationship between the level of inclusive education practices and the sense of belonging among special education students. The results indicate that none of the constructs have a significant relationship with the students' sense of belonging. This is evident from the high p-values for all three constructs (greater than 0.05), meaning the relationships are not statistically significant. The r-values are also very close to zero, showing weak or no correlation. Based on these findings, the decision is to not reject the null

hypothesis, suggesting that the sense of belonging is not strongly influenced by these specific inclusive education practices.

Table 8. Significant Relationship Between level of inclusive education practices and Collaboration Skills.

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Teaching Strategies	0.091461	0.909226	0.365462	Not Significant	Do not reject
Classroom Modifications	-0.06325	-0.62737	0.531875	Not Significant	Do not reject
Support Services	0.027631	0.273636	0.78494	Not Significant	Do not reject

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$.

The data in Table 8. examines the relationship between the level of inclusive education practices and the collaboration skills of special education students. The results show that none of the constructs have a significant relationship with collaboration skills. This is supported by the p-values for all three constructs being greater than 0.05, indicating a lack of statistical significance. Additionally, the r-values are close to zero, suggesting weak or no correlation. Therefore, the decision is to not reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the level of inclusive education practices does not significantly impact the collaboration skills of special education students.

Table 9. Significant Relationship Between level of inclusive education practices and Conflict Resolution.

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Teaching Strategies	-0.14568	-1.45776	0.148105	Not Significant	Do not reject
Classroom Modifications	0.051258	0.508095	0.612529	Not Significant	Do not reject
Support Services	-0.17247	-1.73337	0.086175	Not Significant	Do not reject

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$.

The data in Table 9 explores the relationship between the level of inclusive education practices and the conflict resolution skills of special education students. The findings indicate that none of the constructs show a significant relationship with conflict resolution skills. This is evident from the p-values for all constructs being greater than 0.05, indicating no statistical significance. The r-values are also small, suggesting weak or negligible correlations. Consequently, the decision is to not reject the null hypothesis, meaning that the level of inclusive education practices does not significantly influence the conflict resolution skills of special education students in this sample.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that inclusive education practices, including teaching strategies, classroom modifications, and support services, do not significantly influence students' social outcomes, such as sense of belonging, collaboration skills, and conflict resolution. The data reveals weak or no correlation between these practices and social skills development. This suggests that while inclusive education practices are valuable for promoting accessibility and participation, other factors may play a larger role in shaping students' social interactions and relationships. It highlights the need to explore additional variables or approaches that contribute to enhancing social outcomes for students in inclusive educational environments.

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