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## **INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED) TEACHERS IN SELECTED PRIVATE SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTERS IN PARANAQUE CITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Ther broad concept of the professional requirements and attributes of special education teachers is viewed as body of systematic activities that prepare Sped teachers to enhance their knowledge, skills and expertise to make more prepared to handle special learners with special needs.

This study on the instructional effectiveness and professional attributes of SPED teachers at selected private school in Paranaque City.is a descriptive study which utilized two (2) major groups of respondents: 10 school administrators; and 50 SPED teachers of four (4) selected private special education centers in Paranaque City. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, ranking and z-test were used to treat the data. The findings confirmed the strong and mutual agreement of the respondents that the SPED teachers exhibit more than all the requirements of their profession as they exhibit their mastery and competency in teaching special learners who are mentally challenged. The data clearly manifest that these Special Education Teachers did not only effectively utilize variety of instructional strategies, pedagogies and practices, but also actively involved themselves in class activities that ensure participation of parents and special learners.

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**Keywords:** *Attributes of Effective SPED Teachers, Behavioral Inhibition, Collaborative Consultation, Individualized Education Program (IEP) Systematic Instruction.*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, teacher education has become a “front burner” issue in the Philippine Education system. This newfound status resulted in many issues and concerns that focus on the quality of teachers, student achievement, adequate funding and other factors like lack of classrooms and instructional materials, and inadequate facilities and equipment, just to name a few of the perennial problems of the Philippine education system.

Obviously, the current highly politicized educational issues are quality education, quality teachers and quality instruction which bring the researcher to seek answers within a defined and potential solutions, especially when her major concern is the instructional competencies of teachers handling special groups of learners – the mentally retarded – enrolled in four (4) special learning centers in private schools in Paranaque.

These equally pose a challenge to the researcher to evaluate the instructional effectiveness of these special education (SPED) teachers which is critical to the work of all teachers, especially the SPED teachers who are not only expected to deliver effective but also should possess the desired academic and personal attributes, as well as positive behaviors and practices.

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It is in this spirit that the researcher conducts this study to evaluate and identify the SPED teachers' competencies, attributes, and practices to qualify him as the educator to handle special group of learners – the intellectual disabilities.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the instructional effectiveness of special education teachers of selected private special education centers in Paranaque City.

Specifically, the following are the problems posited in the study:

1. What professional attributes are exhibited by special education teachers with respect to the following aspects:
  - 1.1 professional knowledge
  - 1.2 professional engagement
  - 1.3 3. personal attributes?
2. To what level of effectiveness are the behavior and instructional practices of the SPED teachers achieved to ensure efficacy and quality instruction in the areas of:
  - 2.1 lesson clarity
  - 2.2 instructional variety
  - 2.3 task orientation
  - 2.4 learner engagement
  - 2.5 structures instruction
  - 2.6 cognitive development activities
  - 2.7 expanding processes
  - 2.8 building for learner success

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2.9 learner participation and contribution; and

2.10 teacher affect

3. How significant is the difference in the evaluation of the school administrator and Special Education teachers as to the above perceived effectiveness of the behavior and practices?
4. What pressing issues and concerns on instructions are encountered by the special education centers in the operation and management of special education program of the private school in Paranaque?
5. From the findings of the study what plan of action is proposed to further the instructional competencies of the SPED teacher of the private sped centers in Paranaque?

## METHODS

The specific problems raised in the study enabled the researcher to use the descriptive method that he conducted surveys, interviews, and observations in the gathering of data. According to Birion, De Hose, Dayrit and Mapa (2005), this method describes the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of the study and explored the course of action or phenomena. Specifically, the descriptive method was also used in this study to discover facts on which professional judgment of experts can be based on the instructional efficacy of the SPED teachers.

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There are two (2) major groups of respondents: the school administrators in the persons of the school principal, vice principal, department head, SPED coordinator, guidance counselor who comprised the first group, and the second group are the SPED teachers of the four (4) private schools in Paranaque City. These3 groups were chosen purposively and conveniently.

The data gathering instruments comprised the following:

Part 1. The Personal Profile Survey Questionnaire.

This instrument generates information about the demographic characteristics of the school administrators and SPED teachers with respect to their sex, civil status, age, highest educational attainment, present position, field of specialization, and years in present position.

Part II. The Professional Attitudes and Instructional Efficacy of the SPED Teachers that Affect the Effective Delivery of the Basic Special Educational Services

This major section of the survey questionnaire has the professional attributes and instructional effectiveness as well as the seriousness of the issues and concerns in the operation and management of the special schools. This part of the survey questionnaire is one of the major areas on issues and concerns encountered in the management of school.

These aspects of the instruments are assessed by the two (2) major groups of respondents of the school under study, to address the enumerated issues and concerns in the areas of the administration and instruction of special education.

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## Statistical Treatment of Data

The primary data sourced out from the surveys were piled, collated and summarized separately by group of respondents. The responses for each question were categorized based on the specific questions raised, then, basic arithmetical tools were used to treat the data like:

1. Frequency. It is the actual responses to a specific question or item/category in the survey instrument.
2. Percentage. It is used as descriptive statistics which describes a part using the following formula:

$$\% = f/n \times 100$$

Where:

%	-	percentage
f	-	frequency
n	-	sample

3. Weighted Mean It is used to measure the respondents' perceptions which are computed using weighted mean. It is done by multiplying each value in the group by the appropriate weight factors and the products are summed up and divided by the total number of respondents.

The formula is:

$$WM = \frac{\sum Efx}{N}$$

N

Where:

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WM = weighted mean

E = summation

F = frequency

x = weighted value

n = sample

The summarized data were interpreted using the five (5) Likert Scale Method as the criteria served as the bases of the verbal interpretation of the data. The concept of the boundary of numerals used the following scales:

Option	Verbal Interpretation	Scale
5	Very highly agree/Very serious	4.50 – 5.00
4	Often agree / Often serious	3.50 – 4.49
3	Agree/Serious	2.50 – 3.49
2	Least disagree/ Least serious	1.50 – 2.49
1	Disagree/Not serious	1.0 – 1.49

4. Ranking. It is a statistical tool which enforces and measures the description and degree of association among variables when their distribution is unknown. It also denotes the position importance of an item, object, individual or concept in a series of rank. This tool is non-parametric or distribution-free statistics.

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5. Z-test. This test is significant difference is applied to evaluate the effective delivery of the basic standard special education services of the special education school under study. The computed formula for the difference among the means of groups:

$$z = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{n_2}}} = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2 - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where:

- $\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2$  are the sample means of group 1 and group 2,
- $\mu_1, \mu_2$  are the population means under the null hypothesis (often assumed equal, so  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ),
- $\sigma_1, \sigma_2$  are the population standard deviations,
- $n_1, n_2$  are the sample sizes of group 1 and group 2.

If population standard deviations  $\sigma_1, \sigma_2$  are unknown and sample standard deviations  $s_1, s_2$  are used instead, typically a t-test is preferred rather than a z-test.

The critical z-value at .05 alpha level at different degrees of freedom (dfs) set the region of acceptance and rejection of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Both the school administrators and SPED teachers often agreed that the SPED teachers of the schools under the study exhibited their professional knowledge ( $X=4.38$ ); professional practice ( $X=4.39$ ); and professional engagement ( $X=4.32$ ), respectively.

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These findings confirmed the strong and mutual agreement of the respondents that the SPED teachers exhibit more than all the requirements of their profession as they exhibit their mastery and competency in teaching special learners who are mentally challenged.

2. The effectiveness in behavior and instructional practices of the SPED teachers were achieved to very high level to ensure efficacy and quality instruction focusing on the utilization of instructional effectiveness ( $X=4.52$ ); and the remaining behavior and practices to high degree of performance in lesson planning ( $X=4.44$ ); student participation ( $X=4.43$ ); in teacher affect ( $X=4.41$ ); building on the student success ( $X=4.30$ ); expanding processes ( $X=4.29$ ); task orientation, structures instruction, and cognition development activities ( $X=4.25$ ). each, and in student engagement ( $X=4.00$ ), respectively ranked 1 to 10

3. The application of z-statistics reveals that out of the 10 areas covered in instructional practices, only one (1) is found to have influenced the behavior and instructional practices and this is in student engagement because the computed Z value of  $Z=2.7602$  exceeds the critical  $Z=0.0029$  (one tail) and  $Z=0.0058$  (two-tail) that the research  $H_0$  is rejected. Adversely, the remaining values obtained in nine (9) areas are all in the acceptance region since the highest Z-value ranges from  $Z=-1.3360$  in task orientation, to  $Z=0.2283$  in instructional variety vs critical values that are much less than their computed Z values, hence accept the  $H_0$  of no significant difference at .05 alpha level at  $df = 33$ .

4. Nineteen (19) instructional issues and concerns were evaluated to different levels of seriousness. Three (3) of them were found to have been encountered on often serious level, from learners' physical health and emotional problems ( $X=3.58$ ) to home-training services

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with community-sponsored training programs ( $X=3.55$ ). The rest of the 16 pressing issues and concerns on instruction were only experienced seriously by the groups of respondents since the overall obtained means ranged from  $X=3.47$  in inadequate implementation of existing laws and policies, to  $X=3.15$  in learner achievement, or ranked 4 to 25, respectively.

The composite meaning of  $X=3.34$  suggests that the instructional issues and concerns were seriously experienced in the operation and management of special schools.

5. From the findings of the study, the researcher proposes an action plan focusing of seven (7) key result areas (KRAs) which he hopes will further the instructional competences of SPED teachers. These are focused on training and development. Teachers: modification of SPED curriculum; use of technology in SPED; strengthening of special schools; effective instruction; promotion of research activities; and applied nutrition and wellness program.

On this plan of action is implemented in private school, in Paranaque, there is no reason why the SPED program of the private schools in Paranaque will not succeed given adequate fund the private owners of the center.

## Conclusions

From the salient findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The school administrator and SPOED teachers often agreed that professional attributes are exhibited by the SPED teachers in all aspects of their professional knowledge, practice and engagement.

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2. Both groups of respondents also often agreed that these SPED teachers demonstrate behavior and instructional practices to often effective level and they were able to achieve efficacy and quality instruction in the teaching of special learners who are mentally challenged.
  3. More than majority of the areas submitted to statistical treatment revealed that no significant difference exists in the evaluations of the 8 school administrators and 50 SPED teachers as regards the level of effectiveness behavior and instructional practices were exhibited by the SPED teachers as they performed the instructional requirements expected of them as special teachers of mentally challenged learners.
  4. Most of the pressing issues and concerns in the management and operation of special learning schools were concentrate in the learners health and emotional; their schooling and placement and special home training services which were very seriously encountered since majority of the special learning centers are not manned by qualified and competent special education administrators and teachers and not very knowledgeable about special schooling; placement, and special services that need to be extended to the special learners and their families.
  5. The full implementation of the Proposed Action plan to further instructional competencies of the SPED teachers in private centers in Paranaque City will ensure effective and efficient management and control in the management and operation of resources both people and physical of these special learning centers.

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## Recommendations

From the conclusions, the researcher offers the following:

1. For these SPED teachers to prepare themselves to further their professional knowledge, engagement, and attributes, they should not only pursue the postgraduate studies and participate in seminars and workshops in special education, they also prepare themselves to retool their instructional competency and skills to include literacy, life maintenance, and personal-development as well as proficiency in classroom management procedures including a variety of ecological interventions, group techniques, and crisis intervention.
2. The SPED teachers should be aware of the latest instructional strategies, like scaffolding, direct instruction, to name a few, since the strategy has proven very effective tool in teaching different types of exceptional learners and utilize the present programmed tool is using computer and other communication tools.
3. The school administrator should focus and pioneer in bringing the education of learners with special needs, in not only conducting instructional training to ensure efficacy and instructional competencies, but also in the design and preparation of instructional tools like modular packages in special education and IEP programmed implementation in the special learning centers.
4. The school administrators should increase budget allocation so that they can hire more qualified special education teachers.
5. The Proposed of Action to further the instructional competencies of the SPED teachers should be implemented so that it will address the basic issues and concerns in the field of

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