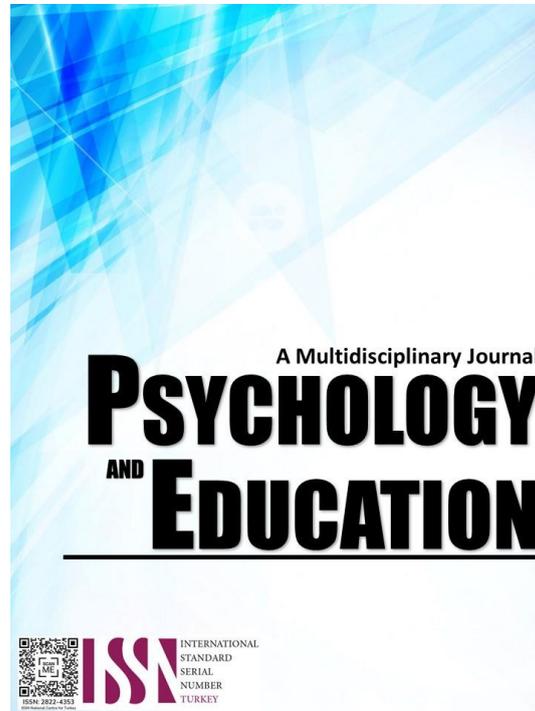


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Teachers' KSAs in Handling LSENs: Basis for Localized Inclusive Education Program

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Abstract

The Department of Education has intensified its focus on Learners with Disabilities (LWD) or Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) since the introduction of the K-12 curriculum. This study aimed to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitude of teachers in Tanay (LSENs). The study used a descriptive – quantitative method of research using the survey- questionnaire. Conducted during the first quarter of the First Semester, SY 2022-2023, research samples were selected through purposive sampling, the 21 teaching personnel of Tanay Senior High School, served as the respondents. Frequency and percentage distribution were used. Findings reveal that in terms of Knowledge, teachers are Less Knowledgeable on indicators related to the concept of inclusive education; in terms of Skills, teachers' skills on handling LSENs are verbally interpreted as Less Competent; lastly, with respect to Attitude, teachers find the attitudes stated as Moderately Manifested. Further, there is no significant difference on the knowledge and skills of teachers in handling LSENs in terms of the number of years in service. Likewise, there is a significant difference on the knowledge and attitude of teachers in handling LSENs in terms of the special needs courses/trainings attended. It is recommended that program on inclusive education be made, likewise be allocated with budget.

Keywords: *inclusive education, senior high school, special education needs, learners with disabilities*

Introduction

Cognizant to the Department of Education's commitment to provide quality and inclusive education, the agency continuously works on providing all possible resources and educational opportunities for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN).

Schools are expected to ensure the provision of education services to learners with disabilities. Concerns on other educational services such as assessment, curriculum, teachers, learning delivery, learning environment and resources, and roles and responsibilities of the different levels of governance are made sure to be addressed. Further, the Department of Education vows to ensure that learners with disabilities are equally provided with opportunities to fully participate in the K to 12 Basic Education Program. However, not all institutions are prepared to cater LSENs, given the limited resources available in every schools. Moreover, combining LSENs in regular classrooms gives teachers a great challenge since most, if not all are not trained to handle such.

Tanay Senior High School, the only stand-alone senior high school in the municipality of Tanay, offers both Academic and Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) tracks. Since its establishment in 2016, it has catered to regular students' senior high school educational needs. However, in 2020, since the

pandemic forced to halt face to face instructions, TSHS started to have enrollees of special needs. At present, TSHS LSENs comprise of learners with difficulties in hearing, remembering, and communicating, specifically those physically disabled, hearing impaired, deaf and mute and speech or language impaired.

With DepEd's goal of mainstreaming all types of learners, teachers play an inevitable job in the proper implementation of inclusive education. Particularly at TSHS, handling LSENs in a regular class, not to mention the learning delivery modalities employed by the school, is a big challenge for teachers. For LSENs to receive the same quality education as those regular students, teachers carry the essential task in the appropriateness of applying inclusive education since these are relevant factors to consider in the exercise of mainstreaming.

Another concern for LSENs at a senior high school is the nature of its teaching-learning process. Since learners are prepared and trained for the four curriculum exits: higher education, middle level skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment, the need for learners to be involved in the process is very vital.

These being said, regular teachers are anxious of handling LSENs coming from Special Education (SPED) self- contained classes in their regular class, whether in a modular, online or blended learning



modalities. This is mainly because they have no or little knowledge or background to these types of learners.

Although LSEN enrollees at present is low compared to the majority of regular learners, their presence requires equal attention from teachers. Being the only stand-alone SHS in the municipality, and serving as the catch- basin to the only public junior high school with Special Education (SPED) Program, it is foreseen that statistics of LSENs is likely to surge continuously.

Specifically, this study aims to ascertain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) of TSHS teachers in handling LSENs in their regular classes. Findings of KSAs of these teachers shall serve as basis in the crafting of Localized Inclusive Education Program, focusing on the professional development of teachings to enhance their KSAs towards achieving inclusive classrooms.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of years in service; and number of special needs courses/ training attended?
2. What is the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of TSHS teachers in handling Learners with Special Educational Needs?
3. Is there a significant difference on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of TSHS teachers in handling Learners with Special Educational Needs in terms of years in service and number of special needs courses/ trainings attended?

Literature Review

Inclusive education is a field where there is sharing between mainstream education teacher and special education teacher in teaching a diverse group of students, including those with special needs, in a general educational setting, and in a manner that is flexible and meets the learning needs (Friend., 2010). Teachers will be more prepared to teach if they gain information or knowledge on the subject being taught, their students cooperate, and there is sharing in thinking between mainstream and special education teachers (Melanie et al., 2008). As for teaching approach, collaborative teaching is best implemented in Inclusive education that combines skills of special education teachers and academic knowledge of

mainstream teachers (Yehuda et al., 2010).

As time progresses, the society, along with the government, get more enlightened and sensitive about Inclusive Education and Inclusive Needs Education. Needing quality teacher training to provide differentiated learning for these types of learners is an inevitable foundation that needs to be secured. Meeting this primary factor would realize the envisioned inclusive society through DepEd's inclusive education provision.

Hence, teacher's preparedness to provide inclusive education is a must. However, studies show that worldwide, teachers are found to be not prepared for inclusion. Teachers have no adequate knowledge about inclusion prior to the introduction of inclusive education in Ghana, as revealed in the study of Wisdom et al. (2016). Further, the study of Forlin and Sin (2017) that most of the Pacific regions show that even in-service teachers and fresh graduates from teacher training schools are not well-prepared for managing inclusive classrooms with diverse types of learners. Hence, the study of Dapudong (2013) revealed that teachers in Thailand are concerned that their inadequate professional knowledge and skills will affect the school performance, particularly in the academic area.

Dapudong (2013) pointed out that teachers' awareness, attitudes, and skills had been found to be contributory to the process and outcome of inclusion. Moreover, Muega and Echavia (2011) found out that many schools do not have enough teachers to handle inclusive education. These findings magnify the value of teachers' awareness and attitude towards inclusive education, as they are directly involved in addressing the gaps between existing education programs and what is actually transpiring in the delivery of these programs. Among the concerns include limited understanding of the concept of Inclusive Education, negative attitude towards learners with disabilities, and resistance to change, all are factors impeding the realization of inclusive education.

The Department of Education has intensified its focus on Learners with Disabilities (LWD) or Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) since the introduction of the K-12 curriculum, as it is now mandated to adopt inclusion. Thus, teachers are expected to possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address diverse learners, particularly in terms of learning abilities, culture, gender, religion, and socio-economic status, and race.

DepEd's Special Education (SPED) Program takes



into account that pupils with exceptionalities will receive quality learning by providing the education adaptive to their needs. Hence, this study sought to ascertain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers to handle LSEs.

Methodology

Participants

Research sample were selected total enumeration, with a total of 21 teaching personnel at Tanay Senior High School.

Instruments of the Study

A survey questionnaire was from Dapudong (2014) was adapted. The researcher modified the questionnaire to fit with the current study. As a result of the modifications, the researcher came up with the new research tool which is divided into four parts, namely: Part 1: Demographic information, Part 2: Knowledge on the concepts of inclusive education Part 3: Teachers’ Skills in handling LSEs; and Part 4: Teachers’ Attitude Scale towards inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms.

The researcher’s research tool was validated by experts, particularly SPED Coordinator, Assistant SPED Coordinator, with knowledge and experience in teaching students with special educational needs. The validators’ suggestions were incorporated to come up with the final questionnaire.

Procedure

This study aimed to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitude of teachers in Tanay Senior High School in handling Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEs). The study used a descriptive – quantitative method of research using the quantitative data collections. Conducted during the first quarter of the First Semester, SY 2022-2023, the 21 teaching personnel of Tanay Senior High School served as the respondents. Frequency, mean and percentage distribution were used as statistical tools of this study. The study focused on finding the teachers’ KSAs which shall serve as the basis in crafting the school’s Localized Inclusive Education Program, particularly on the professional development program of the teachers. Responses were gathered, collected, computed and interpreted. Using a Likert Scale, the range and verbal interpretations below were utilized.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the teachers in Tanay Senior High School in terms of number of years in service and number of special needs courses, seminars, trainings attended. In terms of number of years in service, majority of the respondents, 11 or 52.38 percent have been in service for 11 to 15 years, 7 or 33.33 have been teaching for 6 to 10 years and 3 for 1 to 5 years.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Number Of Years In Service	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5 years	3	14.29
6 to 10 years	7	33.33
11 to 15 years	11	52.38
<i>Special Needs Courses, Seminars, Trainings Attended</i>		
NONE	16	76.19
1 to 3 trainings	3	14.29
4 to 6 trainings	1	4.76
7 above trainings	1	4.76

In terms of special needs courses, seminars, and trainings, 76.19 percent or 16 of the respondents have not yet attended any special needs courses, seminars, or trainings, while 3 or 14.29% had attended at least 1 to 3 courses, seminars, or training. The remaining 2 claimed to have attended 4 to 6, and 7 above trainings. Considering the data provided, it depicts that neither of the respondents have direct connection to teaching Learners with Special Needs (LSEs), as revealed in their highest educational attainment. However, in terms of the special needs courses, seminars, or trainings attended, it can be gleaned that there are teachers who have a background knowledge in terms of LSEs, as shown in their participation and attendance to mentioned training/s attended.

Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude of Teachers in Handling LSEs

Knowledge of Teachers in Handling LSEs. Table 2 shows the Knowledge of teachers in Handling Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEs). Findings reveal that out of the 10 indicators provided in the survey-questionnaire, teacher respondents are

Less Knowledgeable in all given statements. Demonstrating knowledge and understanding on the



school and the teachers' responsibilities in ensuring the inclusion of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) towards inclusive education got the highest mean of 2.52, followed by Policy Guidelines of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program with 2.48 mean. With a computed mean of 2.33, contextualization and modification of curriculum materials based on learner's pace of learning, ability and interest followed. Concept on the appropriate values and attitudes in dealing with LSENs was next in rank with 2.29 computed mean. The knowledge and understanding of teachers in the classifications and types of Learners with Special Educational Needs and the differentiated teaching strategies responsive to the needs and background of LSENs both got 2.24 mean.

Table 2. *Knowledge of Teachers in Handling LSENs*

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
<i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of...</i>		
1 The school and the teachers' responsibilities in ensuring the inclusion of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) towards inclusive education	2.52	Less Knowledgeable
2 Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program	2.48	Less Knowledgeable
3 Classification and types of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.24	Less Knowledgeable
4 The Individual Education Plan (EIP) for LSENs	1.95	Less Knowledgeable
5 Differentiated teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs and background of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.24	Less Knowledgeable
6 Contextualization and modification of curriculum materials based on learner's pace of learning, ability, interest, and context	2.33	Less Knowledgeable
7 On the preparation of varied learning resources to provide more learning options for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.19	Less Knowledgeable
8 The different ways of communicating with Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.05	Less Knowledgeable
9 The appropriate values and attitudes in dealing with Learners with Special Needs (LSENs)	2.29	Less Knowledgeable
10 The different linkages with different agencies and LSEN teachers to the parents of LSENs.	1.86	Less Knowledgeable
Overall Mean	2.21	Less Knowledgeable

Further, concepts on the preparation of preparation of varied learning resources to provide more learning options for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs); Individual Education Plan (EIP) for LSENs; different ways of communicating with Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs); and the different linkages with different agencies and LSEN teachers to

the parents of LSENs were among the indicators which teachers were found to be Less Knowledgeable. With an over-all computed mean of 2.21, teachers' knowledge in terms of concepts of handling LSENS is verbally interpreted as Less Knowledgeable.

Findings imply that teachers at Tanay Senior High School needs orientation on the guidelines provided by the Department of Education with respect to the provision of educational programs and services for learners with disabilities. This provision includes all aspects given in the statements. To achieve such, teachers should undergo professional development programs, as one of the stated objective of Learning Action Cell in DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, is to engage teachers in collaborative learning sessions.

Skills of Teachers in Handling LSENs. Table 3 presents the Skills of Tanay Senior High School Teachers in handling Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs). With an over-all mean of 2.14, findings reveal that teachers at Tanay Senior High School are Less Competent in terms of skills in handling LSENs. With 10 indicators provided in the survey-questionnaire, all responses got computed means which are verbally interpreted as Less Competent. The statement: Applies appropriate values and attitudes in dealing with LSENs got the highest mean of 2.29, followed by: Perform the responsibilities of teachers ensuring the inclusion of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) towards inclusive education; Apply and follow the Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program; Classify and identify type of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs); and Design, create, implement differentiated teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs and background of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs), with 2.19 computed mean.

Table 3. *Skills of Teachers in Handling LSENs*

	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1	Perform the responsibilities of teachers ensuring the inclusion of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs) towards inclusive education.	2.19	Less Competent
2	Apply and follow the Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program	2.19	Less Competent
3	Classify and identify type of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.19	Less Competent
4	Implement the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for LSENs throughout the school year to reflect students' progress and goals	2.10	Less Competent
5	Design, create, implement differentiated teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs and background of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.19	Less Competent
6	Design, create, and implement contextualization and modification of curriculum materials based on learner's pace of learning, ability, interest, and context	2.14	Less Competent
7	Design, create, and utilize varied learning resources to provide more learning options for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.10	Less Competent
8	Apply, utilize, and implement different ways of communicating with Learners with Special Education Needs (LSENs)	2.10	Less Competent
9	Applies appropriate values and attitudes in dealing with Learners with Special Needs (LSENs)	2.29	Less Competent
10	Coordinates and collaborates with different linkages with different agencies and LSEN teachers to the parents of LSENs	1.90	Less Competent
	Overall Mean	2.14	Less Competent

Findings supports the result of the teachers' knowledge in handling LSENs as reflected in the latter's discussion. Individual's knowledge of any concept greatly affects one's skill. Consequently, Zahra (2022) defines knowledge as both the theoretical and the practical information, facts or skill which we acquire through experience or through learning. One's knowledge increases as one gains more experiences. Findings supports the result of the teachers' knowledge in handling LSENs as reflected in the latter's discussion. Individual's knowledge of any concept greatly affects one's skill. Consequently, Zahra (2022) defines knowledge as both the theoretical and the practical information, facts or skill which we acquire through experience or through learning. One's knowledge increases as one gains more experiences.

Attitudes of Teachers in Handling LSENs. Table 4 shows the Attitudes of teachers in Tanay Senior High School in handling Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs).

Table 4. *Attitudes of Teachers in Handling LSENs*

	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1	Students with special educational needs should have equal opportunities to participate in all school sponsored age-appropriate activities (e.g., sports, field trips, clubs, school plays, community service activities, etc.)	3.76	Moderately Manifested
2	General education, special education, paraprofessionals, parents and related service providers have to plan and work collaboratively for the achievement of learning goals set for the child with special educational needs.	3.71	Moderately Manifested
3	Regular classroom teachers must have the abilities necessary to work with students with special educational needs	3.81	Moderately Manifested
4	Regular classroom teachers must have sufficient training to teach students with special educational needs	4.10	Moderately Manifested
5	The student with special educational needs develops academic skills more rapidly in a regular classroom than in special	3.76	Moderately Manifested
6	The integration of students with special educational needs can be beneficial for students without disabilities	3.62	Moderately Manifested
7	Integration of students with special educational needs promotes his or her social independence;	3.62	Moderately Manifested
8	An Individual Education Plan (IEP) that reflects individual educational needs, including academic and functional (e.g., behavioural, social, communication, life skills, etc.) skills needed to access the general education curriculum should be provided	3.86	Moderately Manifested
9	Students with special educational needs should be welcome in regular classes	3.52	Moderately Manifested
10	Students with special educational needs are given every opportunity to function in regular classrooms when possible	3.52	Moderately Manifested
	Overall Mean	3.73	Moderately Manifested

Among the three aspects ascertained, Attitude got the highest computed mean of 3.73, verbally interpreted as Moderately Manifested. This reveals that teachers of Tanay Senior High School find the indicators provided manifested among themselves. Statements used cover attitudes particularly focused on their beliefs or perspective of inclusive education, feelings or expected outcomes, and actions in the classroom.

The statement: Regular classroom teachers must have sufficient training to teach students with special educational needs; An Individual Education Plan (IEP) that reflects individual educational needs, including academic and functional (e.g., behavioural, social, communication, life skills, etc.) skills needed to access the general education curriculum should be provided;



Regular classroom teachers must have the abilities necessary to work with students with special educational needs got the highest computed mean of 4.10, 3.86, 3.81, respectively.

Further, teachers agree on the following statements: Students with special educational needs should have equal opportunities to participate in all school sponsored age-appropriate activities (e.g., sports, field trips, clubs, school plays, community service activities, etc.); The student with special educational needs develops academic skills more rapidly in a regular classroom than in special classrooms; and General education, special education, paraprofessionals, parents and related service providers have to plan and work collaboratively for the achievement of learning goals set for the child with special educational needs, as they responded that these are moderately manifested in them.

Concepts that: the integration of students with special educational needs can be beneficial for students without disabilities; integration of students with special educational needs promotes his or her social independence; Students with special educational needs should be welcome in regular classes; and Students with special educational needs are given every opportunity to function in regular classrooms when possible, likewise, were perceived moderately manifested by the teacher respondents.

The third problem posted in this study is to answer the question about the attitudes of international school teachers in terms of: a) beliefs or the core perspectives; b) feelings or the expected outcomes of inclusion; and c) actions or the classroom practices. Summary of each finding is arranged specifically with headings: Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education of Children with Special Educational Needs in terms of their Beliefs; Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education of Children with Special Educational Needs in terms of their Feelings and Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education of Children with Special Educational Needs in terms of their Actions.

It can be gleaned from the results that the respondents have a favorable attitude towards inclusive education of children with learning disabilities in terms of their beliefs or perspective on inclusive education, feelings or expected outcomes, and actions in the classroom. According to the Cognitive Module of Attitudes, Beliefs, whether good or bad, appropriate or not, reflect the cognitive component of attitudes. The cognitive module suggesting it bears categories of stimuli and the characteristics and opinions associated

with each classification (Hannah & Pliner, 1983; Dapudong, 2013).

Significant Difference on KSA of Teachers in Terms of Years in Service and Number of Special Needs Courses/ Trainings Attended

Table 5 presents the significant difference on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers in terms of years in service.

Table 5. *Significant Difference on the KSA of Teachers in Terms of Years in Service*

	<i>p-val</i>	<i>Ho</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
Knowledge	0.1497	Accepted	Not significant
Skills	0.2204	Accepted	Not Significant
Attitude	0.0076	Rejected	Significant

Findings reveal that there is no significant difference on the knowledge and skills of teachers in handling LSEns in terms of the number of years in service. However, data tells that the attitude of teachers in handling LSENS has a significant difference in terms of years in service.

Results supports the study of Dapudong (2014) which showed that the international school teachers believe that education is the right of all children, and inclusive education aims to ensure that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community as stipulated in the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994). With this awareness alone, concrete and specific knowledge and skills about Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEns) is enough for teachers to adjust themselves in a new classroom set-up, with the presence of LSEns inside. In the case of Tanay Senior High School, teachers were able to plan and create mechanisms that will address the needs of their LSEns.

On the other hand, the significant difference between the number of years in service and the teachers' attitudes in handling LSEN supports the Contrived/Behavioral Module of Attitudes, stated in Dapudong (2014), notes that since attitudes are complex and related to covert behavior, attitudes have an "action tendency." This is due to being able and ready to behave in a specific way associated with a particular feeling, yet at the same time, it does not cover the actual behavior itself. Hence, even with the very limited knowledge and skills, with a high

motivation and willingness, teachers can still perform and handle LSEs.

However, this is in contrary to Dapudong's (2014) findings which showed that teachers with either shorter or longer period of teaching experience can obtain either extensively unfavorable or favorable attitude towards inclusive education of children with special educational needs.

Table 6. *Significant Difference on the KSA of Teachers in Terms of Number of Special Needs Courses/ Trainings Attended*

	<i>p-val</i>	<i>Ho</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>
Knowledge	0.1497	Accepted	Not significant
Skills	0.2204	Accepted	Not Significant
Attitude	0.0076	Rejected	Significant

Table 6 presents the significant difference on the KSA of teachers in terms of number of special needs courses/ trainings attended. Results show that there is a significant difference on the knowledge and attitude of teachers in handling LSEs in terms of the special needs courses/ trainings attended, as denoted by the computed p-values of .048 and .000 which are lower than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that teachers with and without attendance to any training program or workshop in special education have various levels of knowledge and attitude towards handling LSEs.

Findings is also supported by the study of Dapudong (2013) and Stewart (2001) pointed out that teachers' attitude towards inclusive education reveals their abilities to meet the individual needs of students with disability. They accentuate that teachers who are knowledgeable and have training and background in handling children with special needs drew positive attitudes.

Conclusion

In terms of Knowledge, findings imply that teachers need orientation on the guidelines provided by the Department of Education with respect to the provision of educational programs and services for learners with disabilities. This provision includes all aspects given in the statements. Considering Skills, results support the conclusion that individual's knowledge of any concept greatly affects one's skill. Consequently,

Zahra (2022) defines knowledge as both the theoretical and the practical information, facts or skill which we acquire through experience or through learning. One's knowledge increases as one gains more experiences. Lastly, in terms of Attitude, results supports the Cognitive Module of Attitudes, Beliefs, which states that whether good or bad, appropriate or not, reflect the cognitive component of attitudes. The cognitive module suggesting it bears categories of stimuli and the characteristics and opinions associated with each classification (Hannah & Pliner, 1983; Dapudong, 2013). Findings reveal that there is no significant difference on the knowledge and skills of teachers in handling LSEs in terms of the number of years in service. However, data tells that the attitude of teachers in handling LSENS has a significant difference in terms of years in service. Results show that there is a significant difference on the knowledge and attitude of teachers in handling LSEs in terms of the special needs courses/ trainings attended. This implies that teachers with and without attendance to any training program or workshop in special education have various levels of knowledge and attitude towards handling LSEs.

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