The Perceptions of Pre-service Special- and General-Education Teachers on the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of pre-service special- and general-education teachers in the Philippines about the inclusion of children with special needs (CSN) in the regular classroom. Teacher perception has been found to be a significant factor on implementing inclusion (Norwich, 1994; Elliot, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). However, studies on this topic are lacking in the Philippines. The study employed a mixed method approach using both semi-structured interviews and survey using an adapted version of Saloviita’s (2015) Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale. The interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis and the survey data was analysed using two-way t-tests. The study determined that pre-service teachers in the Philippines had different sentiments about their prior experience and training on teaching CSN. Participants also had different definitions and understanding of inclusion. Moreover, the participants shared their concerns about the lack of sufficient teacher training and the current educational situation of the country as potential barriers to implementing inclusion. Lastly, the study also determined that there is a significant difference between the views of special- and general-education teachers, especially in their views on teacher roles and the feasibility of inclusion. The results of the study showed the need to strengthen teacher training in the country and to implement legislation that will determine how inclusive education is defined and implemented in the country.

KEY WORDS

Inclusive education, inclusion, children with special needs, pre-service teachers, pre-service training, student teachers, teacher perceptions, teacher attitudes.