

The Special Education Program (SPED) in the Province of Surigao del Sur, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Special Education program in the Philippines has become more imperative in response to the growing number of children with special needs having access to quality education. This study is designed to assess the implementation of Special Education (SPED) Program of the nine SPED implementing schools in the province of Surigao del Sur using the CIPP Model. This study involved a descriptive-survey utilizing the structured questionnaire and focused group discussion (FGD). The data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Content analysis was used in the qualitative data gathered in the FGD sessions. The findings of the study revealed that SPED implementation in the province of Surigao del Sur is high owing to the sufficient provisions in the Context and Product components and the deficiencies in the components of Input and Process. The findings of the study served as a basis for developing effective intervention programs and activities to enhance SPED implementation in the province and the deficiencies found in the components of Input and Process should be properly addressed by developing an effective programs and activities to enhance the SPED implementation in the province of Surigao del Sur.

KEYWORDS

Education, Special Education Program, Content Input Process Product (CIPP) Model, Descriptive, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Special Education Program has eventually found its place in the Philippine educational landscape since the start of its implementation late in 1997. The program has become more imperative in response to the growing number of children with special needs having access to quality education (UNESCO, 2004; EFA, 2010). Along with this, DepEd Order No. 26 s. 1997 mandated all schools in the country to offer specialized education for children with disabilities who are presumed to have special learning needs considering their status. Subsequent Orders such as DepEd order no. 11 s. 2000 wherein each division is mandated to have at least one SPED centers, DepEd Order No. 6 s. 2006, in which secondary schools are ordered to offer also sped program and DepEd Order no. 38 s. 2015 which stipulated the guidelines on the utilization of sped funds, these orders have been made giving impetus to the institutionalization of SPED, particularly in the public schools. Thus today, SPED centers have been created in every division to commence the implementation of the Special Education Program in the localities. In fact the province of Surigao del Sur, there are three SPED centers recognized namely; Bislig City Sped Center, Surigao del Sur sped center and Cortes Sped Center to provide quality and accessible education for children with special needs.

In the first world countries, remarkable stories about the implementation of special education programs have been noted mostly in the foreign setting such as the United States of America. Their successes are attributed to their evolving and progressing approach in addressing the changing needs of the learners (Meynert, 2014). It started with the exclusive concept of educating the special children, and just recently it has embraced the idea of inclusive education to bring access to children with special needs to the main stream of education. This progressive approach coupled with the full cooperation of stakeholders and the provision of needed resources has ensured the success of program implementation (Fuchs, 2010).

In the third world countries like the Philippines, the success of Special Education has been reported mostly in urban communities. Successful SPED programs were usually implemented by leading educational institutions whose faculties were well-trained and well-equipped with needed learning facilities. Likewise, parents were also well-off who could fully support and provide their special child with the needed support. However, program implementation is not as successful in the rural setting (Yap & Adorio, 2008).

The study found that SPED program implementation in the local setting is only Average gauging high success on Access by the number of identified students with special needs. However, the study noted the lack of available well-trained SPED teachers and insufficient learning resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning (Yap & Adorio, 2008). Apparently, most of these schools offering SPED program in the rural setting need to be refined and supervised to enhance their program implementation. This predicament holds true Caraga Region which was reported that only 50 children

are enrolled in SPED in public schools in S.Y 2011-20012 out of 1,610 children with special needs in SY 2012-2013.

The province of Surigao del Sur, has nine (9) schools offering special education program of which are three (3) have already been recognized SPED centers and the rest are all regular schools offering sped classes. The schools are catering children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, learning disability, and intellectual disability. In consonance with the UNESCO 2003 goals of special education, the SPED program in this locality aims to bring children with special needs to the mainstream of education in the regular class; encourage high participation of special children in school, home, and in the community; and trained them how to live life independently. Considering those stipulated goals and the span of years of SPED program implementation in the locality, the proponent, unfortunately, could not categorically claim of high success of its implementation based on the following observations.

Only a few children enrolled in the SPED classes are being mainstreamed into the regular classes. Several of them did not finish the school year, and some parents have the negative attitude towards SPED program. Furthermore, there was less participation of children in school and community activities, lack of well-trained teachers to handle children with special needs, and above all lack of resources to carryout and sustain the program. Thus, the proponent being a Principal of a school offering SPED program for more than five years already was prompted to conduct this study.

The study assessed the implementation of the SPED program using the Context Input Process Product (CIPP) Model. Its overarching goal is to analyze the various phases of program implementation, find out the strengths and weakness and develop effective interventions to enhance the SPED implementation in the locality. The study is deemed necessary and timely because the SPED program has been implemented in this locality for more than 10 years already. On the personal account, the conduct of this study will enhance the management competence of the proponent particularly in managing the SPED program.

FRAMEWORK

The proposed study adheres to the importance of conducting a holistic approach to program evaluation to enhance the SPED implementation. In this study, the researcher found it appropriate to use the CIPP Model of Program evaluation. The CIPP Model is a social systems model by Stufflebeam (2007) applied to program evaluation. CIPP stands for evaluation of Context, Input, Process, Product. These components can be viewed as separate forms of evaluation, but they can also be viewed as steps or stages in a comprehensive evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2007)

Furthermore, CIPP model of evaluation is anchored on general systems theory of program evaluation which appreciated that an outcome is not explained simply by the

parts but that the relationships between and among those parts and their environment or context.

An educational program is a social system composed of parts, with interactions and interrelations among the parts, all existing within, and interacting with, the program's environment. Thus, to understand an educational program's system it would require an evaluation approach consistent with system theory (Jarvis, P. 2012).

Context evaluation includes examining and describing the program context, target population, and its needs, opportunities for addressing needs, problems underlying the needs, whether program goals are sufficiently responsive to the assessed needs. In this study, the context evaluation of the SPED program is based on the formulation of goals, and the appropriateness of these goals respond to the needs of special children in the locality.

Input evaluation includes of the cost effectiveness of the resources and activities in comparison as to how the program might perform compared to other programs. This specifically pertains to the evaluation of the program as to strategies and procedures being undertaken and provided. In short, this type of evaluation examines what the program plans on doing. The instructional facilities, the learning resources, the teacher competence are being assessed. This is beneficial in making program structuring decisions.

Process evaluation includes assessing how a program is being implemented, monitoring how is it performing, to ensure that required legal and ethical guidelines are being observed. Identifying defects in the procedural design or the implementation of the program are being also noted. It is here that the assessors provide information about what is occurring and happening in the program. In this study, the process evaluation how the SPED program was implemented, the strategies employed, problems encountered and how to address those problems.

Product evaluation is focused on examining the general and specific outcomes or results of the program. It is also about assessing its strengths and weaknesses and conducting a retrospective benefit/cost assessment to establish the actual worth or value of the program. In this, the product refers to the learning achievement of the special students and their participation in school and community activities.

Thus, the evaluation of the special education program implementation is based on the standards of the curriculum. In this study, it focuses on the curriculum goals and objectives, contents, strategies and learning experience, learning resources, and the assessment of the learning outcomes. Specifically, the *Context* assessment includes the provision of responsive special education program and attainment of program goals and objectives; *Input* covers the curriculum, faculty, administrative support, instruction, and learning resources. The process includes the program implementation procedures and standards; instructional delivery using IEP, meeting issues and concerns and monitoring and evaluation. *Product* refers to the learning performance, competencies and general impact of the special education program to the learners with special needs.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study assessed the implementation of the Special Education Program (SPED) in the province of Surigao del Sur using CIPP model.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed descriptive research design through a survey and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in assessing the implementation of the special education program in the province of Surigao del Sur.

Research Respondents

All school administrators and teachers of schools offering the special education program for children with special needs in the division of Surigao del Sur, Bislig and Tandag City were the respondents of the study. They were chosen using the purposive sampling technique considering their knowledge and experience in SPED programs

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the 9 schools offering special education classes of Surigao del Sur, Bislig and Tandag City Divisions, namely, Carrascal CES, Cantilan East Central, Madrid Central ES, Cortes Central ES, Lianga Central ES, Marihatag CES, Bislig SPED center, and Tandag SPED center.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher made questionnaire validated by a pool of experts. The questionnaire asked for the profile of the participating schools in terms of SPED programs offered, number of years offering the program, and the number of teachers assigned to handle SPED programs as well the indicators for assessing context, input, process and product. An open-ended grand tour question was used during the FGD to elicit the needed information. Furthermore, the instruments had undergone content validity as part of validating the instrument.

Data gathering Procedure

Upon identification of the respondents, the researcher then asked permission from the schools division superintendent to allow her to conduct the study and float the questionnaires to the selected respondents in the division. After the approval was granted, the researcher went to the SPED implementing schools in the province and again asked permission to the schools district supervisor to conduct the study in their district. Then the researcher proceeded to the school in the district offering special

education program for children with special needs then permission was asked from the head of school.

Once the permission from the school head was granted, the researcher set dates on the actual administration of survey questionnaire for parents and teachers.

The questionnaires simultaneously answered by the teachers and school heads with the presence of the researcher. The focused group discussion was held in every SPED school participated in by respective school heads and teachers handling the SPED program. A ground tour question was asked and subsequently follow-up questions when deemed necessary. Responses were recorded both in writing and using video recorder. Transcriptions of responses were made for the purpose of data analysis. When all the questionnaires were retrieved, data gathered were sorted and analyzed.

Ethical Standard

To protect the respondents and for research ethical consideration, letters of permission to higher authorities and consent letters to respondents were given and approved.

Statistical Treatment

The following statistical measures were employed in treating the data gathered Mean and Standard Deviation were deemed appropriate in determining the level of implementation of the special education program for children with special needs; One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to find out significant difference in the implementation of the special education program for children with special needs when grouped according profile variables. Content Analysis and Coding Technique were used in analyzing the qualitative data elicited from the focused group discussion (FGD).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Summary of Assessment of SPED Implementation

Program Components	Mean	Sd	VI	QD
Context	4.06	.38	E	HI
Input	3.59	.37	E	High
Administrative Support	4.09	.32	E	High
Instructional Facilities for SPED	3.06	.65	E	High
Learning Resources	3.68	.50	E	High
Teacher Competence & Instructional Delivery	3.55	.51	E	High
Process	3.76	.42	E	High
Product	4.09	.57	E	High
Grand Mean	3.88	.34	E	High

Parameters	Verbal Interpretation	Qualitative Description
5.00 to 4.21	Highly Evident (HE)	Very High Implementation (VHI)

4.20 to 3.41	Evident (E)	High Implementation (HI)
3.40 to 2.61	Fairly Evident (FE)	Moderate Implementation (MI)
2.60 to 1.81	Less Evident (LE)	Low Implementation (LI)
1.80 to 1.00	Not Evident (NE)	Very Low Implementation (VLI)

The over-all result of the assessment in the implementation of the SPED Program in the Province of Surigao del Sur are summarized in Table 1. The result is presented per components of the CIPP Model of evaluation adopted in this study. As shown in the Table, the grand mean is 3.88 pooled from the components of product (4.09), context (4.06), process (3.76), and input (3.59) in that order. The over-all result indicates the Great extent of implementation of SPED programs in the nine SPED centers in Surigao del Sur. The components of product (4.09) and context (4.06) obtain the highest assessment results while that of process (3.76) and input (3.59) post the lowest assessment ratings based on the perceptions of the respondents.

The average standard deviation of .34 indicates homogeneity of responses ensuring the normal distribution of data that are valid and reliable for analysis.

Based on the over-all result, it can be inferred that the special education (SPED) implementation has achieved the goals of formulating special programs and activities that are responsive to the needs of children with disabilities in the province of Surigao del Sur. The high implementation of SPED program yields positive impact on the learning achievement of pupils with learning difficulties which is evident in the present. On the other hand, the study also found weak areas for improvement of the program implementation along the input and process components. More detailed discussions of the result are done by component to come up with a clearer description of the phenomenon presently investigated.

Table 2. Transcriptions of Data from FGDs Coded Strengths and Opportunities

Verbatim Responses Obtained from the Nine FGD Sessions	Unit Meaning
FGD1. (Strengths and Opportunities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SPED center has accessed donation of wheel chairs from 12 foreign benefactors through I love Marihatag ● Utilization of social media through FB post to advocate SPED programs and activities and increased awareness among stakeholders. ● Conducted 12 months feeding by generating local resources ● Generated P10,000.00 through bundle of joy ● Resourceful SPED teachers ● Developed Pre-school curriculum 	Strong program support Social media advocacy for SPED Resourcefulness of teachers Well-defined SPED curriculum

FGD 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supportive parents ● Care-taker to assist teacher charged to PTA ● Suggestions: Tap BLGU & LGU support, conduct orientation and advocacy on the SPED program, conduct of assessment using appropriate tools 	Support from PTA
FGD3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong support from parents ● Availment of Adopt a School Program ● Provision of needed facilities such as air-conditioned classrooms, play room, instructional facilities (Braille machine) ● Dedicated and well-trained teachers to teach SPED programs 	Strong support from parents Sufficient instructional facilities commitment from teachers
FGD 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Active involvement of SPED learners in school and community activities. Because of this, learners developed social skills like skirting, participating programs ● Resourcefulness of SPED teachers to make use of educational technologies such as films and videos for SPED instruction ● Recognition for CSN 	Responsive SPED learners Resourceful teachers
FGD 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supportive parents. They are actively involved in public awareness activities to advocate the SPED program and activities ● Active involvement of SPED learners in school and community activities to develop their talents ● Strong LGU support for SPED program 	Supportive parents, LGU Responsive SPED learners
FGD 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dissemination of the SPED program and activities during General PTA meetings ● Conducted monitoring and evaluation same with the regular program 	SPED program advocacy
FGD 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of socialization activities for SPED learners ● Conducted follow-up lessons towards the mainstream ● SPED program has reached out to the community 	Facilitating meaningful learning experiences
FGD 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support from RBI, DSWD (P20,000.00), availing of eye screening ● Implementation of differentiated instruction for SPED learners ● Socialization activities of SPED learners 	Strong support from stakeholders Individualized teaching strategy Responsive Learners

As shown in the second column of table 2, there is a recurrent indication of strong support for SPED program from various stakeholders (FGD 1, 2, 3, 5, & 9). The support

usually came from parents, LGUs, and benefactors in cash or kind. Other forms of support were done through active involvement of parents and stakeholders in meetings and social advocacy campaigns. The strong support from parents and stakeholders substantiated earlier finding under Item No. 45 of the process component obtaining very high assessment stating “The school coordinates with local government units and non-government organizations for aid and support (4.30). Indeed, that activity highly was highly evident among the SPED implementing schools in the province and those were contributing to the implementation of the program.

The resourcefulness and commitment of the SPED teachers also evolved in the process of analysis (FGD 1, 3, 4 & 9). The study found that in spite limited resources and capacities of teachers to handle the SPED program, they manifested dedication and commitment in the program implementation by being resourceful and innovative such as the use of videos and films to facilitate instruction and the application of individualized instruction to attend to the individual learning needs of children with varied difficulties. This finding substantiated that of Item No. 26 under Input component describing the teachers to have possessed positive attitude, desirable personal values, and commitment to children with special needs (4.56); and that of No. 40 under process where the teachers are found to have observed prompt attendance to classes, decorum at all times, performed tasks, and manifested harmonious relationship with people within the organization and the community (4.54).

The responsiveness of the SPED learners in the province is highly evident in the study based on the FGD responses (FGD4, 5, 9). These manifested in their active involvement in the school and communities and socialization activities which obtained assessment ratings under Item Nos. 46.2 and 46.3.

These were achieved because of the teachers’ innovative teaching strategies and resourcefulness by facilitating meaningful learning experiences by exposing them to participate in the school and community activities and the use of educational technology and individualized teaching instruction (FGD 1, 4, 7 & 9).

This finding corroborates that of Item Nos. 27 and 28 under process component stating teaching strategies are creative and multi-dimensional (4.22), and teachers make use of sense modalities that encourage active participation of the learners in the learning process” (4.22).

Putting together all the responses obtained from the FGD sessions shown in Table 12, the respondents simply describe some problems and constraints they encountered in the implementation of the SPED program in their respective schools. Most responses redound to the inadequacies and insufficiencies of instructional facilities, equipment, and materials needed to facilitate effective instructional delivery of the SPED programs (FGDs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 & 9). Specifically, these problems pertain to the insufficient and inadequate number of classrooms, laboratories, recreational facilities appropriate for children with special needs. These also include in the availability of learning resources for SPED children. This information substantiated results under Input component of

Instructional Facilities which obtained Low assessment rating particularly on classrooms (2.27), Science laboratories (2.74), speech laboratories (1.44) internet facilities (2.59) and use of adoptive tools (2.44).

The inadequacy of the number of competent and well-trained faculty to handles various SPED programs were also evident during FGD sessions (FGD 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9). Although the earlier finding described the SPED teachers to be resourceful and committed to the program, it was also found that they difficulty implementing the SPED classes particularly addressing the variety of disabilities simply because they lacked professional training and education in the field of special education. The same observations were noted in the survey results Item Nos. 24 that described moderate ability to demonstrate professional teaching competence (3.14) because of lack of training and engagement in research (2.33) and publication activities (2.52). In an adequate number of well-trained teachers was also indicated in Item No. 23 where the number of teachers assigned to each disability is quite inadequate (3.07) considering the need to cater to the various learning disabilities and the increasing number of SPED enrolment reported in this study.

Moreover, the study also found insufficient professional medical services to assess the condition of the SPED learners. This holds true with the inadequate assessment of learners due to the absence of appropriate and standardized assessment tools (FGD 1, 2 & 7).

Table 3. Transcriptions of Data from FGDs Coded as Weaknesses and Threats

Weaknesses and Threats		Unit Meaning
FGD1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of medical assessment and check-up for SPED learners ● Hiring and training of additional SPED teachers ● Some CSN in the community who are not catered in SPED 	Insufficient medical services Inadequate competent teachers Limited access to SPED from remote areas
FGD 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to conduct assessment using appropriate tools 	Inadequate assessment
FGD 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom designs are not appropriate for SPED pupils ● Lack of teacher to teach autism and other disabilities ● Lack of training for SPED teacher 	Insufficient and inadequate instructional facilities and well-trained teachers for SPED
FGD 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of trained teachers to handle SPED programs 	Inadequate well-trained teachers
FGD 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of access to SPED due poverty and the distance 	Accessibility problem to SPED from remote areas

FGD 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have additional teachers for SPED programs • Need to have more instructional materials and classrooms appropriate for SPED learners 	<p>Inadequate number of well-trained teachers</p> <p>Insufficient and inadequate instructional facilities</p>
FGD 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and seminars for SPED teachers • Provision of needed instructional materials and facilities for SPED • Need to use appropriate assessment tools 	<p>Inadequate number of well-trained teachers</p> <p>Insufficient and inadequate instructional facilities</p> <p>Inadequate assessment tools</p>
FGD 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of instructional facilities such as classrooms, recreation area, and materials for SPED program • Lack of trained teachers to handle SPED programs 	<p>Insufficient instructional facilities and instructional materials</p> <p>Lack of well-trained teachers</p>
FGD 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teachers to handle children with disabilities • Lack of instructional facilities such as classrooms, recreation area, and materials for SPED program 	<p>Insufficient instructional facilities and instructional materials</p> <p>Lack of well-trained teachers</p>

This observation was also found in the assessment results Item 22 that assessment of pupils with special needs using the appropriate psychological test (3.19) and in promoting children with special needs (2.51) because of lack of promotion policy for SPED learners. The study finds that information obtains during the focused group discussion (FGDs) that corroborated the results of the survey which describe the extent of SPED implementation to be high particularly in the provisions of context and product components. The same observations were found out as to the areas of concerns implying appropriate interventions in the components of Inputs and process.

The success indicators are highly evident in the components of context through the development of well-defined SPED program goals and objectives and the product component yielding positive impacts on the learning outcomes of the SPED pupils in spite limited input resources and some inadequacies in the process of implementing the program. The deficiencies found in the component evaluations provide relevant feedback to enhance the program implementation in the province of Surigao del Sur.

This positive finding suggests sustainability of program implementation reach out to those individuals having learning disabilities and needing special services. Concerning those inadequacies, deficiencies, and insufficiencies found, the study implies the development of a more comprehensive and responsive program modifications and intervention activities to address those problems and concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

Premised by the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn

1. The level of implementation of SPED program in the province of Surigao del Sur is high owing to the sufficient provisions in the Context and Product

- components and the deficiencies in the components of Input and Process.
2. The sufficiency of SPED implementation is gauged in the responsive formulation of program goals, objectives and strategies and their impact on learning achievement specifically the development of the positive understanding of the learners themselves and their manifestations of social skills. The deficiency of the program is on the inadequacy competent faculty and insufficiency of instructional facilities and learning resources.
 3. The number years of offering the SPED program and the number of the teacher assigned to handle SPED classes are operant factors that are significantly contributory to the implementation of SPED programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following are recommended

- The school heads of SPED implementing school should consider the hiring of the well-trained and competent teacher to adequately handle children with various learning disabilities.
- SPED implementing schools having longer experience in the program may be tapped to enhance capability building of school heads and teachers who are new to the program.
3. The deficiencies found in the components of Input and Process should be properly addressed by developing an effective programs and activities to enhance the SPED implementation in the province of Surigao del Sur. Activities should be incorporated in the school improvement plans of the SPED implementing schools, and a memorandum of agreement should be made to LGU's, BLGU's and other stakeholders for financial support and assistance.

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