

TEACHERS' AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) IMPLEMENTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

This study utilized a descriptive correlational design to determine the relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEP as factors influencing their implementation in selected public school teachers in Marikina City, specifically in San Roque Elementary School, Concepcion Elementary School, Parang Elementary School, and Barangka Elementary School, towards the implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in teaching LSN. This aimed to identify the demographic profile of the SPED teachers in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and type of school setting. It also aimed to present the level of attitudes and awareness of the teachers towards the IEP, and determine the significant relationship. The respondents were teachers who are directly handling SPED classes as well as those assigned to inclusive classrooms where LSNs are integrated. Through the purposive sampling technique, 36 teachers were selected, ensuring that only teachers with relevant experience in implementing or assisting with IEPs were included. Findings revealed that most teachers are Bachelor's degree, while only 5 hold a master's degree. In terms of the level of SPED training, 8 attend intermediate training, while only 5 have an advanced SPED specialization. It is also revealed that teachers demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), with a composite mean of 3.79. Likewise, teachers displayed positive attitudes toward the IEP, with a composite mean of 3.82. The statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in awareness and attitudes based on gender, age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, or level of SPED training. However, the school setting significantly affected awareness ($p=0.0002$). It further revealed that teachers show positive attitudes toward IEP. Moreover, the proposed IEP-READY Program aims to further strengthen implementation capacity in practical application, collaboration, and reflective practice.

Keywords: *SPED education, awareness, attitudes, Individualized Education Plan (IEP)*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic right for every child, regardless of their needs and abilities. This principle is clearly supported by Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive, fair, and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities (Wulff, 2020). In the Philippines, this goal has guided the development of policies and programs that aim to better serve Learners with Special Needs (LSN) and learners with disabilities. However, despite these efforts, there are still gaps in how inclusive education is carried out in real classroom settings, especially in terms of how teachers understand and respond to these policies.

According to the Department of Education, in School Year (SY) 2019–2020, there were about 360,879 LSN enrolled in Special Education (SPED) programs across the country, as cited by Dela Peña (2023). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sharp drop in enrollment, with only 111,521 learners in SY 2020–2021 and further down to 93,895 in SY 2021–2022. This decline shows that many learners with special needs were not able to continue their education during this time.

The types of disabilities being handled in SPED are also wide and varied. According to Araña (2022), common conditions among learners include difficulty in remembering, focusing, or paying attention, visual impairment, difficulty in applying knowledge, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairment, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), learning disabilities, and communication difficulties. Because of these differences, teaching strategies cannot be the same for all learners. Teachers must adjust their instruction, materials, and support depending on each learner's needs. This makes the role of teachers even more important, not only in skills but also in their level of awareness and their attitudes toward inclusive education practices.

Over the past years, SPED in the Philippines has become more recognized and prioritized. One example is DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, which shows the government's commitment to inclusive education. However, even with such policies, many challenges still exist in actual implementation. These include issues in identifying learners with disabilities, lack of resources, limited training opportunities for teachers, and insufficient SPED centers (Chan, 2025).

More importantly, while policies focus on structures and programs, there is still limited attention given to how teachers themselves understand these policies and how they feel about applying them in real teaching situations. This creates a gap between policy and practice.

In Marikina City, there has been gradual but meaningful progress in supporting inclusive education over the years. The city has established SPED centers in public schools and also has private institutions that serve learners with special needs. For example, Barangka Elementary School supports learners with visual impairments, while San Roque Elementary School provides services for learners with autism, ADHD,

intellectual disabilities, and hearing impairments. Private institutions such as Dynamic Thinkers Educational Center, Eucharistiana Center for Special Children, and Sta. Clara Academy also provides services for different conditions.

These efforts show that access to SPED services in Marikina is improving. However, even with these available programs and centers, the effectiveness of inclusive education still depends on how teachers implement strategies such as the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in their daily teaching.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as explained by Ismail and Majid (2020), is a written plan designed to meet the unique learning needs of a student with a disability. It helps guide teachers in setting learning goals, planning instruction, and monitoring student progress (Ranbir, 2024). An IEP usually includes the learner's current performance, specific goals, and support services needed (Kurth et al., 2022). It is not just a document but a process that involves teachers, parents, and other stakeholders working together to support the learner. Because of this, the success of an IEP depends greatly on how well teachers understand it and how willing they are to use it properly.

Although inclusive education and the use of IEPs are supported by policy, many public school teachers still face challenges in terms of their awareness and attitudes toward IEP implementation. According to Groh (2021), many teachers lack proper training, resources are limited, and schools are often underprepared for SPED programs. These challenges can affect how much teachers know about IEPs and how they feel about using them.

Some teachers may be aware of IEPs but may not fully understand how to apply them, while others may have negative or uncertain attitudes due to workload, lack of support, or limited experience. This shows an important research gap: while policies and programs exist, there is still a need to better understand the level of awareness and attitudes of teachers, as these factors directly affect how IEPs are implemented in real classrooms.

Thus, examining both awareness and attitudes is important. Awareness refers to the teacher's knowledge and understanding of IEP, while attitude refers to their beliefs, perceptions, and willingness to apply it. If teachers are highly aware but have negative attitudes, implementation may still be weak. On the other hand, positive attitudes without enough awareness may also lead to improper use of the IEP. Therefore, both factors must be studied together to fully understand their effect on inclusive education.

This study focuses on public school SPED teachers in Marikina City to determine the relationship between their awareness and attitudes toward the implementation of IEPs in teaching Learners with Special Needs (LSN). By focusing on this specific location, which is known for its strong support for education, the study aims to identify existing strengths and remaining gaps in practice. More importantly, it seeks to provide insights that can help improve teacher training, support systems, and policy implementation. Since IEPs play a key role in helping LSN succeed, understanding how teachers think and feel

about them is necessary in improving inclusive education, not only in Marikina City but also in the broader Philippine context.

Background of the Study

There is an evident growing recognition that inclusive education is not only a legal mandate but also a moral and social responsibility. IEP is central to inclusive education, as it ensures that students with disabilities are given tailored instruction that meets their unique needs (Ismail & Majid, 2020). In the Philippines, the passage of Republic Act 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act, underscores the national commitment to address the learning needs of students with disabilities by mandating support systems and structures in schools (Durante et al., 2024). Despite this policy support, many public schools continue to face difficulties in IEP implementation, raising important questions about teachers' preparedness and perceptions.

The problems connected to IEPs are multifaceted. Goldman et al. (2024) report that teachers often spend almost half of their working hours completing IEP paperwork, leaving them with reduced time for actual classroom instruction. On top of that, new teachers frequently struggle to write measurable and meaningful goals, affecting the overall quality of the plans (Rakap, 2023). Even experienced teachers face challenges, particularly when they lack administrative and peer support, adequate training, and access to special education specialists (Groh, 2021).

In the Philippine context, Concepcion et al. (2025) presented that teachers are generally knowledgeable about IEP development but encounter barriers in systematic processes such as regular review and revision. Mangongon (2023) also signified the teachers' call for greater parental involvement and mentoring in the IEP process. These problems are compounded by systemic issues such as limited resources, insufficient training, and persistent social stigma (Macabenta et al., 2023).

Given these realities, the success of IEPs rests largely on teachers' awareness and attitudes. Awareness refers to how well teachers understand the principles, components, and application of IEPs, while attitudes reflect their willingness and openness to implement them effectively in classrooms. Robinson and Young (2020) argued that teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions strongly influence student outcomes, both academic and social.

Likewise, Manzoor et al. (2024) maintain that positive teacher attitudes strengthened inclusive classrooms that empower LSN. This reinforces the need to study both awareness and attitudes in tandem, as either factor alone is insufficient to ensure quality IEP implementation.

Marikina City provides a significant context for this research because of its reputation as a highly urbanized community with a strong focus on education and social development. According to the Marikina City Planning Office (2022), the city has a projected growth to 493,543 by 2025 based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data. Such growth naturally puts pressure on the education sector, including the need for

accessible and inclusive education. Teachers in Marikina are regularly exposed to training initiatives, including programs related to Special Education (SPED), but the extent of their knowledge and the attitudes they bring toward IEPs remain underexplored.

This study was conducted in four selected public elementary schools in Marikina City: San Roque Elementary School, Concepcion Elementary School, Parang Elementary School, and Barangka Elementary School. These institutions are considered medium-sized schools, each with an estimated 65 to 80 teachers, reflecting the average staffing of public elementary schools in the city. San Roque Elementary School serves a diverse student body, including learners with autism, ADHD, intellectual disabilities, and hearing impairments, making it an important site for inclusive education practices.

Concepcion Elementary School, similarly, has implemented programs for LSN across grade levels, integrating SPED classrooms alongside mainstream education. Parang Elementary School, one of the larger schools in its district, also accommodates students with varying needs, including those requiring behavioral and academic interventions. Significantly, Barangka Elementary School is particularly known for its program catering to children with visual impairments, suggesting the city's capacity to address specialized disabilities. Collectively, these schools provide a realistic setting to examine how IEPs are being implemented and what challenges teachers face in doing so.

The findings served as a basis for strengthening teacher training, informing local DepEd policy, and improving collaboration among stakeholders. More importantly, it contributes to ensuring that LSN in Marikina receives the quality education they deserve, consistent with national goals and international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Importance of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a central tool in supporting LSN. It was first introduced through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which later became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 (Rozalski et al., 2021; Draper, 2020). The IEP is a written document that ensures students with disabilities receive the necessary services to meet their individual learning needs. It is more than just a plan, as it is a legal requirement that guarantees students' right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Under this principle, education must be provided at no cost, must follow state standards, be available at all levels of education, and must align with the student's IEP (Rozalski et al., 2021).

This demonstrates agreement with the rise of Special Education, which is defined by Francisco et al. (2020) as a customized educational approach that is designed to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, especially among children with special needs who require more efforts of the educational system in order for them to learn effectively and efficiently. According to Mangonon (2022), it involves the implementation of individualized educational programs (IEPs) to ensure that students with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that accommodates their specific

learning requirements. The objective of this is to provide these students with equitable educational opportunities alongside their peers in the general education system.

Undoubtedly, teachers are the main actors in making IEPs effective. Concepcion et al. (2025) found that special education teachers have strong knowledge in creating IEPs, especially in planning and intervention, but face challenges in reviewing and revising them. Their study highlighted that teachers' knowledge strongly affects their actual practices, which means continuous training and professional development are essential for effective IEP use.

Similarly, Mangongon (2023) found that teachers experience difficulty in implementing the IEP process despite being aware of its importance. This indicates gaps in their understanding of IEP as an instructional support for LSN, highlighting the need for adequate training and stronger parent involvement, which are essential for its effective implementation. The study further points out that teachers encounter confusion in properly applying IEPs, not only in their teaching practices but also in fully understanding their overall purpose and function.

The creation of IEPs also depends on clear developmental assessment reports. Jocson and Buenrostro (2022) observed that reports usually include a profile, present condition, findings, and recommendations, though formats may differ among practitioners. This indicates that standardized and well-structured assessments to guide IEP development effectively are necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of its function. Hence, the IEP is both a legal and educational tool designed to protect the rights of learners with special needs and provide them with quality, individualized learning. While its benefits are widely recognized, continuous teacher training, strong parental collaboration, and consistent assessment practices remain key to ensuring its success.

In addition, IEPs serve as useful tools for improving the academic performance of students with learning disabilities by giving them a chance to enhance their skills for reading and writing. This view is an effective approach for addressing specific needs while ensuring that there will be adequate results for improving the overall performance of the students with well-implemented IEPs. At the same time, it supports teachers' capability to foster better collaboration among learners by providing structured lessons and activities aligned with the needs of every student with disabilities (Donaire et al., 2024).

Similarly, Yuniari and Santosa (2024) found that the development and implementation of high-quality IEPs among institutions play an important role in improving the speaking skills of children with speech delay problems. The authors emphasize the significance of developing an IEP, especially in providing all the needed resources and supports needed by the educators and the students that are accessible to use for creating a more impactful program for addressing needs. It is also important in building an inclusive education for students with special abilities, specifically speech difficulties. Therefore, support for IEP implementation is not just a part of an educational plan for nothing, but it is more helpful for better improvement.

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents is an important part of understanding the results of the study. It includes basic information such as age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and type of school setting. These factors help explain differences in teachers' awareness and attitudes toward the IEP.

According to Adams et al. (2021), teachers' background characteristics can influence their readiness in inclusive education. While some studies show that demographic factors do not always directly affect attitudes, they still play a role in shaping teachers' experiences and exposure to inclusive practices. For example, teachers with more years of experience may have encountered more learners with special needs, which can improve both their awareness and confidence in using IEP.

Correspondingly, Olavyar (2022) explained that personal and professional characteristics, such as teaching experience and training, affect teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms. Teachers who have received more training or have higher educational attainment are more likely to understand the IEP better and apply it more effectively. This shows that the profile of the respondents is not just for description but also helps explain variations in awareness and attitudes.

Ginevra et al. (2021) also found that teaching context and background influence how teachers respond to students with disabilities. For instance, teachers in different school settings may have different levels of exposure to inclusive education, which can affect how they view and use IEP. Liquido and Potane (2023) added that years of service and sex may also influence teaching competence and involvement in school activities.

Nwosu et al. (2020) emphasized that teachers who are trained in special education are more prepared and willing to include learners with special needs. This means that the level of SPED training is a very important factor in shaping both awareness and attitudes. Teachers who are properly trained are more likely to understand the purpose of the IEP and feel confident in using it.

In total, the profile of the respondents provides important information that helps explain the differences in teachers' awareness and attitudes toward IEP. It also helps identify which groups of teachers may need more support, training, or resources. By analyzing these profiles, the study can better understand how background factors influence the implementation of IEP in teaching learners with special needs.

Profile of Teachers and Their Role in Inclusive Education

Teachers' personal and professional profiles greatly affect how they approach inclusive education. Several studies have examined how factors such as age, sex, teaching experience, educational background, and training influence teachers' effectiveness and attitudes when teaching LSN. Specifically, Olavyar (2022) found that teachers' demographic factors, such as age, sex, and years of teaching, along with their competencies, influence their self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms.

In a related study, Ginevra et al. (2021) asserted that teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities are also influenced by their profiles and teaching context. While age and gender were not directly related to attitudes, secondary teachers often showed more negative perceptions, especially toward students with behavioral or intellectual disabilities. This reveals that the school setting and the type of disability affect how teachers respond to inclusion.

Liquido and Potane (2023) further supported that teachers' profiles, particularly sex and years of service, can moderate their teaching competence and organizational citizenship. Younger teachers with strong pedagogical knowledge were more likely to demonstrate positive school involvement, which indirectly supports inclusive practices.

Following this, Nwosu et al. (2020) studied Nigerian teachers and found that demographic factors like gender and marital status did not significantly affect willingness to include children with special needs, but teachers' specialty did. Those trained in relevant fields showed more readiness, which raised the necessity of their skill development and the importance of targeted preparation. Once an educator is more exposed to the proper utilization of IEP, it makes them more ready to adapt to possible changes brought by utilizing the tools.

Adams et al. (2021) reported that readiness for inclusive education depends heavily on teachers' knowledge, skills, and prior training. Age, experience, and qualifications influenced preparedness, but the most important factors were teachers' understanding and attitude toward inclusion. In total, these studies show that while demographic profiles matter, it is teachers' competence, training, and school environment that most strongly shape their role in inclusive education. Teachers who are motivated, well-prepared, and supported are more effective in creating inclusive classrooms that meet the needs of all learners.

Historically, this integration of IEP in classrooms for LSN has evolved from a marginal practice to a central element of inclusive education. IEP was once thought to be an additional resource for a particular category of learners and teachers aiming to enhance educational experiences despite challenges (Pendharkar, 2023).

That said, the use of IEP has expanded and been included in standard educational methods due to the introduction of legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the United States (Craparo, n.d.). This legislation became one of the hundred movements supporting the progression of integration of various innovations within the system of Special Education that is designed for LSN.

Teachers' Awareness Towards the IEP

Teachers' awareness of the IEP is one of the most important factors in ensuring quality education for LSN. Their awareness includes knowledge of the IEP's content, its goals, and the steps needed for proper implementation. When teachers understand the IEP well, they are better able to design meaningful learning experiences, make appropriate adjustments, and support the growth of LSN. This is shown in the papers of

Ismail and Majid (2020), where teachers generally see IEPs as helpful in improving curriculum outcomes and developing students' abilities.

Despite these benefits, several studies point to gaps in teachers' knowledge and involvement in IEP preparation. Ograjšek et al. (2022) reported that in Slovenia, fewer than half of primary school teachers consistently took part in preparing IEPs, and only slightly more than half were familiar with all the adjustments required. This lack of involvement shows that some teachers may not be fully equipped or encouraged to take an active role in the process, limiting the IEP's effectiveness.

On top of that, there is a strong connection between knowledge and practice. Concepcion et al. (2025) discovered that teachers who have high knowledge levels about IEPs also perform better in actual implementation, especially in planning interventions. This means that improving teachers' awareness can directly improve how IEPs are carried out in schools.

Teacher qualifications also determine their awareness. Alnefaie and Alzahrani (2024) found that teachers with higher academic degrees, such as PhDs, show greater understanding of how to involve parents in the IEP process compared to those with lower qualifications. Similarly, Siron (2020) explained that teacher literacy in special needs education influences their ability to design effective IEPs, while self-efficacy alone does not guarantee strong design skills.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards the IEP

Special education teachers generally have a positive attitude towards IEP in the classroom, as evidenced by the paper by Kinneer (2021) wherein the author identifies the perceptions of the teachers in promoting inclusive education through various areas such as collaboration, professional and resource supports, and planning phase. The findings indicate that even general education teachers see the significant contribution of the IEP as specialized design structured to provide collaborative learning setting among LSN, which may serve in an inclusion setting. The author emphasizes that a special education teacher that has direct experiences on the use of IEP is more knowledgeable on the general curriculum guidelines that can meet the student needs.

Teachers' attitudes determine how effectively IEPs are implemented. Even when teachers are aware of the purpose and goals of IEPs, their willingness and motivation to apply them greatly influence student outcomes. A positive attitude often leads to stronger commitment and better classroom practices, while a negative or neutral attitude can become a barrier to inclusive education. This is reflected in the paper, similar to Groh (2021), who pointed out that general education teachers often struggle with IEP implementation because they lack the necessary training, knowledge, and support. Without these, teachers may feel unprepared or overwhelmed, leading to less favorable attitudes toward inclusion.

Attitude is not just an individual issue but also a broader pattern in inclusive education. Lindner et al. (2023) explained that many primary school teachers hold neutral

or ambivalent attitudes toward inclusion, and their acceptance often depends on the type of disability the student has. This means that teachers may feel more comfortable supporting students with certain conditions while feeling less prepared for others. Rashid and Wong (2022), through their review of studies, also confirmed that lack of motivation is the most common attitudinal challenge teachers face, appearing in about two-thirds of the research they examined.

Additionally, teachers' attitudes towards IEPs are crucial as they have a significant part in facilitating the use of the plan in the classroom. Positive perceptions from teachers regarding the benefits of IEP, such as its ability to conceptualize multiple learning strategies, provide deliverable contents with proper instructions to children with disabilities, and the ability to handle instructional data can motivate them to integrate these resources effectively (Tenerife et al.2022).

In the findings of research led by Kozikoğlu and Albayrak (2022), some teachers express a positive attitude towards the use of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) because of the advantages it provides for students with disabilities, while others express concerns about the limitations of using it due to a lack of resources and capabilities in special education. These concerns arise during the implementation of the IEP including the planning phases and the overall assessment of the plan.

Relationship between Awareness and Attitudes

The relationship between awareness and attitudes toward inclusive education has been widely explored, showing that teacher awareness often shapes their acceptance and support of inclusive practices. According to Jincy and Anu (2024), there is a statistically significant relationship between awareness and attitude toward inclusive education, with urban teachers demonstrating higher awareness compared to rural teachers. This higher awareness among urban teachers is linked to better access to training and exposure to inclusive practices, resulting in more positive attitudes. Such positive attitudes are necessary because they are strongly associated with improved academic performance and enhanced well-being of LSN.

Variations in teachers' attitudes also depend on demographic and experiential factors. Karaca et al. (2020) found that pre-service teachers' attitudes toward IEPs differ significantly depending on gender, training in inclusive education, and knowledge of related regulations. This suggests that awareness is not only tied to general knowledge but also to specific exposure and preparation. Teachers who receive formal training or have prior experience working with LSN are more likely to demonstrate favorable attitudes.

Theoretical perspectives further explain how awareness and knowledge influence attitudes and practices. Audi (2020) argues that perception and knowledge guide practical reasoning and action, meaning that teachers who are more knowledgeable about inclusive practices are better able to translate awareness into effective strategies. Being aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the said plan makes it a big factor on

creating impactful learning experiences among students with disabilities, even at their younger age.

Enhancing Teachers' Awareness and Attitudes

Enhancing teachers' awareness and attitudes toward inclusive education and IEPs is one of the most essential steps in building an effective and equitable education system. Galiakberova et al. (2020) signified that teachers' professional self-awareness does improve their teaching attitudes and effectiveness. They explained that many pre-service teachers possess theoretical knowledge but lack awareness of their professional identity and purpose. Without proper self-reflection and understanding of their roles, teachers may lose motivation and the sense of value in their profession.

The study of Contuk and Atay (2021) presented the Harezmi Educational Model, which supports teachers' professional development through multi-disciplinary training involving robotics, coding, and problem-solving. The model encourages innovation, collaboration, and reflection—skills that directly improve teachers' confidence and attitudes toward modern, inclusive teaching practices. Teachers who participated in this training reported enhanced autonomy, stronger collaboration with peers, and greater belief in their teaching capacity. These outcomes show that training grounded in creativity and teamwork not only improves professional skills but also fosters positive attitudes toward educational change and diversity.

For special education, Donaire et al. (2024) and Ni'mah and Ni'am (2024) both confirmed that the success of IEPs depends heavily on teacher preparedness and motivation. Donaire et al. (2024) found that students' academic performance improved by 20% when IEPs were effectively implemented, showing that structured and well-managed teaching practices can transform learning outcomes. However, teachers also reported time limitations and administrative challenges, stressing the need for adequate support and regular updates.

Likewise, Ni'mah and Ni'am (2024) described that IEP implementation in the Merdeka curriculum improved learning outcomes for inclusive students when teachers were properly guided through planning, implementation, and evaluation. These findings highlight that enhancing awareness of IEP procedures and attitudes of commitment among teachers directly leads to better educational results for LSN.

Leadership was also found to create positive teacher attitudes. Lambrecht et al. (2020) discovered that transformational and instructional leadership practices help create structures for collaboration that enhance teachers' participation in IEP development. They found that leadership indirectly influences IEP success by providing systems that encourage cooperation among teachers. When teachers feel supported by school leaders, their attitudes toward inclusive practices become more positive, and their awareness of student diversity deepens.

Training through experiential learning can also improve teacher awareness. Toledo (2023) demonstrated this through simulated IEP meetings, where pre-service

teachers experienced the process of planning and discussing student needs. After participating in these role-play sessions, teachers gained a greater understanding of the IEP process and reported higher confidence in applying it. This practical approach helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real classroom experiences, fostering both awareness and positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Barriers to Effective IEP Implementation

Despite positive attitudes and awareness, numerous barriers hinder the effective implementation of IEP in educational settings. Alhajeri (2025) highlighted that challenges such as lack of administrative support, adequate training for teachers, parental involvement, and the flexibility of the current curriculum hinders the effectiveness of the IEP in supporting student's engagement. It affects the consistent goals of the educational system to offer an inclusive education among students with disabilities because of difficulties they might experience while engaging into the use of IEP.

The study of Brazas (2023) examined the different challenges faced by the migration narratives of Filipino SPED teachers, highlighting the poor working conditions, insufficient funding, and professional isolation as key factors driving their decision to seek better opportunities abroad. It merely affects the current development of any instructional tools used by educators to help students.

Scheef et al. (2023) found that the implementation of IEP is associated with several challenges in both perceptions of students and teachers that utilize the system. These include the ability of the student to easily adapt IEP as learning method, teachers self-efficacy, and the personal interest of the users regarding on the functions of the plan itself. Another study highlighted challenges such as students' obstacles, resource inadequacy and the need for more training for SPED teachers in order to effectively utilize the IEP.

Consequently, Nicolaysen (2024) further examines several challenges that impede the overall effectiveness of IEP among its members and users. It is revealed that systematic changes, such as lack of collaborations between special and general teachers seen to be a major barriers that affects greater improvement of the tool. It further highlights that differences in the roles within a structured organizations hinders the ability of the system to access comprehensive data because of inconsistent ideas regarding the correct process of utilizing the IEP across diverse educational setting.

According to Lomba-Portela et al. (2022), resistance to novelty in educational transformation refers to the reluctance or hesitance of educators to adopt and integrate new and innovative ideas into their teaching practices. This resistance may be caused by a number of things, including a dislike for traditional teaching techniques, lack of training or support, worries about the efficacy of the educational tools, and unfamiliarity with it.

At the same time, if the tools might not be officially classified as assistive technology (AT) and hence not taken into consideration during the planning phase, their exclusion from Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) also causes additional resistance, which creates barriers.

Congruently, the adoption of IEP as instructional tools in SPED is impeded by worries about teacher capacity and time restrictions, especially when such tools are not familiar to educators. This has an effect on group decision-making, whether accepting or rejecting the tools because of unfamiliarity with it creating a wider impact on the system of education (Ibeanusi,2020).

Another factor is the quick-fix mindset that affects some educational environments and has an inclination to rely only on technology rather than considering alternative teaching methods. Even though there are tools available to facilitate autonomous learning, some teachers are reluctant to encourage student freedom, which adds to the opposition towards embracing new educational tools.

Synthesis

The reviewed studies show a clear and consistent pattern about the role of the IEP in supporting LSN. Many authors agree that an IEP is an important tool in inclusive education because it helps guide teaching, improve learning outcomes, and address the individual needs of students.

However, across the studies, a common pattern can be seen: the success of IEP does not only depend on the plan itself, but more importantly on the teachers who implement it. Specifically, teachers' awareness, attitudes, training, and working conditions strongly affect how effective the IEP becomes in actual classroom practice.

Several studies determined that even when teachers recognize the importance of an IEP, they still face challenges in using it properly. Concepcion et al. (2025) explained that teachers are capable of planning and intervention but struggle in reviewing and improving IEPs. In the same way, Mangongon (2023) found that teachers understand IEP but still experience difficulties due to a lack of training, support, and parent involvement.

Jocson and Buenrostro (2022) also emphasized the need for clear assessment and standard procedures. This shows a pattern that knowledge alone is not enough, and there is still a gap between understanding and actual practice.

Another pattern found in the studies is the influence of teachers' profiles and background. Studies by Olavyar (2022), Ginevra et al. (2021), and Liquido and Potane (2023) show that factors such as experience, training, and teaching context affect teachers' competence and attitudes.

However, Cañoso (2025) and Adams et al. (2021) emphasized that training, motivation, and school support are more important than demographic factors alone. This suggests that while the profile of teachers matters, their awareness and attitudes are more critical in determining their effectiveness in inclusive education.

Most importantly, the studies consistently show a strong connection between awareness and attitudes toward IEP. Teachers who have higher awareness tend to show more positive attitudes and are more capable of applying IEP effectively (Ismail & Majid, 2020).

However, some studies also show that awareness does not always lead to positive attitudes, especially when teachers lack motivation, support, or confidence (Wong & Rashid, 2022; Groh, 2021). This creates a pattern where awareness and attitudes are related but may not always align, depending on different factors such as training and environment.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEPs, which are considered key factors influencing their implementation. By identifying this relationship, the study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how these factors influence IEP use and to identify areas where support, training, and improvement are needed. This will help strengthen inclusive education practices and improve learning outcomes for LSN.

Theoretical Framework

This study employed the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) Model as its theoretical framework to explain the relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEPs, which are considered as key factors influencing their implementation.

The KAP model suggests that knowledge influences attitudes, which in turn affect practices or behaviors (Zheng et al., 2021). In the context of this study, teachers' awareness or knowledge of IEPs is expected to shape their attitudes, which may then influence how they approach and support LSN in their classrooms.

Kang and Bagaoisan (2024) stated that KAP model was first proposed by Everett M. Rogers in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a behavioral intervention theory aimed at changing poor practices. The model is built on three key stages: acquiring knowledge, building attitudes, and constructing practices.

This means that awareness of a certain concept, such as IEP, leads to the development of either positive or negative attitudes, which then determine how individuals act in real-life situations. In education, this represents how teacher awareness can be translated into meaningful classroom practices through attitudes.

As well as that, Luo et al. (2022) indicated that while knowledge is essential, attitudes often play a more critical role in determining actual practices. This implies that teachers who possess adequate awareness of IEPs may still fail to apply them effectively if they hold negative attitudes, whereas positive attitudes can strengthen their ability to practice inclusive teaching strategies.

Zheng et al. (2021) also added that knowledge can have both direct and indirect effects on practice, showing how awareness and attitudes are interconnected in influencing teacher behavior. Therefore, this study adopted the KAP model to provide a clear framework for examining whether teachers' awareness of IEPs is significantly related to their attitudes, which ultimately contributes to better practices in supporting learners with special needs.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research provides a clearer view of the relationship among its key factors and variables. It firstly identified the profile of the teachers and their connection between the degree of awareness and attitudes toward the use of IEP, and its effect on the overall implementation among LSN. Awareness referred to the knowledge of the teachers regarding the acceptance and effectiveness of implementing IEP in their teaching practices, while the attitudes refer to the beliefs and clearer understanding of teachers' readiness to implement IEP within the classroom setting.

In analyzing these connections, this study seeks to establish whether awareness significantly affects teachers' attitudes toward the use and implementation of IEP, and the significant difference when grouped according to demographic profile of the respondents. This framework represents the connection between awareness and attitudes of the teachers, which will be the basis for recommending an effective program that could strengthen and fosters both awareness and positive attitudes among public school teachers in Marikina City. Significantly, it suggested that the success of the IEP implementation would be a foundation for building a constructive IEP-related program in promoting inclusive education.

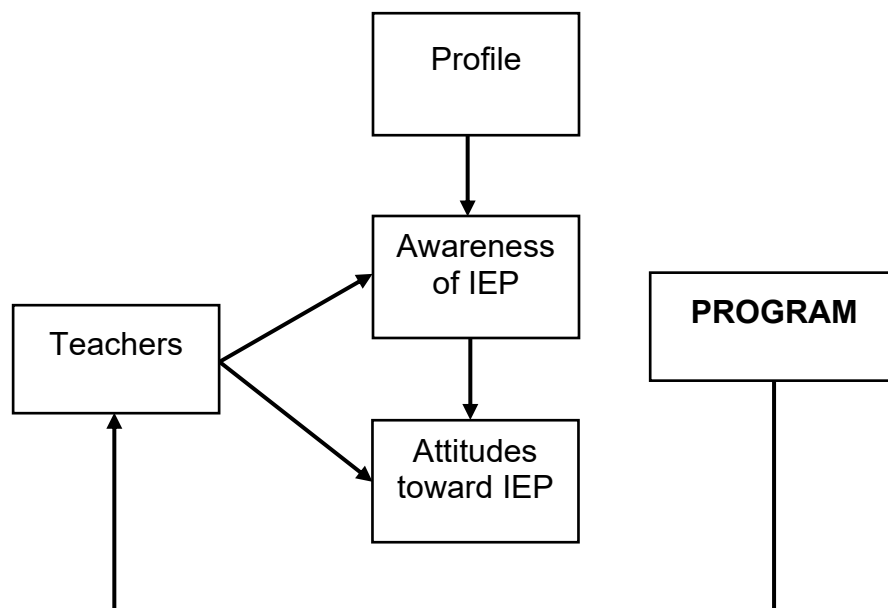


Figure 1

Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the relationship between the awareness and attitudes of public school teachers in Marikina City towards the implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in teaching LSN. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the profile of the respondents with respect to:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. educational attainment;
 - 1.4. years of teaching experience;
 - 1.5. level of SPED training; and
 - 1.6. type of school setting
2. What is the level of awareness of the respondents towards the IEP?
3. What is the level of attitudes of the respondents towards the IEP?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of awareness and attitudes towards IEP?
5. Is there a significant difference between the level of awareness and attitudes according to their demographic profile?
6. What program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Hypotheses

The researcher formulates hypotheses.

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEP.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between the level of awareness and attitudes of the respondents regarding the IEP when grouped according to demographic profile.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on determining the relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEP as factors influencing their implementation. Specifically, it examined the levels of awareness and attitudes teachers possess, and how these two variables relate to each other.

This study was conducted in four medium-sized public elementary schools in Marikina City, namely, San Roque Elementary School, Concepcion Elementary School, Parang Elementary School, and Barangka Elementary School during the school year 2025-2026. These schools were chosen as the research setting because they cater to students with SEN and employ teachers who directly handle the implementation of IEPs.

It is further limited on selected public elementary schools in Marikina City; thus, the findings cannot be generalized to private schools or to schools outside the city. On top of that, this study only measured the self-reported awareness and attitudes of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative approach, specifically a descriptive correlational design, to determine the relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes towards IEPs among 36 public school teachers from four selected elementary schools in Marikina City: San Roque Elementary School, Concepcion Elementary School, Parang Elementary School, and Barangka Elementary School.

The descriptive correlational design is properly aligned for this study as it allows for the description of the relationship between awareness and attitudes towards IEP as factors influencing the implementation of public school teachers. According to Sakkir et al. (2022), this design involves selecting a representative sample and using validated instruments to gather data.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study were beneficial to the following:

Special Education Teachers

The findings of this helped every Special Education Teacher to understand the importance of an Individualized Education Plan in teaching LSN;

Learners with Special Needs (LSN)

This study is beneficial to all students, particularly those with special needs in educational settings. Through the proper implementation and use of IEPs by teachers, the specific learning needs of students can be effectively addressed.

Parents

The result of this study helps parents to have a clear understanding of the crucial role of IEP in the learning progress of their children, so that they are able to support their children based on what they need.

School Administrators

The findings of the study guide them to develop a scheme that is more focused on assessing the awareness and attitudes of public school teachers in the use of IEPs.

Researcher

Conducting the study provides her with more knowledge and information about the level of awareness and attitudes of the teacher in relation to the implementation of IEP in supporting LSN.

Future Researchers

The proposed study will benefit and help future researchers as their guide and reference for future study, especially when it is about determining the relationship between the awareness and attitudes of public-school teachers about the implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in teaching LSN.

Definition of Terms

For a better understanding of the study, the following terms are conceptually and operationally defined:

Attitudes

Conceptually, this refers to how the teachers feel and respond to the use of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in their teaching. In this study, it is measured based on their level of agreement in the survey, including their beliefs, opinions, and willingness to use IEP in the classroom.

Awareness

This refers to how much the teachers know and understand about the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In this study, it is measured through their responses to questions about their knowledge of IEP components, purpose, and how it is used in teaching LSN.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

This refers to a written plan used by teachers to guide the learning of students with special needs. This study includes setting learning goals, planning teaching strategies, and monitoring the progress of LSN based on their individual needs.

Special Education (SPED)

This refers to the type of education given to learners with special needs. This study involves the use of different teaching methods, materials, and support to help students with disabilities or learning difficulties learn better in public schools.

SPED Teachers

This refers to the teachers who handle learners with special needs. This study includes both SPED teachers and regular teachers in inclusive classrooms who are involved in using or assisting with the IEP.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

To gather the needed data for this study, a researcher-made structured survey questionnaire was used as the main instrument. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on related literature and previous studies about the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), teacher awareness, and attitudes toward inclusive education. It was designed to measure the awareness and attitudes of public school teachers in Marikina City regarding the implementation of IEP in teaching students with special needs.

Part I focuses on the demographic profile of the respondents, which includes age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and type of school setting. Part II measures the level of awareness of teachers regarding IEP, including their knowledge and understanding of its components and implementation. Lastly, Part III measures the level of attitudes of teachers toward IEP, including their perceptions, beliefs, and willingness to apply IEP strategies in their teaching practices.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by two experts in the fields of Special Education and one in educational research. This procedure ensured that the instrument is valid, reliable, and appropriate for collecting accurate and meaningful data for the study.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey questionnaire were analyzed using frequency, weighted mean, Pearson correlation, One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), and T-test to address the research objectives.

1. Frequency and Percentage

It was used to tabulate and summarize the respondents' demographic profiles, including age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and type of school setting.

2. Weighted Mean

It was employed to measure the respondents' levels of awareness and attitudes toward the Individualized Education Plan. Operationally, the weighted mean provides a single representative score that reflects the average response of participants while accounting for varying degrees of agreement or frequency.

3. Pearson correlation

It was employed to determine whether there is a significant correlation between positive attitudes toward IEP implementation.

4. One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

It was used to determine a significant difference between the level of awareness and attitudes according to their demographic profile

5. T-test

It was used to determine the difference between the level of awareness and attitudes according to gender.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were highly prioritized by the researcher to ensure that the research is both respectful and responsible toward participants. The social value of the study was highlighted by its potential to contribute to the improvement of teaching practices for LSN. Informed consent was obtained from each participant. The researcher also considered the vulnerability of participants by creating a safe and supportive environment, ensuring that teachers can share their experiences without fear of judgment or repercussion. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study. All personal information was anonymized, and data collected was securely stored following the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring that no identifying details are disclosed. Transparency was upheld by clearly communicating the research process, data handling procedures, findings, and how the results were utilized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

This section contains the demographic profile of selected public elementary schools in Marikina City, particularly in San Roque Elementary School, Concepcion Elementary School, Parang Elementary School, and Barangka Elementary School during the school year 2025-2026 in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and type of school setting.

Age

Age of SPED teachers determine their level of attitudes and awareness toward IEP implementation. Table 1 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of Age.

Table 1
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 29 years old	18	50.00
30 – 39 years old	15	41.67
40 – 49 years old	3	8.33
Total	36	100

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their age. It shows the frequency and percentage of the ages of the respondents in the sample. Most respondents were 20–29 years old (50%), followed by 30–39 years old (41.67%), while only 8.33% were 40–49 years old.

The results indicates that the majority of respondents are young professionals, suggesting that many teachers handling learners with special needs are relatively early in their teaching careers.

Gender

Gender of SPED teachers also matters on their level of attitudes and awareness toward IEP implementation to identify if female teachers are more aware on its usage or vice versa. Table 1.2 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of Gender.

Table 1.2.
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	30	83.33
Male	6	16.67
Total	36	100

Table 1.2 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender. It shows the frequency and percentage of male and female respondents in the sample. Based on the table, most respondents were female (83.33%), while 16.67% were male. In this study, this reflects the common trend in the teaching profession where female teachers dominate the education sector, particularly in inclusive and special education settings.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is an important factor that contributes on the better understanding about the effectiveness of IEP implementation. Table 1.3 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of Educational Attainment.

Table 1.3.
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage

As	Bachelor's Degree (SPED Major)	15	41.67
	Bachelor's Degree (Non-SPED Major)	12	33.33
	Master's Degree	5	13.89
	Bachelor's Degree with Master's Units	2	5.56
	Others	2	5.56
	Total	36	100

presented in Table 1.3, this indicated that most respondents hold a Bachelor's Degree in SPED (41.67%), followed by non-SPED bachelor's degree holders (33.33%). A smaller proportion had graduate-level education (19.45%), indicating that while many teachers have relevant undergraduate training, fewer have advanced specialization in SPED.

Years of teaching experience

Years of teaching experienced perceived the role teachers with more experiences in teaching students with special needs. Table 1.4 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of years of teaching experience.

Table 1.4
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Years of teaching experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0–5 years	19	52.78
6–10 years	12	33.33
11–15 years	3	8.33
16 years and above	2	5.56
Total	36	100

Table 1.4. presents that majority of respondents have 0–5 years of teaching experience (52.78%), suggesting that many teachers working with LSN are relatively new to the profession.

Type of School Setting

Types of School setting provide background information about the current setting where SPED teachers are teaching students with special needs. Table 1.5 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of type of school setting.

Table 1.5
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Type of School Setting

School Setting	Frequency	Percentage
Inclusive Classroom	17	47.22
SPED Center	13	36.11
Regular Classroom	5	13.89
Inclusive & Regular Classroom	1	2.78
Total	36	100

Table 1.5 findings indicates that most respondents work in inclusive classrooms (47.22%), followed by SPED centers (36.11%), indicating that inclusive education practices are widely implemented in the participating schools.

Level of SPED Training

Level of SPED training identifies the roles of actual experiences through effective trainings about SPED education including the use of IEP in promoting inclusive education among students with special needs. Table 1.6 presents the profile of the SPED teachers in terms of level of SPED training.

Table 1.6
Profile of SPED Teachers in Terms of Level of SPED Training

SPED Training	Frequency	Percentage
No SPED Training	6	16.67
Basic Training (Seminars/Workshops)	17	47.22
Intermediate Training	8	22.22
Advanced SPED Specialization	5	13.89
Total	36	100

Level of Awareness of the Respondents towards the IEP

Table 2.1 presents the level of awareness of the respondents towards IEP

Table 2.1
Level of awareness of the respondents towards IEP

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am aware that the IEP is mandated under the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277 as amended by RA 10524) and DepEd Orders.	3.83	VHA
2. I am aware of the purpose of the IEP in supporting LSN.	3.86	VHA
3. I am aware of the steps in developing an IEP, including the present level of social skills functioning and accommodations.	3.72	VHA
4. I am aware that parents or guardians are required to participate in the IEP process.	3.83	VHA
5. I am aware of the roles of teachers, school heads, and specialists in preparing and implementing the IEP.	3.78	VHA
6. I am aware of the key components of an IEP, namely the student profile, learning goals, accommodations, and teaching modifications.	3.72	VHA
7. I am aware of how an IEP ensures equal access to quality education for LSN.	3.80	VHA
8. I am aware that the IEP must be regularly reviewed and updated to meet the changing needs of the learner.	3.83	VHA
9. I am aware that the IEP is aligned with DepEd's inclusive education framework.	3.78	VHA
10. I am aware with the legal accountability of teachers in implementing the IEP as part of inclusive education policy.	3.75	VHA
Composite Mean	3.79	VHA

Weighted Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
3.26 – 4.00	Very High Awareness (VHA)	The respondents demonstrate a very high level of awareness toward the IEP.
2.51 – 3.25	High Awareness (HA)	The respondents demonstrate a high level of awareness toward the IEP.
1.76 – 2.50	Low Awareness (LA)	The respondents demonstrate a low level of awareness toward the IEP.
1.00 – 1.75	Very Low Awareness (VLA)	The respondents demonstrate a very low level of awareness toward the IEP.

Table 2.1 presents the level of awareness of the respondents towards IEP. The composite mean of 3.79 indicates that respondents have a high level of awareness of the Individualized Education Plan. Teachers generally understand the purpose, legal basis,

and components of the IEP, suggesting that awareness of inclusive education policies is well established among respondents. The results showed that teachers have a high level of awareness regarding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This finding suggests that teachers are generally familiar with the purpose, principles, and importance of individualized instruction for learners with special needs. This awareness is essential because knowledge about inclusive policies and individualized learning strategies forms the foundation for effective implementation. These findings imply that although teachers are highly aware of IEPs, there is a need to strengthen their practical competencies through sustained training and institutional support. Enhancing skills in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will ensure that awareness is effectively translated into meaningful educational outcomes for learners with special needs.

The Level of Attitudes of the Respondents towards the IEP

Table 3.1 presents the level of attitudes of the respondents towards IEP.

Table 3.1
Level of attitudes of the respondents towards IEP

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I agree that the IEP is an essential tool for ensuring the all-inclusive development of LSN.	3.82	VPA
2. I feel confident and capable of participating in the preparation and implementation of IEPs.	3.75	VPA
3. I regard that collaboration between parents and teachers makes the IEP more effective.	3.89	VPA
4. I am willing to invest time and effort in preparing IEPs, even if it adds to my workload.	3.72	VPA
5. I consider that individualized goals and accommodations under IEP truly help learners achieve their potential.	3.86	VPA
6. I have a positive perception of the IEP as a strategy to promote inclusive education.	3.83	VPA
7. I am motivated to learn more about IEP preparation and implementation through training.	3.78	VPA
8. I support the legal mandate that requires teachers to implement IEPs for LSN.	3.86	VPA
9. I hold that the IEP contributes positively to the overall development of LSN.	3.83	VPA
10. I am committed to implementing the IEP as part of my teaching practice to support inclusive education.	3.82	VPA
Composite Mean	3.82	VPA

Weighted Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
3.26 – 4.00	Very Positive Attitude (VPA)	The respondents demonstrate a very positive attitude toward the implementation of the IEP.

2.51 – 3.25	Positive Attitude (PA)	The respondents demonstrate a positive attitude toward the implementation of the IEP.
1.76 – 2.50	Negative Attitude (NA)	The respondents demonstrate a negative attitude toward the implementation of the IEP.
1.00 – 1.75	Very Negative Attitude (VNA)	The respondents demonstrate a very negative attitude toward the implementation of the IEP.

Table 3.1. Composite mean of 3.82 indicates that teachers demonstrate a positive attitude toward the implementation of IEP. Respondents generally support inclusive education and believe that individualized planning contributes positively to student development. The study also revealed that teachers have positive attitudes toward the implementation of IEPs. This is an encouraging finding because teacher attitudes play a crucial role in the success of inclusive education programs. The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate a positive attitude toward the implementation of the IEP, as reflected in the composite mean of 3.82. This suggests that respondents value the role of IEPs in promoting inclusive education and supporting the development of learners with special needs. As described by Schnepel et al. (2025), positive teacher attitudes are associated with increased collaboration and more effective instructional practices, which contribute to the success of inclusive education in primary schools. This substantiates that teachers' favorable perception of IEPs enhances their willingness to implement individualized strategies.

Overall Significant Relationship between the Level of Awareness and Attitudes towards IEP

Table 4.1 presents the Relationship between the level of awareness and attitudes towards IEP

Table 4.1

Relationship between the level of awareness and attitudes towards IEP

Variables	Computed Pearson r Value	Description	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Awareness and Attitudes toward IEP	0.66	High Correlation	0.00001	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Significant

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Scale of Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
$0 < r \leq 0.19$	Very Low Correlation
$0.20 \leq r \leq 0.39$	Low Correlation

$0.40 \leq r \leq 0.59$	Moderate Correlation
$0.60 \leq r \leq 0.79$	High Correlation
$0.80 \leq r \leq 1.00$	Very High Correlation

Table 4.1 shows that the computed Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.66$) indicates a high positive relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes toward the IEP. The p-value (0.00001) is less than 0.05, which means the relationship is statistically significant. This implies that teachers with higher awareness of IEP tend to have more positive attitudes toward its implementation. One of the most important findings of the study is the significant positive relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes toward IEP implementation. This means that teachers who possess greater knowledge and understanding of individualized education plans tend to demonstrate more positive attitudes toward implementing them in their classrooms. The findings of this study indicate a high positive relationship between teachers' awareness and attitudes toward the IEP, suggesting that higher levels of knowledge and understanding are associated with more favorable perceptions and willingness to implement IEPs. This result bears similarity with the study by Werner et al. (2022), who found that teachers' awareness of inclusion policies, combined with self-efficacy, significantly shapes their attitudes toward inclusive education. Specifically, teachers with greater knowledge and stronger institutional support were more confident and demonstrated more positive attitudes, highlighting the critical link between awareness and attitude.

Overall Significant Difference between the Level of Awareness and Attitudes According to their Demographic Profile

Table 5.1 presents the differences in the Level of Awareness according to respondent's demographic profile

Table 5.1

Differences in the Level of Awareness according to their demographic profile.

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender					
Male	3.42	$t = -1.45$	0.202	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Female	3.87				
Age					
20–29	3.67	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.19	0.316	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
30–39	3.89				
40–49	4.00				

Educational Attainment					
Bachelor's (SPED)	3.91	Computed ANOVA Value = 2.46	0.066	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Bachelor's (Non-SPED)	3.55				
With MA Units	3.85				
Master's	4.00				
Others	4.00				
Teaching Experience					
0–5	3.68	Computed ANOVA Value = 0.70	0.560	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
6–10	3.89				
11–15	4.00				
16+	3.90				
SPED Training					
None	3.60	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.59	0.212	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Basic	3.70				
Intermediate	3.90				
Advanced	4.00				
School Setting					
Inclusive	3.89	Computed ANOVA Value = 8.82	0.0002	Reject H ₀	Significant
SPED	3.93				
Regular	3.42				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

The results indicate that only the school setting shows a statistically significant difference in the level of awareness ($p = 0.0002 < 0.05$). This implies that the teaching environment significantly influences teachers' awareness of IEP, with higher awareness observed among teachers in SPED centers and inclusive classrooms. On the other hand, gender, age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and level of SPED

training do not show significant differences since their p-values are greater than 0.05. However, the school setting shows a statistically significant difference in awareness ($p = 0.0002$). This suggests that teachers working in different school environments, particularly those in SPED centers and inclusive classrooms, tend to demonstrate higher awareness of IEP implementation compared to those in regular classroom settings. This finding may be attributed to the greater exposure, training opportunities, and practical engagement of teachers in SPED and inclusive settings with individualized instructional planning. In these environments, teachers are more frequently involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of IEPs, which enhances their familiarity with its components, legal basis, and instructional strategies. In contrast, teachers in regular classroom settings may have limited direct experience with IEP processes, resulting in comparatively lower levels of awareness.

Post Hoc Analysis on Post Hoc Analysis on the Difference in the Level of Awareness According to School Setting

Table 5.1.1 presents the post hoc analysis of the perceived level of on the Difference in the Level of Awareness According to School Setting.

Table 5.1.1
Post Hoc Analysis on Post Hoc Analysis on the Difference in the Level of Awareness According to School Setting

Variables	Mean Difference	p-value	Interpretation
Inclusive vs SPED Center	-0.04	0.982	Not Significant
Inclusive vs Regular Classroom	0.47	0.021	Significant
Inclusive vs Inclusive & Regular	1.69	0.0003	Significant
SPED Center vs Regular Classroom	0.51	0.015	Significant
SPED Center vs Inclusive & Regular	1.73	0.0002	Significant
Regular Classroom vs Inclusive & Regular	1.22	0.004	Significant

The table shows there is no significant difference between teachers in inclusive classrooms and SPED centers, indicating that both groups have comparable levels of awareness toward IEP. However, significant differences exist between Inclusive classrooms and regular classrooms, SPED centers and regular classrooms and all groups compared to the combined (inclusive & regular) setting.

These results indicate that teachers in SPED centers and inclusive classrooms have significantly higher awareness of IEP compared to those in regular classroom settings. The lowest level of awareness is observed among teachers handling both inclusive and regular classrooms simultaneously, which may suggest divided focus or limited specialization in IEP implementation.

Differences in the Level of Attitudes according to demographic profile

Table 5.2 presents the findings on the differences in the level of attitudes according to the respondents' demographic profile.

Table 5.2

Differences in the Level of Attitudes according to demographic profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender					
Male	3.62	T=-1.18	0.285	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Female	3.86				
Age					
20–29	3.77	Computed ANOVA Value =0.71	0.499	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
30–39	3.83				
40–49	4.00				
Educational Attainment					
Bachelor's (SPED)	3.87	Computed ANOVA Value =2.14	0.099	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Bachelor's (Non-SPED)	3.62				
With MA Units	3.90				
Master's	4.00				
Others	4.00				
Teaching Experience					
0–5	3.74	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.02	0.396	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
6–10	3.88				
11–15	4.00				
16+	3.95				
SPED Training					
None	3.75	Computed ANOVA Value	0.212	Do not reject the Null	Not Significant
Basic	3.73				

Intermediate	3.94	=1.58		Hypothesis	
Advanced	4.00				
School Setting					
Inclusive	3.79	Computed ANOVA Value =1.59	0.212	Do not reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
SPED	3.94				
Regular	3.60				
Incl & Reg	3.80				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the level of attitudes toward the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) when respondents are grouped according to their demographic profile, as all computed p-values are greater than the significance level of 0.05. This means that teachers, regardless of their gender, age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, level of SPED training, and school setting, exhibit similar attitudes toward IEP implementation. Although slight variations in mean scores are observed (e.g., teachers with advanced SPED training and those with more teaching experience tend to have higher mean attitudes), these differences are not statistically significant, indicating that such variations may be due to chance rather than actual differences in perception. The findings of this study indicate that most demographic variables, including gender, age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and level of SPED training, do not significantly influence teachers' attitudes toward the IEP. This result is consistent with Buslon et al. (2025), who determined that teacher attitudes toward inclusive education are largely independent of demographic characteristics and are instead more closely associated with institutional support, access to resources, and professional development opportunities.

Program can be Proposed based on the Findings of the Study

- I. **Program Title:** "IEP-READY Program: Improving Educators' Proficiency, Readiness, and Engagement in Developing and Applying Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)"

- II. **Introduction**

The effectiveness of inclusive education largely depends on how well teachers understand, design, and implement the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In the context of public school teachers in Marikina City, the study revealed that respondents have a high level of awareness (Mean = 3.79) and very positive attitudes (Mean = 3.82) toward IEP implementation. This indicates that teachers already possess a strong foundational understanding and

favorable disposition toward supporting learners with special needs (LSN). However, despite these encouraging results, gaps remain in the actual translation of knowledge and attitudes into consistent and high-quality practice, particularly in areas such as advanced IEP writing, progress monitoring, interdisciplinary collaboration, and classroom-level implementation strategies.

Many teachers, especially those with basic SPED training (47.22%) and limited teaching experience, require further professional development to fully operationalize IEP principles in diverse classroom settings. Additionally, the study found that teachers in regular classrooms demonstrate comparatively lower awareness than those in SPED centers and inclusive settings, highlighting the need for more exposure and hands-on practice. This program is therefore designed to bridge the gap between awareness and practice by strengthening teachers' competencies, confidence, and collaborative support systems in implementing IEPs effectively. Anchored on the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) Model, the "IEP-READY Program" emphasizes that knowledge and positive attitudes must be reinforced through structured training, mentoring, and continuous professional engagement to ensure effective educational outcomes for learners with special needs.

III. Rationale

The findings of the study show that while teachers possess high awareness (Mean=3.79) and very positive attitudes (Mean=3.82) toward IEP implementation, these strengths do not automatically guarantee mastery in actual classroom application. The presence of mostly early-career teachers and those with limited SPED training indicates a need for sustained professional development. Furthermore, the significant difference in awareness based on school setting suggests unequal exposure to inclusive education practices. Teachers in SPED centers and inclusive classrooms benefit from direct experience, while those in regular classrooms may lack practical engagement.

Anchored on the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) Model, this program recognizes that knowledge and positive attitudes alone are insufficient without corresponding classroom practice. It aims to bridge the gap between awareness and implementation by strengthening teachers' skills, confidence, and support systems for effectively executing IEPs.

Thus, the IEP-READY Program is proposed to strengthen implementation capacity by focusing not only on theoretical understanding but also on practical application, collaboration, and reflective practice. The program ensures that teachers are not only aware and supportive of IEPs but are also fully equipped to implement them effectively in real classroom situations.

IV. Learning Objectives

At the end of the program, the participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate improved competency in developing, implementing, and evaluating IEPs.
2. Apply differentiated instruction strategies aligned with IEP goals.
3. Strengthen collaboration with parents, specialists, and school stakeholders.
4. Conduct systematic monitoring, documentation, and revision of IEPs.
5. Exhibit increased confidence and self-efficacy in handling learners with special needs.

V. Target Participants

- Public elementary school teachers handling learners with special needs
- SNED teachers and inclusive classroom teachers
- Master teachers and School heads

VI. Program Duration

- The program will be implemented for 12 months using a blended professional development approach combining workshops, coaching, collaborative learning, and digital support systems.

VII. Implementation Plan

Learning Activity	Description	Time Frame	Person Involved	Expected Output
IEP Orientation Session	Introduction to IEP concepts, purpose, and legal basis	Month 1	School Head, SPED Coordinator, Teachers	Orientation Output Notes
IEP Development Workshop	Training on PLAAFP, SMART goals, and proper IEP writing	Months 2–3	SPED Teachers, Master Teachers	Draft IEP Outputs
Differentiated Instruction Training	Application of teaching strategies aligned with IEP goals	Months 3–4	Master Teachers, Teachers	IEP-Aligned Lesson Plan
IEP Simulation Activity	Hands-on case-based IEP writing and application	Months 4–5	SPED Teachers, Teachers	Completed Sample IEP
Mentoring and Coaching	Classroom observation and guidance for implementation	Months 5–10	SPED Mentors, School Heads	Coaching Feedback Logs
Parent Consultation Sessions	Engagement with parents for IEP collaboration	Months 7–10	Teachers, Parents	Consultation Records
Program Evaluation &	Presentation of outputs and evaluation of program	Months 11–12	All Participants	Final IEP Portfolio

Culmination	effectiveness			
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VIII. Work Plan (Gantt Chart)

Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
IEP Orientation Session												
IEP Development Workshop												
Differentiated Instruction Training												
IEP Simulation Activity												
Mentoring and Coaching												
Parent Consultation Sessions												
Program Evaluation & Culmination												

IX. Expected Outcomes

After implementation, the program is expected to:

- Improve teachers' **IEP writing and implementation skills**
- Increase **consistency in IEP monitoring and evaluation**
- Strengthen **collaboration among teachers, parents, and administrators**
- Enhance **student learning outcomes for LSN**
- Sustain **positive teacher attitudes through support systems**

X. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the IEP-READY Program will assess the effectiveness of activities in improving teachers' competency in IEP implementation. Since the study showed high awareness and very positive attitudes, the evaluation will focus on practical application, quality of outputs, and consistency in implementation. School heads and SPED coordinators will conduct regular monitoring through classroom observations, review of IEP documents, and analysis of coaching logs using standardized rubrics.

A pre-test and post-test will be used to measure improvements in teachers' knowledge and skills in developing and implementing IEPs. Teacher feedback surveys and reflection forms will also be used to assess confidence and readiness.

At the end of the program, a final evaluation will be conducted through review of IEP portfolios and stakeholder feedback from teachers, parents, and school leaders. The results will serve as the basis for program improvement and sustainability.

XI. Sustainability Plan

To ensure long-term impact, the program will be integrated into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and continuous In-Service Training (INSET) programs. Annual program evaluation and enhancement will also be conducted to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and responsiveness to evolving inclusive education needs.

Summary of Findings

Demographic Profile of the SPED teachers based on variables:

In terms of age majority are 20-29 years old, gender, most of the teachers are female and only male only, highest educational, 27 are Bachelor Degree (Non-SPED Major and SPED Major), while only 5 holds masters degree; while 2 have masters unit. In terms of years of teaching, 19 of the respondents have 0-5 experience; 12 have 6-10 years of experience; only 3 have 11-15 years of teaching and 2 are more than 16 years. In terms of level of SPED training 17 are able to attends basic training; 8 attends intermediate training; while only 5 have an advanced SPED specialization. For the type of school setting, nearly half of the respondents (17) were teaching in inclusive classrooms and SPED centers (13); while 5 respondents worked in regular classrooms; and 1 is working in combined settings.

Level of Awareness of Respondents Towards the IEP.

The results indicate that teachers demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), with a composite mean of 3.79. Respondents reported familiarity with the legal basis of IEPs, their purpose in supporting learners with special needs, the steps in developing the IEP, the roles of stakeholders, and the key components necessary for individualized planning. Teachers also recognized the importance of parental involvement, regular review of the IEP, and alignment with inclusive education frameworks, indicating that knowledge about inclusive policies and individualized learning strategies is well established among the respondents.

Level of Attitudes of Respondents Towards the IEP.

Teachers displayed positive attitudes toward the IEP, with a composite mean of 3.82. Respondents value the IEP as an essential tool for inclusive education, believe in its effectiveness for individualized learning, and recognize the benefits of collaboration with parents and other educators. They are motivated to learn more, support the legal mandate for IEP implementation, and are committed to applying it in their teaching practice, demonstrating overall favorable dispositions toward supporting learners with special needs.

Differences in Awareness and Attitudes Based on Demographic Profile

One-Way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in awareness and attitudes based on gender, age, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, or level of SPED training. However, the school setting significantly affected awareness ($p=0.0002$), with teachers in SPED centers and inclusive classrooms showing higher awareness than those in regular classrooms. Attitudes remained positive across all groups, having consistent support for IEP implementation regardless of demographic differences.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The teachers in Marikina City public elementary schools are mostly young, female, and early in their teaching careers. Many have SPED-related education and are assigned to inclusive and SPED settings. Most have basic SPED training, which helps shape their awareness and positive attitudes toward IEP. Teachers have a high level of awareness of IEPs. This means they understand its purpose, process, and importance in supporting learners with special needs. This awareness provides a strong foundation for the effective implementation of IEP in schools. Teachers show positive attitudes toward IEP. This means they support its use, value its importance, and are willing to apply it in their teaching. Demographic factors generally do not affect teachers' awareness and attitudes toward IEP.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusions drawn, the following are hereby recommended:

To consistently improve teachers' abilities in inclusive education and IEP implementation, a thorough capacity-building program should be created. Seminars, workshops, coaching sessions, and professional learning communities (PLCs) with an emphasis on behavior management, progress tracking, and customized instruction may be included in this curriculum.

Schools should implement an immersion program where regular teachers are assigned to SPED or inclusive classrooms for a specific period, such as one week per quarter.

Each school should create a mentoring system where experienced SPED teacher's guide regular teachers in using the IEP.

School administrators should provide dedicated time for teachers to prepare and review IEPs, such as scheduled planning periods.

To guarantee collaborative decision-making, constant communication, and goal alignment for every LSN, regular IEP team meetings should be held. To encourage accountability and teamwork, roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined.

The Department of Education (DepEd) should implement a continuous and school-based IEP training program that focuses on actual classroom practice.

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