



SELF-ASSESSMENT ON CLASSROOM PRACTICES OF GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS HANDLING LEARNERS WITH DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING, REMEMBERING, AND CONCENTRATING: AN EXPLANATORY SEQUENTIAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Low self-assessment among general education teachers is alarming globally. This explanatory sequential study investigated the self-assessment of general education teachers instructing learners with difficulties in understanding, remembering, and concentrating, addressing the global issue of low teacher self-assessment. Employing an explanatory sequential design, the study surveyed 150 teachers quantitatively, followed by a focus group discussion with 10 selected participants. Quantitative findings revealed remarkably high self-assessment levels across socio-emotional, cognitive, communication, physical, and daily living skills domains. Qualitative data identified environmental and behavioral conditions contributing to these high self-assessments, including positive school environments, home and community support, favorable classroom climates, student personal conditions, and effective school management and administration. This research provided valuable insights into teacher self-assessment and recommended further investigation and targeted interventions to enhance teacher efficacy and improve student learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *Self-Assessment; Handling Learners With Difficulty; General Education Teachers Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

The poor self-assessment results of general education teachers contribute to feelings of reduced accomplishment, a dimension of burnout. This problem can manifest incompetence and a perceived lack of achievement and productivity in their work (Skaalvik, 2020). Studies highlighting the insufficient training and support provided to teachers responsible for guiding students with disabilities (Brown et al., 2020; Mader, 2017) further provide evidence of this gap in educator preparation.

In various countries such as South Korea, the United States, Macedonia, and the Philippines, challenges persist in adequately addressing the needs of learners with disabilities. Insufficient training in inclusive education, difficulties in assessment, and systemic issues such as overcrowded classrooms and resource shortages compound these challenges (Hyunjeong et al., 2014; Angeloska-Galevska & Ilić-Pešić, 2018; Alegado, 2018). The consequences of teachers' low self-assessment results extend beyond academic performance, impacting learners' self-esteem and motivation for personal development (Ezeh, 2020). Research suggests that a lack of teacher knowledge and skills, combined with aggressive or humiliating behavior, severely hinders students' academic progress (Broeckelman Post et al., 2015). The urgency to address this significantly prevented potential future damage to learners' self-esteem and motivation. However, minimal research has been published on this matter. It was for

this reason that the study was conducted.

This study emphasizes the importance of supporting general education teachers in managing learners who struggle with understanding, remembering, and concentrating, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Quality Education. The research benefits stakeholders such as DepEd officials, school heads, teachers, parents, and learners by promoting inclusive education.

The study aims to assess general education teachers' self-assessment of their classroom practices with struggling learners across five domains: communication, cognitive, daily living skills, socio-emotional, and physical, and to identify environmental and behavioral factors influencing these self-assessments. The study assumes that while teachers have some competence in supporting these learners, this ability is shaped by environmental (e.g., resources, support) and behavioral (e.g., training, beliefs) factors. A comprehensive, holistic approach is necessary to improve inclusive practices. Grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), the study views self-assessment as a form of human functioning influenced by the interaction between environment, behavior, and personal factors. Teachers reflect on their experiences, adapt, and regulate their practices accordingly.

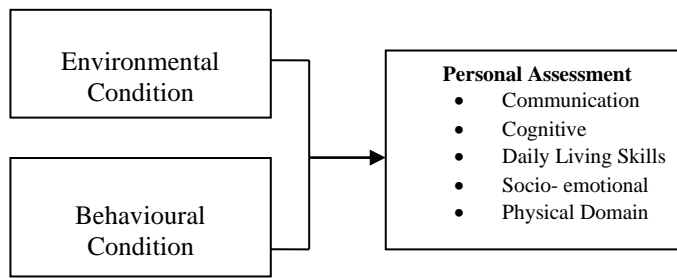


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework/ Paradigm Study

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, a two-phase approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative methods. Initially, quantitative data was gathered and analyzed to identify general trends or patterns. These results were then explored in greater depth through qualitative methods to provide explanations, context, and insights into the quantitative findings. This methodology aligns with the frameworks of Acquah et al. (2021) and Creswell (2014), who advocate for the mixed methods approach when rich, contextual exploration is required after an initial quantitative phase.

The research was conducted in three purposively selected elementary schools in the Tacurong City Division, Region XII, Philippines. Citing Darling-Hammond et al. (2019), the study recognizes that smaller school divisions often face unique constraints (e.g., fewer resources) and advantages (e.g., tighter-knit communities) in implementing educational interventions. Studying them can yield valuable insights into how inclusive teaching practices are adapted under varying circumstances. This selection was grounded in purposive sampling, consistent with Creswell and

Creswell (2022), ensuring the data gathered is valid, context-specific, and truly reflective of the challenges and strategies involved in inclusive education.

The study employed purposive sampling to select 150 general education teachers as respondents. This non-random sampling technique, as Sugiyono (2012) defines, involves selecting participants based on predefined criteria relevant to the study's objectives. The selection focused on teachers who: have experience teaching learners with difficulties in understanding, remembering, and concentrating, are currently employed in the chosen elementary schools, and are involved in inclusive classroom settings or interact with diverse learners regularly. The sample size of 150 was determined to be statistically sufficient for quantitative analysis and allowed for credible generalizations within the context of the study. It also ensured enough variability to explore themes through qualitative follow-up, supporting the explanatory sequential design.

Quantitative Instrument Validation

A pilot test was conducted with 20 teachers who were not part of the main study to assess the reliability of the adapted survey questionnaire. The result yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.952, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming the questionnaire's reliability.

Qualitative Data Collection

For the qualitative phase, a validated interview guide was used in a focus group discussion (FGD) involving 10 selected participants. As supported by Akyıldız and Ahmed (2021) and Hennink (2014), this method is effective for gaining in-depth insights into participants' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. The qualitative data enriched and contextualized the quantitative findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of the research problem. To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments, the study incorporated both pilot testing and a focus group discussion (FGD) as part of its mixed-methods approach.

Pilot Testing of the Survey Instrument

The researcher conducted a pilot test with 20 teachers who were not included in the main study sample. This preliminary testing aimed to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the adapted survey questionnaire used to assess general education teachers' self-assessment practices. The pilot test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.952, indicating an excellent level of internal consistency across the instrument. This high-reliability rating confirmed that the questionnaire was statistically sound and suitable for full-scale administration in the main study.

Focus Group Discussion for Qualitative Data

In the qualitative phase, the researcher used a validated interview guide to conduct a focus group discussion involving 10 purposefully selected participants. These participants shared relevant teaching experiences and perspectives aligned with the study's focus on learners with cognitive difficulties. The FGD method, supported by Akyıldız and Ahmed (2021) and Hennink (2014), is a qualitative research approach that gathers individuals with similar backgrounds to discuss a specific phenomenon.

Participants were asked to share their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions, allowing for a deeper understanding of their instructional practices and challenges. The qualitative data gathered through the FGD complemented the quantitative findings, enriching the study through a more holistic and explanatory interpretation of the results.

By integrating quantitative reliability testing and qualitative insights, the researcher ensured both methodological rigor and depth in capturing the realities of inclusive education practices.



Quantitative Data Analysis

The study used descriptive statistical analysis, specifically focusing on the mean to evaluate general education teachers' self-assessment of classroom practices.

The mean, or average, was applied to each domain (communication, cognitive, daily living skills, socio-emotional, and physical) to summarize and compare responses effectively. This approach allowed the researcher to quantify the levels of practice and identify prevailing patterns among the teachers in handling learners with difficulties in understanding, remembering, and concentrating.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher adopted thematic analysis to interpret qualitative data collected through focus group discussions, using it to complement and explain the quantitative findings (as recommended by Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic framework, ensuring a systematic approach through four key steps: Arranging and Organizing Data – Transcription of all collected data into text and systematic arrangement based on the interview questions. Coding the Data – Categorization of data into themes by identifying common properties and recurring patterns. Validation of Data – Ensuring the accuracy

and reliability of the information obtained from the participants. Conclusion of Analysis – Drawing insights and interpretations based on the coded themes, readying the data for integration with the study's findings.

This dual analytical approach ensured both breadth and depth in understanding teachers' experiences and practices in inclusive education settings. The study strictly adhered to ethical guidelines to ensure all research participants' protection, respect, and fair treatment. The researcher complied with the standards set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB, 2017) and the DOST Administrative Order 2007-001, which requires institutions to evaluate and monitor studies involving human participants through established Research Ethics Committees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Analysis

The table below presents a descriptive summary of the self-assessment variable. It includes key indicators across five domains: socio-emotional, cognitive, communication, physical, and daily living skills. The overall mean score of 4.50, classified as very high, reflects the respondents' strong self-assessment in these areas.

Table 1. Descriptive Table

Variable	Mean	Descriptive Level
Self-Assessment	4.50	Very High
Socio-Emotional Domain	4.61	Very High
Cognitive Domain	4.59	Very High
Communication Domain	4.48	Very High
Physical Domain	4.44	Very High
Daily Living Skills Domain	4.40	Very High

The study found an overall mean self-assessment score of 4.50, interpreted as "Very High", indicating that general education teachers perceive themselves as highly competent in supporting learners with cognitive and concentration challenges across five key domains. Socio-Emotional Domain (Mean: 4.61 - Very High) This domain received the highest mean score, suggesting teachers are particularly strong in: building positive teacher-student relationships, managing classroom emotions, and creating emotionally supportive and inclusive learning environments. These capabilities play a crucial role in enhancing learners' well-being and fostering a safe space for academic and personal growth. Cognitive Domain (Mean: 4.59 - Very High) Teachers demonstrated high competence in supporting learners' thinking, memory, and concentration skills. They excel in scaffolding instruction, differentiating learning opportunities, and adapting teaching strategies. These findings reflect teachers' proficiency in tailoring cognitive support that enables academic success in inclusive classrooms. Communication Domain (Mean: 4.48 - Very High) Teachers effectively engage learners through clear and supportive communication. This score indicates strong abilities in facilitating understanding of content, ensuring student interaction, and supporting language and expression needs. The domain's importance aligns with inclusive education research emphasizing the central role of communication in facilitating learning for students with cognitive difficulties. Physical Domain (Mean: 4.44 - Very High) The high score suggests that teachers are prepared to accommodate the physical needs of learners, ensuring accessibility. Teachers promote physical participation in activities and comfortable and inclusive classroom setups. This domain highlights teachers' readiness to support learners with physical challenges, thereby contributing to a more equitable learning environment. Daily Living Skills Domain (Mean: 4.40 - Very High) Though it received the lowest mean score, it still falls within the "Very High" category.

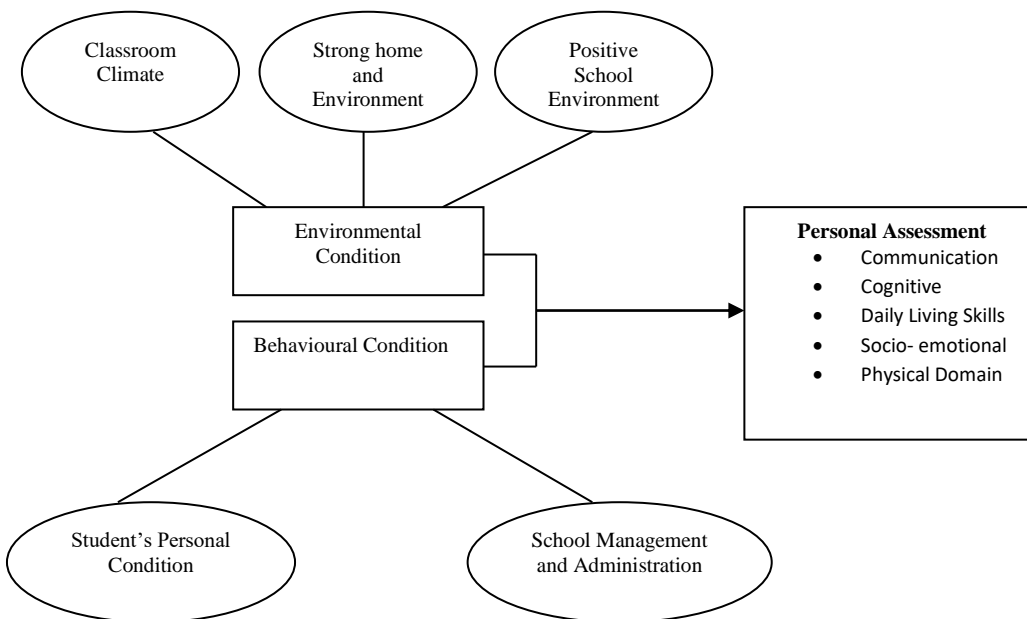
This indicates that while teachers are confident, they may feel less adept at integrating life skills such as self-care, organization, or time management into their instruction. Nevertheless, their competence in this area still contributes to functional learning outcomes for students needing support with real-life tasks. The findings reflect a strong overall self-perception of competence among general education teachers in managing and supporting learners with cognitive and attention-related difficulties. The highest scores in the socio-emotional and cognitive domains suggest teachers are particularly skilled in both fostering supportive environments and implementing effective academic strategies, which are central to successful inclusive education. While the daily living skills domain scored slightly lower, it still indicates high capability and points to an area where further professional development could be beneficial.

Qualitative Analysis

The emerging sub-themes identified in the study are aligned with Social Cognitive Theory, emphasizing the interaction between environmental and behavioral factors and their influence on teachers' self-assessment outcomes. These sub-themes demonstrate how environmental conditions (such as classroom climate, strong home environment, and positive

school environment) and behavioral conditions (students personal condition and school management and administration) shape teachers' perceptions of their classroom practices. The connection between these factors and the quantitative findings underscores the theory's relevance in explaining variations in self-assessment results.

Figure 2.



Based on the conversations between the researcher and the study participants, important themes related to the conditions that may affect teachers' performance in handling learners who have difficulty understanding, remembering, and concentrating were identified. Through detailed and systematic data analysis, two major themes were identified based on Social Cognitive Theory: Environmental Condition and Behavioural Condition, each with specific sub-themes that highlight the factors influencing teachers' self-assessment practices when supporting learners with difficulties in understanding, remembering, and concentrating.

Environmental Condition

This theme underscores how the physical, social, and psychological environments affect both teaching and learning outcomes. Teachers emphasized that environmental conditions play a critical role in their ability to assess and adapt teaching strategies effectively. Three sub-themes emerged:

Positive School Environment

Teachers shared that feeling supported, valued, and respected within a school community boosts their confidence and motivation. A positive school culture fosters continuous professional growth and enhances their capacity to support struggling learners.

Strong Home and Community Environment

Teachers noted that when families are actively involved in a child's education, it improves their understanding of the learner's context. This partnership helps teachers better tailor

their strategies and create a more inclusive and responsive classroom.

Classroom Climate

A respectful, cooperative, and engaged classroom atmosphere motivates teachers to reflect and improve. Teachers feel fulfilled when students participate actively and respectfully, reinforcing the importance of nurturing a healthy classroom dynamic for effective learning and self-assessment.

Behavioral Condition

The Behavioral Condition theme centers on the patterns of actions, attitudes, and responses observed within educational environments. Teachers described these behaviors as influenced by internal factors such as motivation, emotional well-being, and self-regulation, as well as external influences like peer dynamics, family support, and school culture. These behavioral dynamics are deeply intertwined with the quality of learning engagement, discipline, and the effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Teachers emphasized that a positive behavioral environment not only enhances student academic performance but also improves their own instructional efficacy and strengthens the sense of harmony and collaboration in the school community.

Students' Personal Condition

Teachers observed that students' individual characteristics significantly influence classroom practices and self-assessment efforts. They highlighted that: Each student brings unique learning styles, strengths, challenges, and experiences



to the classroom.

These personal conditions require teachers to consistently adapt their teaching strategies. Understanding and responding to individual differences is essential in fostering meaningful student engagement and growth, especially among learners who struggle with understanding, remembering, and concentrating. Teachers' ability to support these learners is directly linked to how well they can address students' psychological and behavioural needs.

School Management and Administration

Teachers also stressed the crucial role of school leadership and administrative support in shaping effective teaching practices. Key points included: Supportive leadership practices, effective policies, and a positive organizational culture to create an environment conducive to teacher growth. When administrators provide encouragement, autonomy, and professional development opportunities, teachers are more likely to engage in self-reflection and continuous improvement. A strong leadership structure empowers teachers to collaborate, innovate, and sustain high performance in supporting learners with cognitive and behavioural difficulties. Ultimately, this supportive infrastructure elevates teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have significant implications for improving general education teachers' practices and enhancing inclusive education.

Role of Teachers in Inclusive Learning Environments:

The study emphasizes general education teachers' vital role in fostering inclusive environments by effectively addressing the diverse needs of learners. Teachers' high self-assessment scores in socio-emotional, cognitive, communication, and physical domains demonstrate their ability to support students holistically. This underscores the importance of continuing to equip teachers with the tools to nurture academic growth and students' emotional, social, and physical well-being.

Recommendation for Teacher Training Programs

The results suggest that teacher training and professional development should continue to focus on socio-emotional learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusive communication practices. By enhancing these areas, teachers can become better equipped to handle the challenges posed by diverse learners, particularly those with learning difficulties.

Daily Living Skills Domain

Despite their overall strengths, teachers exhibited comparatively lower confidence in the daily living skills domain. This finding points to a need for targeted professional development in this area. Daily living skills—such as time management, personal organization, and decision-making—are essential for preparing students for life beyond school.

Recommendation for Schools and Policymakers:

Schools should consider integrating more practical life skills training into curricula. Teachers should also receive additional resources and strategies to help students develop these crucial

real-world competencies. This would help bridge the gap in areas where teachers feel less confident and ensure that students are adequately prepared for life outside the classroom.

Environmental and Behavioural Conditions:

The study highlights that environmental and behavioral conditions significantly influence teachers' performance and self-efficacy. A positive school climate, strong home-school partnerships, and effective classroom management all contribute to teachers' ability to support students effectively, particularly those facing learning challenges.

Recommendation for School Administrators:

School leaders should prioritize creating a supportive and collaborative culture that nurtures teacher's confidence. They should promote reflective practices, encourage professional collaboration, and offer continuous learning opportunities. By fostering such an environment, teachers will be more engaged and empowered to adapt their instructional approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Importance of School Leadership:

Effective school leadership is critical for promoting inclusive education policies and ensuring that teachers have the necessary resources to support all learners, especially those with difficulties in understanding, remembering, and concentrating. Leadership that emphasizes inclusivity will ultimately lead to more successful teaching outcomes for all students.

Future Directions

Based on the findings, several key areas for future research emerge that could further enhance teachers' self-assessment, professional growth, and overall instructional effectiveness.

Impact of Professional Development Programs:

Future research should investigate the long-term impact of professional development programs on teachers' self-efficacy and instructional practices. Specifically, longitudinal studies could assess how ongoing training in differentiated instruction, inclusive teaching strategies, and socio-emotional learning influence teachers' confidence and effectiveness over time.

Comparative Studies

Further comparative studies that examine teachers across different educational contexts—such as urban versus rural schools or public versus private institutions—could provide deeper insights into how contextual factors influence self-assessment levels. Understanding these differences can help tailor professional development programs to better meet teachers' specific needs and improve instructional quality across diverse settings.

Correlation Between Teacher Self-Assessment and Learner Outcomes:

Another important area for future research is to explore the relationship between teacher self-assessment and learner outcomes. Researchers could investigate how teachers' high self-assessment scores in various domains correlate with



student academic achievement, engagement, and well-being in inclusive classrooms. This would help validate the impact of teachers' self-perceptions on their actual teaching effectiveness and student success.

Targeted Interventions for Domains with Lower Confidence:

The study identified daily living skills as an area where teachers had lower confidence. Future research could focus on targeted interventions to improve teacher effectiveness in this domain. Experimental studies could evaluate the effectiveness of specific training programs aimed at increasing teachers' confidence and instructional capabilities in supporting daily living skills. The goal would be to identify evidence-based strategies that can improve teachers' ability to address this gap.

Bridging the Gap Between Teacher Self-Perception and Student Learning Outcomes:

A crucial direction for future research is to bridge the gap between teacher self-perception and measurable improvements in student learning experiences. Researchers can better understand how teachers' confidence in their abilities translates into real-world educational outcomes by linking teachers' self-assessment scores with actual student progress. This could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student success in inclusive settings.

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