

Perceptions on Inclusive Education, Professional Learning Community Practices and Teachers' Collaboration: Multiple Regression Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Teacher collaboration is an essential part of building inclusive classrooms, yet it remains a global challenge in many education systems. This study looked into how public elementary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and their involvement in professional learning communities (PLCs) relate to how well they collaborate. Using a descriptive-correlational approach, data were gathered from 232 teachers through survey questionnaires, with all participants selected through total enumeration sampling. The findings revealed that both teachers' views on inclusion and their PLC practices significantly influenced how they work together, with PLC engagement showing a slightly more substantial impact. These results support Transformative Learning Theory, which emphasizes how teachers grow by reflecting on experiences and learning collaboratively. However, the study also found that other factors not covered here still account for most of the variance in collaboration, about 87.3%, suggesting the need for further research.

Keywords: inclusive, education, collaboration

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' collaboration is seen as a significant problem in practicing inclusive education (Paju et al., 2021). Additionally, Pozas & Letzel-alt (2023) mentioned that the lack of teacher collaboration has been considered a significant weakness of inclusive schools. Internationally, a study by Alghazo and Alkhazaleh (2021) conducted in Abu Dhabi schools examined the level of collaboration among 135 special and regular education teachers. The findings revealed only a moderate level of collaboration, highlighting limited joint efforts in supporting students with disabilities. Similarly, Selders (2021), in her study in the United States, found that 92% of the challenges in collaboration stemmed from misunderstandings about fellow teachers' roles. Berry (2021) further emphasized the urgent need to strengthen collaboration through professional development. More so, a study in Jordan by Alabdallat et al. (2021) reported disagreements in three out of four key collaborative responsibilities between general and special education teachers. While 78% of teachers agreed on instructional duties, they failed to reach consensus on planning, evaluation, and behavior management.

In the Philippines, the recent study of Calinawan et al. (2024) reported support for collaborative efforts in inclusive education. Respondents expressed neutral views on issues like potential confusion over responsibilities between special and general education teachers, and the misconception that special education teachers only support students with special needs. Moreover, another national study by Paires and Linx (2023) showed no significant difference in collaboration perceptions between mainstream and special education teachers. The study

emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration to enhance teaching effectiveness in inclusive education, particularly in knowledge, readiness, and attitude.

In general, poor teacher collaboration can negatively impact the overall learning experience (Akbar, 2023; Cariaga, 2023). This unfavorable impact of poor teacher collaboration triggered the urgency of this research. This urgency is coupled with the scarcity of research published about poor teacher collaboration. It was for this reason that this study was conducted. Significant findings from previous research highlighted the imperative role of teacher collaboration in inclusive settings. In this study, the researcher was eager to investigate the potential of teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and professional learning community practices to intensify the collaboration between general and special education teachers. International policymakers could have utilized the findings of the study to formulate comprehensive directives, policies, programs, and other undertakings that intensified teacher collaboration in schools for the effective implementation of inclusive education. Moreover, key implementers of inclusive education in the field, such as school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders, were able to consider the findings of this study as a valuable guide and reference. These findings served as a concrete framework for the effective implementation of inclusivity in education.

This study determined the significance of perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices as predictors of teachers' collaboration. Specifically, it aimed to achieve the following objectives; To determine the levels of perceptions on inclusive education as indicated by perception on inclusive education, perception on collaboration efforts in inclusive education and perception on strategies to improve inclusive education; professional learning community practices as indicated by shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, shared personal practice, supportive conditions-relationships, supportive conditions-structure; and teachers' collaboration as indicated by knowledge, attitudes and readiness. To determine the significance of the correlation between perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices, and teachers' collaboration. To determine the significance of the individual and combined degree of influence of perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no correlation between perceptions of inclusive education, professional learning community practices, and teachers' collaboration.

HO₂: The individual and combined degree of influence of perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration is not significant.

Theoretical Framework

The Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow et al., 1990, p.5) as cited by Flemming (2018) claims that learning is a process of utilizing prior interpretations or frame of reference to construe new or critical reflection of the meanings of one's experiences and using this as a guide to action. The first predictive variable is the perceptions on inclusive education with three indicators: perception on inclusive education, perception on collaboration efforts in inclusive education, and perception on strategies to improve inclusive education (Calinawan et al., 2024; Cariaga et al., 2024). It stands for the idea of prior interpretation as asserted in the theory. The professional learning community practices predictive variable has six indicators: shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, shared personal practice, supportive conditions-relationships, supportive conditions-structure (Moosa et al., 2020; Cariaga, 2024). It relates to the learning process as discussed in the theory. Finally, the criterion variable is teachers' collaboration with three indicators: knowledge, attitude, and readiness (Paires et al., 2023), which stands for the idea of action as highlighted in the theory. To elucidate, this study is delimited only to prior interpretations, the learning process, and action concepts. The critical reflection element in the theory is excluded in the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The researcher utilized the quantitative research method with a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative research is a type of study that seeks to explain phenomena by gathering numerical data, which is then analyzed

using mathematical methods, with a strong emphasis on statistical techniques (Xiong, 2022). On the other hand, Devi et al. (2022) stated that a correlational research design refers to methods used to determine the relationship between variables with the use of a statistical analysis. In this study, the descriptive correlational design is used to determine the levels and relationship of teachers' perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration in Banaybanay, Davao Oriental.

Research Locale

The research locale was the 18 public elementary schools of the Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, which were situated within Banaybanay, Davao Oriental. The Banaybanay District has sufficient respondents who can significantly contribute to the research. Moreover, the place was chosen because the researcher is also a public-school elementary teacher in the district. The researcher wanted to know and understand the status of public schools' elementary teachers in terms of teachers' perceptions on inclusive education, professional learning community practices, and teachers' collaboration in an inclusive setting.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The respondents of the study were the 232 out of the 240 elementary teachers of Banaybanay District in the Division of Davao Oriental. The researcher employed a total enumeration technique in this particular study. The technique allowed the researcher to retrieve 96% of the administered survey questionnaires from the public schools' elementary teachers who were within the locality or district. Moreover, the technique also made it easy for the researcher to reach the needed number of respondents for this study. The inclusion criteria for this undertaking included: (a) a public elementary teacher in the district, (b) teaching from the general and special education classes, and (c) handling learners with difficulties or disabilities in the general or special needs education class.

Research Instrument

The research instrument for gathering data was adapted to conform to the purpose, locale, and respondents of the study. It was tailored to suit the standards of public elementary school teachers teaching in an inclusive setting. Moreover, the locale of the study was considered to accommodate social background, linguistic variability, and other contextual factors. Notably, the instrument used in this study consisted of three parts. The first part was the informed consent form. The second part covered the demographic profile of the respondents, which included their name (optional), sex, school, age, position, and the type of class handled in the classroom. The third part comprised the research survey questions. The questionnaire on perceptions of inclusive education was adapted and modified from the study titled *"An Empirical Study on Teachers' Perceptions Towards Inclusive Education"* by Calinawan et al. (2024). This questionnaire included three domains: perceptions of inclusive education, perceptions of collaboration efforts in inclusive education, and perceptions of strategies to improve inclusive education. Respondents rated the questionnaire using the following scale to evaluate their perceptions: 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. The corresponding range, descriptive levels, and interpretations are provided below.

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are extremely positive.
3.40-4.19	High	The teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are very positive.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are positive.
1.80-2.59	Low	The teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are negative.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The teachers' perceptions about inclusive education are extremely negative.

Second, the questionnaire on professional learning communities was adapted and modified from the study titled *"Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised: A Measure of Schools as Learning Organisations"* by Moosa et al. (2020). This questionnaire contained six domains: shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision,

collective learning and application, shared personal practice, supportive conditions–relationships, and supportive conditions–structure. Respondents rated the questionnaire based on the following criteria when evaluating their professional learning community: 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. The corresponding range, descriptive levels, and interpretations are provided below.

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The teachers' professional learning community practices are excellent.
3.40-4.19	High	The teachers' professional learning community practices are very good.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The teachers' professional learning community practices are good.
1.80-2.59	Low	The teachers' professional learning community practices are poor.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The teachers' professional learning community practices are very poor.

Third, the questionnaire for teachers' collaboration, which was adapted and modified from the study titled "Collaborative Teaching Between Special Education Teachers and Mainstream Teachers in Inclusive Education" by Paires, et al. (2023). This questionnaire has three domains: knowledge, attitude, and readiness. Respondents rated the questionnaire based on the following criteria when evaluating teachers' collaboration education: 5 as strongly agree, 4 as agree, 3 as neutral, 2 as disagree, and 1 as strongly disagree. The respective range, descriptive level, and interpretations are provided below:

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The teachers' collaboration is excellent.
3.40-4.19	High	The teachers' collaboration is very good.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The teachers' collaboration is good.
1.80-2.59	Low	The teachers' collaboration is poor.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The teachers' collaboration is very poor.

Lastly, the adapted survey questionnaire was forwarded for reliability and validity testing. The researcher sought the validation of different experts. The overall validation exhibited a good review of the research instrument. Further, the instrument was administered for pilot testing to thirty respondents in the adjoining district. The Cronbach's alpha generated a value of 0.935, suggesting excellent internal consistency for independent and dependent variables.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher conceptualized the research based on prevalent issues and concerns in inclusive education. The conceptualized research underwent review by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) and sought the approval of the members of the panel during the proposal defense. After the approval, the researcher asked for endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School. Once endorsement was obtained, it was secured and attached to the research request addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Davao Oriental. Thereafter, a research permit was then procured and attached to the permission letters. The permission letters were given to the identified public school district supervisors and public school elementary school heads within the division. When all the necessary approvals were secured, the survey questionnaires were then distributed in printed copies for pilot testing. After obtaining the internal consistency, the researcher proceeded with the distribution of the survey questionnaire to the teacher respondents. The researcher ensured their voluntary participation through informed consent as indicated in the printed copies of the survey questionnaires. The researcher explained the process and informed the respondents of their right to discontinue their participation if they felt uncomfortable about the undertaking. After the teachers completed the surveys, the questionnaires were collected for analysis. Finally, the gathered data were tallied, organized, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS to derive meaningful insights.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used to analyze the data that was gathered in this study. First, there are the mean and the standard deviation. The mean is the total of all values divided by the number of observations in the dataset (Chakrabarty, 2021). Meanwhile, El Omda and Sergeant (2021) defined standard deviation as a statistical tool that quantifies how spread out a set of values is, usually in relation to the mean of the dataset. Specifically, the mean and standard deviation in the study aimed to determine and describe the levels of teachers' perceptions on inclusive education, professional learning community practices, and teachers' collaboration. Second, the Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used. As defined, the Pearson correlation coefficient determines whether a relationship exists between two variables and measures the strength of that association. On the other hand, regression analysis forecasts the dependent variable based on the given independent variable, assuming an average mathematical relationship exists between them (Garg et al., 2020), lastly, in this study Pearson correlation coefficient aimed to measure the strength of the linear relationship of the variables while the regression analysis was to determine the degree of the combined influence of the predictive variables to the criterion variable.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical standards, this study followed key protocol assessment indicators, including social value, informed consent, risk assessment, privacy, justice, transparency, researcher qualifications, facility adequacy, and community involvement. The research was relevant to the education sector, particularly in embracing Inclusive Education. Ethical clearance was obtained, and informed consent was secured, allowing respondents the choice to participate. The study ensured respondents were fully informed of potential risks, benefits, and safety measures. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Respondents were given ample time to complete the survey, with the freedom to withdraw at any point. Justice was upheld by treating all participants equally, and as a token of gratitude, they received a small appreciation gift. Transparency was maintained through open communication with respondents regarding the study's intent, potential risks, and results. The researcher, though new to quantitative research, sought guidance from experts, peers, and a thesis adviser to ensure accuracy. Adequate facilities, including libraries and internet resources, were utilized to strengthen the study's findings. Finally, community involvement was prioritized, with results shared with academic institutions and stakeholders. The researcher ensured all activities were conducted with the permission of the designated officials and personnel and aimed to present findings in both local and international research forums, fostering engagement and informed decision-making.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the study's results, including the descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis results and a summary of findings.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 is the descriptive table. It presents the level of perceptions on inclusive education, professional learning community practices, and teachers' collaboration among public-school elementary teachers. It also contains the sample population, standard deviation, average, and descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive Table

<i>Variables</i>	N	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Perceptions on Inclusive Education	232	0.42	4.03	High
Perception on Inclusive Education	0.45	4.23		Very High
Perception on Collaboration	0.58	3.83		High
Efforts in Inclusive Education				
Perception on Strategies to Improve Inclusive Education	0.57	4.05		Very High
Professional Learning Community Practices	232	0.44	4.23	Very High
Shared and Supportive Leadership	0.59	4.31		Very High

Shared Values and Vision	0.56	4.40		Very High
Collective Learning and Application	0.60	4.38		Very High
Shared Personal Practice	0.48	4.40		Very High
Supportive Conditions-Relationship	0.52	4.40		Very High
Supportive Conditions-Structure	0.56	4.29		Very High
Teachers' Collaboration	232	0.47	4.30	Very High
Knowledge	0.70	4.09		High
Attitude	0.49	4.48		Very High
Readiness	0.53	4.32		Very High

Specifically, perceptions of inclusive education are measured through perceptions of inclusive education, perceptions of collaboration efforts in inclusive education, and perceptions of strategies to improve collaboration. Among its indicators, perception on inclusive education got the highest mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.45. This was followed by perception on strategies to improve inclusive education (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.57) with a very high descriptive level. This indicates an extremely positive perception of teachers about inclusive education. Meanwhile, the perception of collaboration efforts in inclusive education has the lowest mean of 3.83 (SD = 0.58), with a high descriptive level indicating a very positive perception of teachers about inclusive education. The overall mean of 4.03 (SD = 0.42), with a high descriptive level indicating a collectively very positive perception of public schools' elementary teachers about inclusive education. Similarly, the professional learning community practices are measured through shared and supportive leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application, supportive conditions-relationship, and supportive conditions-structure. As shown in the table, shared personal practice (mean = 4.40, SD = 0.48), supportive conditions-relationship (mean = 4.40, SD = 0.52), and shared values and vision (mean = 4.40, SD = 0.56) have the same average weighted mean and very high descriptive level. This is followed by collective learning and application (mean = 4.38, SD = 0.60), shared and supportive leadership (mean = 4.31, SD = 0.59), and supportive conditions-structure (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.56) with the same descriptive level of very high. The overall mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.44), with a descriptive level of very high, indicates that the collective professional learning community practices of public schools' elementary teachers are excellent. Lastly, teachers' collaboration is measured through knowledge, attitude, and readiness. Among these three indicators, the attitude of the teachers ranks as the highest (mean = 4.48, SD = 0.49), followed by readiness (mean = 4.32, SD = 0.53), with both very high descriptive levels signifying that teachers' collaboration is excellent. Knowledge obtained the lowest mean of 4.09 (SD = 0.70) with a high descriptive level, signifying that the teachers' collaboration is very good. The variable's overall mean is 4.30 (SD = 0.47) with a very high descriptive level. This points out that, generally, the collaboration of public schools' elementary teachers is excellent.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 is the correlation table. It exhibited the correlation between the predictive variables, which are the perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices, and the criterion variable, which is the teachers' collaboration among public-school elementary teachers. It also displayed the r-value, p-value, decision on the hypothesis, and interpretation.

Table 2. Correlation Table

	Teachers' Collaboration			
	r	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Perceptions on Inclusive Education	0.279	0.000	Reject	Significant
Professional Learning Community Practices	0.302	0.000	Reject	Significant

The perceptions on inclusive education obtained the p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). This indicates that the correlation between perceptions

of inclusive education and teachers' collaboration is statistically significant. Moreover, the strength of the relationship is confirmed with the *r*-value of 0.279, indicating a moderately low positive correlation between variables. Further, the second predictive variable, professional learning community practices, had a *p*-value of 0.000, suggesting the rejection of the null hypothesis (*H*₀). This confirms a statistical significance of the correlation between professional learning community practices and teachers' collaboration. Additionally, their moderately low positive correlation strength is confirmed by the obtained *r*-value of 0.302. Lastly, the correlation result showed that between the perceptions of inclusive educational and professional learning community practices, the latter has a slightly stronger correlation to the teachers' collaboration among public-school elementary teachers.

Regression Analysis

Table 3 is the regression table. It shows the individual and combined degree of influence of perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration among public-school elementary teachers. The table also presents the intercept or constant value, unstandardized and standardized coefficients, *p*-value, decision on the hypotheses, and interpretation.

Table 3. Regression Table

Independent Variables	Teachers' Collaboration						
	B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Decision on <i>H</i> ₀	Interpretation
(Constant)	2.311	.345		6.697	.000		
Perception on Inclusive Education	.222	.072	.201	3.065	.002	Reject	Significant
Professional Learning Community Practices	.249	.070	.235	3.587	.000	Reject	Significant

$R = .356$; $R^2 = .127$; $F\text{-value} = 16.668$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$

Specifically, the perception of inclusive education has a significant 22.2% (*B* = 0.222) influence on the teachers' collaboration among public-school elementary teachers. Since the *p*-value 0.002 is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis (*H*₀) is rejected. It denotes that the 22.2% degree of influence of the predictor on the criterion variable is significant. The professional learning community practices variable was also found to be a significant predictor of teachers' collaboration. The result showed a 24.9% (*B* = 0.249) influence of professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration. This is confirmed by the *p*-value 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (*H*₀). This means that the 24.9% degree of influence of the predictive variable on the criterion variable is statistically significant.

The *p*-value of 0.000 confirmed that the combined influence of the overall regression model was statistically significant, and the *R*²-value of 12.7% suggests that perceptions on inclusive education and professional learning community practices can explain the variance in teachers' collaboration. Further, it showed that the latter variable emerges as a slightly dominant factor for teachers' collaboration. Finally, the table displays the regression formula for teachers' collaboration: *TC* = .222 *PIE* + .249 *PLC* + 2.311.

Descriptive Analysis

Perceptions on Inclusive Education of Public Schools Elementary Teachers

The results suggested that the public schools' elementary teachers have extremely positive beliefs and behaviors about inclusive education. Additionally, they have the same high disposition about collaboration efforts and strategies to improve collaboration in inclusive education. Generally, their positive perceptions are associated with their favorable view of inclusion of learners in the regular classrooms, collaboration efforts of general and special education teachers in providing appropriate support, and extra help and attention for students with atypical needs.

Yuan (2023) cited a study on the benefits of children with atypical needs in regular classrooms. Accordingly, when children with atypical needs are enrolled in regular classes, their academic performance improves. The study cited research in the International Journal of Special Education that showed that autistic children showed improved performance in inclusive classrooms compared to special education settings. It was also found that when students with special needs join a general education classroom, they often experience a strong sense of inclusion. Feeling valued and respected plays a vital role in their academic success. Additionally, Argan et al. (2020) cited in a similar study the benefits of inclusive placements specifically for children with severe disabilities in different domains such as academic, social, communication, self-determination, vocational, and behavior.

Based on similar findings, most teachers positively perceive providing extra help and attention to learners with atypical needs as an effective strategy for improving inclusive education. This suggests providing curricular modification and adaptation, as well as accommodation for assistive devices and resources, to the learners with atypical needs in the classroom. However, given this result, some studies contradict it. Some teachers do not know how to provide help for children with atypical needs. Byrd & Alexander (2020) claimed that general education teachers are unacquainted with ways of handling students with special needs in the classroom. Their pedagogical expertise and understanding of the educational context alone are insufficient to address the diverse needs of students in the classroom.

Furthermore, special and general education teachers held similar opinions about educational values and principles in terms of co-teaching or collaboration. Jortveit and Kovac (2021) affirmed that both educators have a collective mindset about equity, full involvement in social and academic activities, absence of prejudiced behavior, focus on pupils (i.e., having the pupil in the center of instructional work), and diversity, which are essential characteristics of inclusion.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) Practices of Public Schools Elementary Teachers

The findings presented that teachers' professional learning community practices excel in these aspects: shared values and vision, shared personal practice, and supportive conditions and relationships. These high-level practices are connected with an evident collaborative process through a sense of values among members, intensified and plenty of opportunities for coaching and mentoring, and a caring and harmonious relationship within the professional community. Moreover, they also have high performance in shared and supportive leadership, collective learning and application, supportive conditions and structure.

Teachers who engage in a community of professionals who constantly practice and engage in collaborative and critical discussions have a greater chance for personal and professional development. This claim is supported by the study of Meda et al. (2023), which states that educators and faculty members must regularly engage in professional development sessions to gain new strategies for improving their inclusive teaching methods. It is recommended that inclusive education training be standardized and required for all teachers. This will enhance their ability to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively. In addition, Al-Mughairi and Karim (2020) stated that coaching and mentoring have proven to be crucial methods of development and learning that drive transformation, enhance efficiency, increase awareness, and influence attitudes and behaviors within an organization.

While the findings of this study resulted in a high-level harmonious relationship of public schools' elementary teachers characterized by trust and respect, this claim has been negated by the findings of the study of Tayag (2020). Accordingly, one of the challenges of implementing professional learning community practices in schools is the trust in fellow teachers, other than the enriched learning strategies and materials, interaction between school heads and teachers, supporting new hires, and situated discussion of students' concerns. Low trust for fellow

teachers arises from the hesitation to become teacher-leaders to avoid criticism, especially during learning sessions.

In the same manner, the findings also confirmed the significance of shared and supportive leadership, collective learning and application, and supportive conditions-structure. These coincide with Antinlouma et al. (2021), mentioning shared leadership enhanced staff expertise, commitment, motivation, well-being, belonging, engagement, collaboration, and responsibility. Teachers actively participated in both administrative and instructional decision-making. Further, Khan et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers saw many opportunities for collective learning through open dialogue, leading to high satisfaction with their work environment. Mutual care among staff fostered collaboration, reinforcing the importance of supportive structures for a successful PLC.

Teachers' Collaboration of Public Schools: Elementary Teachers

The results exhibited that the public schools' elementary teachers have very high-level attitudes and readiness, as well as high-level knowledge about teachers' collaboration. Generally, their high-level dispositions are characterized by their attitude and thinking about opportunities to teach together as valuable professional learning experiences and approbatory perceptions of the concepts and goals of inclusion before it was implemented. Given their unified disposition to teach together, some research proves that there is confusion among educators about their responsibilities and the essentials of co-teaching in the inclusive classroom. Paulsrud & Nilholm (2020) stated that many educators appeared to underutilize the co-teaching model but opted to rely on parallel teaching with minimal instructional modifications, such as parallel teaching or one teach, one assist. The one-teach, one-assist co-teaching model was frequently viewed as having an imbalance in responsibilities and authority (i.e., general education teachers in a co-taught classroom made more instructional decisions based on the general standards or Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), which is an isolated side activity rather than being integrated into individualized teaching).

Inferential Analysis

Discussion on the Correlation Results

The study findings highlighted both a moderately low positive correlation of teachers' perception of inclusive education and professional learning community practices on teachers' collaboration. Further, this moderately low positive correlation is confirmed or reinforced by its significance level, stating that the favorable increase of teachers' perception and professional learning community practices also significantly increases the tendency of teachers to improve their knowledge, attitude, and readiness for collaboration in the inclusive setting. These findings aligned with Pilotti et al. (2023), citing that the participation of mathematics teachers in the professional learning community led to successful community learning across five key dimensions. The PLC enhanced educator collaboration through supportive leadership, shared values, collective learning, and a focus on improving math problem-solving outcomes for students with disabilities. Findings suggest that strong communal support fosters trust among teachers, enabling effective collaboration. These results support the conclusions of earlier research, highlighting the importance of supportive leadership, shared professional practices, and collaboration between general and special educators in attaining positive educational outcomes.

Based on the same findings, teachers positively viewed the inclusion of learners in the regular classrooms. This finding was negated by Saloviita (2020), stating that there is only a slight majority of teachers who assumed that children with special educational needs (SEN) can be successfully facilitated in mainstream classrooms. Further, Rajashekar (2021) cited prevailing barriers of inclusion, many regular teachers believe that supporting children with disabilities is solely the responsibility of resource teachers, relieving themselves of any duty. They also see these students as disruptive, causing distractions that hinder curriculum completion. Consequently, these perceptions can slightly alter collaboration as they are significantly proven to be some practices that hinder inclusive education.

Discussion on the Degree of Influence

The regression analysis findings revealed that the individual and combined influence of the teachers' perceptions on inclusive education and effective professional learning community practices significantly influences their collaboration in inclusive education. This suggests that they have favorable thinking on the principles, strategies, and benefits of inclusion, and their constant participation in their professional learning community can

significantly contribute to their knowledge, attitude, and readiness about collaboration. Furthermore, the results presented the degree of influence of professional learning practices generated a higher value than the teachers' perception. Khasawneh et al. (2023) support this claim, citing collaborative activities in professional learning communities as a way to provide valuable learning experiences, foster a culture of ongoing growth, and enhance a teacher's effectiveness. Moreover, this study also claims that collaborative teaching positively impacts student learning outcomes. Participants reported improvements due to joint efforts in refining instructional strategies and adapting teaching to individual needs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study showed that elementary public-school teachers generally have a very positive outlook on inclusive education and are actively involved in professional learning communities (PLCs). Together, these two factors—how teachers think about inclusion and how they work with their peers—play an important role in shaping how well they collaborate to support learners with diverse needs. While their combined influence on collaboration was moderate, it was still meaningful, and it reminds us that collaboration thrives when teachers are both informed and connected. Of the two, participation in professional learning communities had a slightly stronger impact. This tells us that when teachers have regular opportunities to learn from one another, plan together, and support each other, they become more confident and ready to work as a team, especially in inclusive classrooms. These findings reflect the essence of Transformative Learning Theory, which emphasizes that true learning happens when people reflect on their experiences, challenge their old ways of thinking, and grow from new insights. However, the results also pointed out a few challenges. Not all teachers feel fully prepared to co-teach or to support students with special needs, and in some cases, there's still hesitation or lack of trust within teaching teams. These are real issues that schools need to address if they want collaboration and inclusion to work well.

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Conflict of Interest

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