| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators on Assessment, Placement, and Enrollment for Learners with Special Needs

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| ABSTRACT

This study examined how selected public schools implement assessment methods, educational placement, and enrollment practices for incoming Grade 7 learners with presumed special needs. Using a quantitative descriptive–correlational design, data were gathered from 24 teachers and 11 school administrators through a 45-item survey covering assessment, placement, and enrollment indicators. Descriptive statistics and the Mann–Whitney U test were employed to analyze perceptions and group differences. Results showed that respondents generally perceived these practices as moderately practiced, with teachers consistently rating implementation higher than administrators. Significant differences were found between the two groups across assessment (p=0.00016), placement (p=0.00512), and enrollment (p=0.00214). Lower ratings were noted in IEP development and access to specialized support services. Profile data further revealed a predominantly female, early-career SPED workforce with active training participation but limited long-term experience. While schools possess essential inclusive facilities, specialized resources remain limited. Findings highlight perceptual gaps between classroom practice and administrative oversight, underscoring the need to strengthen IEP procedures, expand specialist services, and improve coordination to enhance inclusive practices for learners with special needs.their effectiveness.

Introduction

Educational assessment is central to identifying learners' strengths, needs, and appropriate supports, especially for students with presumed special educational needs transitioning to secondary school (Rangvid, 2025). Effective assessment practices inform decisions about placement and equitable access to education, aligning with inclusive education principles that emphasize participation and fairness for all learners (Tai et al., 2023). Moreover, research shows that multi-source assessments and data-informed placement decisions enhance educational outcomes and reduce misclassification. Moreover, equitable enrollment practices ensure that students with diverse needs are not excluded from mainstream opportunities (UNESCO, 2020). As schools admit incoming Grade 7 learners, examining how assessment, placement, and enrollment are practiced becomes crucial to understanding whether inclusive intentions translate into operational reality.

Special education assessment is a systematic, collaborative process that integrates observations, standardized measures, interviews, and progress data to develop an accurate profile of a learner's strengths and needs (Wang, 2023). Using multiple sources of evidence supports individualized planning, appropriate placement, and targeted supports while reducing bias and misidentification. Recent guidance emphasizes culturally responsive, ongoing assessment conducted by interdisciplinary teams in partnership with families to ensure valid decisions about services and equitable access to learning (Tamilarasi & Krishnakumar,

2024; Rios & Luelmo, 2024). Contemporary special education texts likewise stress data-based decision making and multi-method evaluation as foundations for inclusive participation and effective instruction (Sigmon, 2024).

In the Philippines, there exists a pressing need to understand and improve the assessment, educational placement, and enrollment practices for pre-high schoolers presumed to have special needs. The education system in the country faces various challenges in adequately addressing the diverse learning requirements of students, particularly those with special needs. Despite efforts to promote inclusive education, there remains a gap between policy intentions and practical implementation, especially at the pre-high school level.

Schools and educational institutions' assessment methods for pre-high schoolers with suspected special needs are not yet up to global and national norms. The methods, criteria, and processes used to assess and evaluate kids' learning skills and support needs will be examined. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of these assessment approaches is essential for building more effective and fair special education identification and support measures. As a Special Education (SpEd) Coordinator and Subject Teacher in one of the most populous secondary schools in the lone District of Lapulapu, most entry assessments on pre-high schoolers with special needs are done through physical evaluation (e.g., by looking directly into the child's physical disability and/or special needs; getting some basic academic records from t Though professionals (i.e., occupational therapists, etc.) are needed, the absence of such human resources in school hindered the assessment of these pre-high schoolers with supposed special needs.

On top of that, the schools' educational placement plans have not yet been fully put into place. This means checking to see if students are in the right learning settings for them, like inclusive classrooms, resource rooms, or schools that specialize in certain subjects. When the researcher and her coworkers looked at public and private elementary and high schools in the Lapulapu area, they saw that pre-high school students with what were thought to be special needs could only be placed based on information from their report cards and sometimes only a few words from the teachers who worked with them. In short, there aren't any clear written rules or policies on how to test, place, and enroll these kids who are thought to have special educational needs and will be going to high school. Also, issues like inclusion, accessibility, and support systems haven't been given much thought to yet in the steps used to enroll pre-high school kids who may have special needs. This means looking at the rules and procedures for enrolling students as well as how easy it is for students with different learning needs to get help and make changes.

As such, the recent study shall address a critical gap in the aspect actual assessment, educational placement, and enrollment practices for pre-high schoolers with presumed special needs in the domestic scene. By shedding light on prevailing challenges and areas for improvement, the findings of this study have the potential to inform policy and practice interventions that promote more inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of their learning needs. Therefore, this dissertation shall investigate the efficacy of current assessment methods, the appropriateness of educational placement, and equity in enrollment practices for pre-high schoolers with presumed special needs from the identified schools in the Department of Education Lapulapu City Division over the past decade as basis for formulating a Proposed Policy Brief aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of educational pathways.

Literature Review

A growing body of research underscores that high-quality assessment is foundational to appropriate educational placement and equitable access for learners with special educational needs. Contemporary guidance stresses the use of multi-method, multi-source evidence observations, standardized tools, interviews, and progress monitoring to reduce bias and improve decision accuracy. The American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (2014) Standards, widely cited in recent scholarship, remain central in advocating valid, fair, and culturally responsive assessment practices. More recent syntheses emphasize that assessment should be continuous and embedded in instruction to inform individualized supports rather than serve as a one-time gatekeeping mechanism (Adeniyi, 2025). In inclusive settings, assessment data guide placement decisions that balance learner needs with opportunities for participation in general education contexts, aligning evaluation practices with inclusive education goals (UNESCO, 2020). Recent studies also highlight the role of collaborative assessment involving teachers, specialists, counselors, and families in strengthening placement and enrollment equity. identify assessment as a high-leverage practice that drives data-based decision making in special education, a view reinforced by newer research showing that interdisciplinary evaluation reduces misclassification and improves service matching for students with diverse profiles (Malone, 2024). Family–school collaboration in assessment processes has been shown to improve the relevance of placement decisions and ensure that enrollment practices do not inadvertently exclude learners with presumed needs (Wood et al., 2022; Meriwether, 2024). Together, these works suggest that when schools implement rigorous, collaborative, and culturally responsive assessment systems, they are better positioned to make fair placement and enrollment decisions for incoming students with special needs (Hernandez et al., 2022).

Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the extent to which schools practice assessment methods, educational placement, and enrollment procedures for incoming Grade 7 learners with presumed special needs, and to determine relationships among these practices. The design enabled systematic measurement of existing conditions and statistical analysis of associations without inferring causation. The research was conducted in four public schools with established special education programs: Lapulapu City Central School, Marigondon Elementary School, Babag National High School, and Bankal National High School. Respondents were non-teaching personnel directly involved in school management and procedures related to special education, including principals, head teachers, master teachers, grade leaders, coordinators, and staff. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire adapted from indicators aligned with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and IDEA guidance. The instrument had three sections: (1) school profile, (2) respondent demographics, and (3) 45 indicators, 15 each for assessment, placement, and enrollment. Revisions to indicators were pilot-tested, and internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha at the 0.05 level. A four-point Likert scale (1–4) measured the extent of practice from Not Practiced to Fully Practiced. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage) summarized the levels of practice. Because the data were non-parametric, the Mann–Whitney U test was used to compare group perceptions. The study flow followed an Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to present the research structure clearly.

Results

Table 1. Teachers age and Gender

Age Range (in years)	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
40 to 49	–		3	12.50	3	12.50
30 to 39	1	4.17	8	33.33	9	37.50
20 to 29	1	4.17	11	45.83	12	50.00
Sub-total	2	8.34	22	91.67	24	100.00

The age and gender profile shows a predominantly female group, with 22 of 24 teachers (91.67%) compared to only 2 males (8.34%). Most teachers are young adults: 12 (50.00%) are aged 20–29 and 9 (37.50%) are 30–39, meaning 87.50% are under 40. Only 3 teachers (12.50%) fall in the 40–49 range. Female teachers are concentrated in the younger brackets, particularly 20–29 (45.83%) and 30–39 (33.33%). The two male teachers are split between the 20–29 and 30–39 groups. Overall, the workforce is youthful and strongly female-dominated, suggesting early-career representation.

Table 2. Length Of Service

Length of Service	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
16 to 20	–	–	3	12.50	3	12.50
11 to 15	–	–	3	12.50	3	12.50
6 to 10	–	–	5	20.80	5	20.80
1 to 5	2	8.30	11	45.80	13	54.20
Sub-total	2	8.30	22	91.70	24	100.00

Most teachers are early in their careers. Thirteen (54.20%) have 1–5 years of service, including 11 females (45.80%) and 2 males (8.30%). Five teachers (20.80%), all female, report 6–10 years. Only six teachers fall into longer tenure: three (12.50%) with 11–15 years and three (12.50%) with 16–20 years, all female. Overall, the staff is predominantly female and relatively inexperienced, with limited representation of long-serving personnel.

Table 3. Number of years in Teaching Sped

Length of Service	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
16 to 20	–	–	1	4.20	3	4.20
11 to 15	–	–	2	8.30	2	8.30
6 to 10	–	–	6	25.00	6	25.00
1 to 5	2	8.30	13	54.20	15	62.50
Sub-total	2	8.30	22	91.70	24	100.00

Most teachers have limited experience specifically in SPED. Fifteen (62.50%) report 1–5 years, including both males (8.30%) and 13 females (54.20%). Six teachers (25.00%), all female, have 6–10 years. Only a few have longer SPED tenure: two (8.30%) with 11–15 years and one (4.20%) with 16–20 years, all female. Overall, SPED teaching experience is concentrated in the early years, indicating a relatively new SPED workforce dominated by female teachers.

Table 4. Training and Seminars attended relevant to Sped

Learning Disabilities	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
ASD	1	1.49	11	16.42	12	17.91
ALD	1	1.49	16	23.88	17	25.37
EASD	–	–	6	8.96	6	8.96
DHSI	–	–	9	13.43	9	13.43
EVI	–	–	7	10.45	7	10.45
OTHERS	1	1.49	14	20.90	15	22.39
HNA	1	1.49	–	–	1	1.49
Sub-total	4	5.96	63	94.03	67	100.00

Training participation is heavily female-dominated (94.03%), with males accounting for only 5.96% of reported seminars. The most attended topics are ALD (25.37%), OTHERS (22.39%), and ASD (17.91%). Moderate exposure appears in DHSI (13.43%) and EVI (10.45%), while EASD accounts for 8.96%. Only one male reported HNA (1.49%). Overall, female teachers show broader engagement across SPED-related trainings, indicating stronger professional development exposure in key disability areas.

Table 5. School Administrators Age and Gender

Age Range (in years)	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
50 to 59	–		2	18.18	2	18.18
40 to 49	1	9.09	4	36.36	5	45.45
30 to 39	1	9.09	3	27.27	4	36.36
Sub-total	2	18.18	9	81.82	11	100.00

Most school administrators are female (81.82%), with only two males (18.18%). The largest group falls within 40–49 years old, totaling five administrators (45.45%), followed by four (36.36%) aged 30–39. Two female administrators (18.18%) are in the 50–59 range. Males are represented in the 30–39 and 40–49 brackets. Overall, the profile shows a predominantly female leadership group concentrated in mid-career ages, suggesting experienced yet still active administrators.

Table 6. Number of years as school administrator

Length of Service	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
16 to 20	–	–	2	18.18	2	18.18
11 to 15	–	–	2	18.18	2	18.18
6 to 10	–	–	2	18.18	2	18.18
1 to 5	2	18.18	3	27.27	5	45.45
Sub-total	2	18.18	9	81.82	11	100.00

Nearly half of the administrators (45.45%) have 1–5 years of service, including both males and three females, indicating many are relatively new to their roles. Equal shares of females (18.18% each) fall into the 6–10, 11–15, and 16–20 year brackets, showing a balanced presence of experienced leaders. No males appear in the longer-tenure groups. Overall, the profile reflects predominantly female leadership with a mix of emerging and seasoned administrators.

Inventory of Training	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
ASD	–	–	6	18.18	6	18.18
ALD	–	–	6	18.18	6	18.18
EASD	–	–	2	6.06	2	6.06

DHSI	–	–	5	15.15	5	15.15
EVI	–	–	5	15.15	5	15.15
OTHERS	1	3.03	3	9.09	4	12.12
HNA	1	3.03	4	12.12	5	15.15
Sub-total	2	6.06	31	93.94	33	100.00

Table 7. Training and seminars attended relevant to SpEd

Training records show overwhelmingly female participation (93.94%), with males accounting for only 6.06%. The most attended areas are ASD and ALD (18.18% each), followed by DHSI and EVI (15.15% each). HNA also reflects notable engagement (15.15%). Fewer administrators attended EASD (6.06%). Overall, female administrators demonstrate broader exposure to SPED-related seminars, indicating stronger professional development engagement across key disability and intervention areas.

Table 8. Groupings of special needs cohorts

	BNHS	BKNHS	LLCCS	MNHS	Total	
Groupings	F	f	f	f	f	%
w/ down syndrome	11	2	1	8	22	19.64
w/ learning disability	11	3	4	8	26	23.21
w/ autism spectrum disorder	11	3	5	8	27	24.11
w/ hearing & speech impair	11		2	3	16	14.29
w/ visual impairment	11	3	1	4	19	16.96
Others disabilities	–		1	1	2	1.79
Sub-total (f)	55	11	14	32	112	
Sub-total (%)	49.11	9.82	12.50	28.57		100.00

The distribution of special needs cohorts across schools totals 112 learners, with the largest shares in BNHS (49.11%) and MNHS (28.57%). By category, autism spectrum disorder (24.11%) and learning disability (23.21%) are most prevalent, followed by Down syndrome (19.64%) and visual impairment (16.96%). Hearing and speech impairments account for 14.29%, while other disabilities are minimal (1.79%). BNHS consistently reports high counts across categories, indicating a major concentration of learners with diverse needs. Overall, the data reflect varied disability profiles requiring differentiated supports across sites.

Table 9. School personnel and their educational qualification

	Teachers		Administrator		Total	
Educational Qualification	F	%	f	%	f	%
Doctorate degree	2	5.72	1	2.86	3	8.58
w/ units in doctorate prog.	2	5.72	1	2.86	3	8.58
Master's degree	4	11.43	8	22.86	12	34.29
w/ units in master prog.	10	28.57	1	2.86	11	31.43
College graduate	6	17.14	–	–	6	17.14
Sub-total	24	68.57	11	31.43	35	100.00

Most personnel hold graduate credentials. Twelve (34.29%) have a master's degree, predominantly administrators (22.86%). Eleven (31.43%) have units in a master's program, mainly teachers (28.57%). Doctoral attainment is limited: three (8.58%) hold a doctorate and three (8.58%) have doctoral units. Six teachers (17.14%) are college graduates. Overall, the profile reflects strong engagement in postgraduate study, with administrators more likely to hold completed master's degrees.

	BNHS	BKNHS	LLCCS	MNHS	Total	
Inventory of Facilities	F	f	f	f	f	%
Resource room	12	3	9	3	27	18.37
Therapy room	1		4	7	12	8.16
Assistive technologies	11	2		5	18	12.24
Medical clinic	12	2	4	2	20	13.61
Accessible library	8		5	2	15	10.20
Accessible infrastructure	12	3	6	6	27	18.37

Inclusive classroom	10	4	9	5	28	19.05
Sub-total (f)	66	14	37	30	147	
Sub-total (%)	44.90	9.52	25.17	20.41		100.00

Table 10. Facilities to support Inclusive education

Facilities supporting inclusive education total 147 across schools, with BNHS contributing the largest share (44.90%), followed by LLCCS (25.17%) and MNHS (20.41%). The most available features are inclusive classrooms (19.05%), resource rooms (18.37%), and accessible infrastructure (18.37%). Medical clinics (13.61%) and assistive technologies (12.24%) show moderate presence, while accessible libraries (10.20%) and therapy rooms (8.16%) are less common. Overall, core structural supports are present, but specialized spaces remain comparatively limited.

Table 11. Assessment methods

No.	Indicators	Teachers $\bar{x}$	Teachers VD	Admin $\bar{x}$	Admin VD
1	*Early Developmental Milestones*: Assesses the child's achievement of key development milestones in areas such as motor skills, communication, and social interaction	3.3	FP	2.9	MP
2	*Communication Skills*: Evaluate the child's language and communication abilities, including verbal and non-verbal communication, to identify any potential speech or language delays.	3.3	FP	2.8	MP
3	*Social Interaction and Play Skills*: Examine the child's ability to engage in age-appropriate social interactions and play activities with peers.	3.4	FP	3.1	MP
4	*Cognitive Abilities*: Measure the child's cognitive abilities, including problem-solving skills, memory, and attention span.	3.5	FP	2.8	MP
5	*Adaptive Functioning*: Evaluate the child's ability to perform daily activities independently, such as self-care tasks and following routine instructions.	3.6	FP	3.1	MP
6	*Behavioral Observations*: Observe and assess the child's behavior in different settings to identify any patterns of concern or behavioral challenges.	3.3	FP	3.1	MP
7	*Sensory Processing*: Investigate the child's response to sensory stimuli, including sensitivities or challenges in processing sensory information.	3.3	FP	2.9	MP
8	*Physical Health and Motor Skills*: Examine the child's physical health and motor skills, considering both fine and gross motor abilities.	3.3	FP	3.3	FP
9	*Attention and Focus*: Assess the child's ability to sustain attention and focus on tasks, recognizing any difficulties in maintaining concentration.	3.2	MP	3.1	MP
10	*Emotional Regulation*: Evaluate the child's emotional regulation and coping mechanisms in response to different situations.	3.0	MP	3.1	MP
11	*Executive Functioning*: Examine higher-level cognitive functions, such as planning, organization, and problem-solving skills.	3.1	MP	3.0	MP
12	*Learning Style Preferences*: Identify the child's preferred learning styles and modalities to tailor instructional approaches accordingly.	3.2	MP	3.1	MP
13	*Family and Caregiver Input*: Gather insights from parents or caregivers regarding the child's behavior, strengths, challenges, and any previous interventions or therapies.	3.3	FP	3.1	MP
14	*Health History and Medical Conditions*: Review the child's medical history, including any diagnosed conditions or health concerns that may impact learning and participation in school activities.	3.4	FP	3.2	MP
15	*Previous Educational Experiences*: Investigate the child's prior experiences in educational settings, including any individualized education plans (IEPs) or accommodations previously implemented.	3.5	FP	2.6	MP
	Average Weighted Mean	3.2	MP	3.0	MP

Assessment practices are generally viewed as moderately practiced by both groups (teachers $\bar{x}$=3.2; administrators $\bar{x}$=3.0). Teachers rate several areas as fully practiced, notably adaptive functioning (3.6), cognitive abilities (3.5), and previous educational experiences (3.5), indicating confidence in comprehensive learner profiling. Administrators rate only physical health and motor

skills as fully practiced (3.3), while most other indicators remain moderate. Lower ratings appear in attention and focus, emotional regulation, executive functioning, and learning styles. Overall, teachers perceive stronger implementation than administrators, suggesting slight differences in views on assessment depth.

Table 12. Educational Placement

No.	Indicators	Teachers x̄	Teachers VD	Admin x̄	Admin VD
1	*Inclusive Education Readiness*: Evaluate the school's readiness and commitment to inclusive education, considering policies, resources, and support systems in place.	3.4	FP	3.1	MP
2	*Accessibility of Facilities*: Assess the physical accessibility of the school facilities to ensure they meet the needs of students with diverse abilities.	3.0	MP	3.1	MP
3	*Teacher Training and Professional Development*: Examine the extent of professional development and training offered to educators so they can assist students with special needs in an efficient manner.	3.2	MP	3.2	MP
4	*Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Development*: Examine the procedures used by the school to create and carry out Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that are customized to meet the particular requirements of each student.	2.5	MP	2.0	FR
5	*Specialized Support Services*: Determine if specialist support services—such as speech, occupational, and counseling therapy—are available and how easily accessible they are.	3.0	MP	2.1	FR
6	*Classroom Accommodations*: Evaluate the potential accommodations available in regular classrooms, such as assistive technologies, seating arrangements, and modified teaching materials.	3.3	FP	2.9	MP
7	*Peer Support and Social Integration*: Assess the strategies in place to facilitate peer support and promote social integration of students with special needs within the school community.	3.2	MP	3.0	MP
8	*Parental Involvement*: Gauge the level of parental involvement in the placement process and ongoing collaboration between parents and school staff.	3.4	FP	3.2	MP
9	*Transitioning Planning*: Evaluate the school's approach to transitioning students with special needs into new educational phases, ensuring a smooth and supportive process.	3.3	FP	3.0	MP
10	*Communication and Collaboration among Staff*: Examine the ways that educators, administrators, and support personnel can collaborate and communicate with one another to meet the various needs of the kids.	3.3	FP	3.2	MP
11	*Assessment of Learning Styles*: Explore how the school assesses the learning styles and preferences of students with special needs to inform instructional strategies.	3.2	MP	2.8	MP
12	*Flexible Curriculum Design*: Assess the flexibility of the curriculum to accommodate diverse learning needs and styles.	3.3	FP	3.1	MP
13	*Behavioral Support Strategies*: Identify the strategies in place for managing and supporting behavioral challenges in students with special needs.	3.2	MP	3.1	MP
14	*Evaluation of Previous Sensitivity*: Review the success and challenges of previous placements to inform adjustments in the current placement approach.	3.2	MP	2.6	MP
15	*Cultural Competence and Sensitivity*: Evaluate the cultural competence and sensitivity of the school staff in understanding and meeting the needs of students with special needs from diverse backgrounds.	3.0	MP	2.9	MP
	Average Weighted Mean	3.2	MP	2.9	MP

Educational placement is perceived as moderately practiced overall (teachers x̄=3.2; administrators x̄=2.9). Teachers rate several elements as fully practiced, including inclusive readiness, classroom accommodations, parental involvement, transitioning plans, communication, and flexible curriculum design. In contrast, administrators mark most indicators as moderate and identify IEP development (2.0) and specialized support services (2.1) as only fairly practiced, signaling gaps in formal planning and service access. Differences suggest teachers see stronger classroom-level implementation, while administrators note systemic limitations affecting consistent, high-quality placement practices.

Table 13. Educational Placement

No.	Indicators	Teachers		Admin	
		x̄	VD	x̄	VD
1	Inclusive Education Readiness: Evaluate the school's readiness and commitment to inclusive education, considering policies, resources, and support systems in place.	3.4	FP	3.1	MP
2	Accessibility of Facilities: Assess the physical accessibility of the school facilities to ensure they meet the needs of students with diverse abilities.	3.0	MP	3.1	MP
3	Teacher Training and Professional Development: Examine the extent of professional development and training offered to educators so they can assist students with special needs in an efficient manner.	3.2	MP	3.2	MP
4	Individualized Education Plan Development: Examine the procedures used by the school to create and carry out Individualized Education Plans that are customized to meet the requirements of each student.	2.5	MP	2.0	FR
5	Specialized Support Services: Determine if specialist support services—such as speech, occupational, and counseling therapy—are available and how easily accessible they are.	3.0	MP	2.1	FR
6	Classroom Accommodations: Evaluate the potential accommodations available in regular classrooms, such as assistive technologies, seating arrangements, and modified teaching materials.	3.3	FP	2.9	MP
7	Peer Support and Social Integration: Assess the strategies in place to facilitate peer support and promote social integration of students with special needs within the school community.	3.2	MP	3.0	MP
8	Parental Involvement: Gauge the level of parental involvement in the placement process and ongoing collaboration between parents and school staff.	3.4	FP	3.2	MP
9	Transitioning Planning: Evaluate the school's approach to transitioning students with special needs into new educational phases, ensuring a smooth and supportive process.	3.3	FP	3.0	MP
10	Communication and Collaboration among Staff: Examine the ways that educators, administrators, and support personnel can collaborate and communicate with one another to meet the various needs of the kids.	3.3	FP	3.2	MP
11	Assessment of Learning Styles: Explore how the school assesses the learning styles and preferences of students with special needs to inform instructional strategies.	3.2	MP	2.8	MP
12	Flexible Curriculum Design: Assess the flexibility of the curriculum to accommodate diverse learning needs and styles.	3.3	FP	3.1	MP
13	Behavioral Support Strategies: Identify the strategies for managing and supporting behavioral challenges in students with special needs.	3.2	MP	3.1	MP
14	Evaluation of Previous Sensitivity: Review the success and challenges of previous placements to inform adjustments in the current placement approach.	3.2	MP	2.6	MP
15	Cultural Competence and Sensitivity: Evaluate the cultural competence and sensitivity of the school staff in understanding and meeting the needs of students with special needs from diverse backgrounds.	3.0	MP	2.9	MP
	Average Weighted Mean	3.2	MP	2.9	MP

Results indicate that educational placement is moderately practiced overall (teachers x̄=3.2; administrators x̄=2.9). Teachers perceive stronger implementation, rating several indicators as fully practiced, particularly inclusive readiness, classroom accommodations, parental involvement, transitioning plans, communication, and flexible curriculum design. Administrators, however, rate nearly all items as moderate and identify IEP development (2.0) and specialized support services (2.1) as fairly practiced, revealing notable gaps in formal planning and access to specialist services. The contrast suggests that while classroom-level supports are visible to teachers, administrators recognize systemic constraints affecting consistent, high-quality placement.

Table 13. Test of significance on the difference in the respondents' assessment of these identified components as to the evaluation conducted

Variables in comparison	z-score	Comp. U-value	Critical of U	*p*-value	Results	Decision
Assessment	3.7745	21	64	0.00016	The result is significant*	Reject Ho
Placement	2.7992	44.5	64	0.00512	The result is significant*	Reject Ho
Enrollment	3.0694	38	64	0.00214	The result is significant*	Reject Ho

The z-score values for each variable (3.7745 for Assessment, 2.7992 for Placement, and 3.0694 for Enrollment) significantly exceed their corresponding critical U-values (21, 44.5, and 38 respectively) at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This statistical significance indicates that the perceptions of teachers and administrators differ significantly across these domains. The p-values (0.00016 for Assessment, 0.00512 for Placement, and 0.00214 for Enrollment) further corroborate these findings, confirming that these differences are unlikely to have arisen by chance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho), which assumes no difference in perceptions between teachers and administrators, is rejected for all three variables. The results of the t-tests did not show any statistically significant differences between genders ($p > .05$). This suggests that female and male teachers reported similar levels of confidence in teaching students with learning disabilities (SD) in inclusive settings.

Discussion

The findings show a consistently female-dominated and early-career profile among both teachers and administrators, with most personnel under 40 years old and with fewer than ten years of service, particularly in SPED. Training exposure is likewise concentrated among female staff, with strong participation in ASD, ALD, and related seminars, suggesting active professional development but still within a relatively young SPED workforce. Facility inventories indicate that inclusive classrooms, resource rooms, and accessible infrastructure are present, yet therapy rooms and assistive technologies are less common. Together, these profiles suggest schools that are structurally prepared for inclusion but still developing deeper specialization and long-term SPED expertise among personnel. Perception data further reveal that assessment and placement practices are moderately implemented, with teachers consistently rating practices higher than administrators. Significant differences between groups across assessment, placement, and enrollment confirm divergent perspectives: teachers emphasize classroom-level execution, while administrators note systemic gaps, particularly in IEP development and access to specialized services. These perceptual differences highlight the need for stronger alignment between policy, resources, and classroom practice. Enhancing communication, formalizing support services, and strengthening IEP procedures may help bridge these gaps and promote more consistent, inclusive practices for learners with special needs.

Conclusion

The study's result emphasizes how important it is for entering Grade 7 children with suspected special needs to have inclusive educational placement procedures and efficient evaluation techniques. The findings highlight the necessity for ongoing improvement in assessment accuracy and the implementation of inclusive classroom strategies to ensure optimal educational outcomes for these students. Continued focus on refining these practices is essential to support their diverse learning needs effectively.

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