

Teachers' Level of Knowledge and Attitude, Stressors and Coping Mechanisms In Handling Learners' With Learning Difficulties

Maribel L. Alegarbes¹

Master Teacher, Carcar Central National High School, Carcar City Division, Philippines

maribel.alegarbes@deped.gov.ph

Abstract: This research aimed to determine the teachers' level of knowledge and attitude, stressors and coping mechanisms in handling learners with learning difficulties at Carcar City Division, Carcar City, Cebu for the school year 2019 - 2020. The twenty (20) respondents were selected using universal sampling technique. Survey and interview questionnaires were utilized to obtain the desired results of the study. Weighted mean, percentage, Chi – square Test of Independence, Pearson r and Colaizzi's Method of Analysis were used in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that the teachers are moderately knowledgeable in handling learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in an inclusive classroom setting. Moreover, teachers in Carcar City Division strongly support the integration of learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting as shown in their positive attitude in handling these types of learners. Additionally, the teachers considered high extent of usefulness in utilizing various cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual coping mechanisms to combat stressors while handling learners with learning difficulties. There is a positive significant correlation between teacher's level of knowledge, attitude and usage of coping mechanisms to their years of experience and highest educational attainment. Knowledge is also positively correlated to their level of attitude and usage of coping mechanisms. The stressors encountered by the teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom are administrative concerns and support, parental issues and behavioral issues of learners with learning difficulties integrated with the regular students. Hence, the teachers of Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties have observed a range of stressors that could have a tremendous effect to the teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Special Education, teachers' level of knowledge and attitude, learners with difficulties, mixed method, Carcar City.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is indeed a noble profession. It caters different learners with different needs. For the past decades, challenges arise in the education arena because of the major shift from separating the learners with special needs in the regular classroom to integrating them with the regular ones (Sanchez, 2019). This challenges the inclusive education teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in the regular classroom setting. Cooc (2019) cited that although there are increasing opportunities for students with special needs but teachers face inevitable challenges working with this student population.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is mandating the teachers and administrators to protect the rights of the Filipinos to quality education at all levels and making education accessible at all as reflected in the DepEd's mission and vision. Learners with special needs and interests are given the privileges and opportunities to learn and acquire new skills in order to survive. However, problems arise when these learners with varied special needs are included in the regular classroom setting and therefore, teachers adjust to myriad learning conditions to reach their optimum potentials. This does not exempt the teachers in the Department of Education especially in the secondary schools where only few teachers have proper training on how to handle learners with learning difficulties.

In the study of Schwartz, Hopkins & Stiefel (2021), school – aged children with learning disabilities.’ Academic performance remain extremely low compared to general education students. This situation alarms the authorities to take initiatives on how to resolve this dilemma and this requires serious attention. Therefore, it is essential to define “learning disability”.

According to Marks (2021), learning disability is defined as disorder characterized by difficulty in accomplish certain normal tasks such as reading, writing and the like. The disorder may manifest itself into the slow development in listening, speaking, reading and spelling even doing mathematical calculations. Learners with these manifestations are included in the regular classroom setting and this adds to the stressors of the teachers.

One of the most common challenges also of the teachers in an inclusive education curriculum is to handle children with learning difficulties knowing that the regular learners have also varied interests and demands. Their performances in English, Mathematics and other areas do not meet the learning standards at their age ranges. Cognitive abilities are closely linked to successful learning. This problem comes along with the difficulty of the teachers in handling them especially if they lack knowledge, skills and attitude on special education. Mader (2017) in his research article also coined that the need for teachers to be equipped with knowledge and ability to teach special students is more critical than ever before. However, only few training programs are given to prepare teachers in handling learners with special educational needs.

Learners with learning difficulties mostly have problems on reading, math, written expression, communication disorders and auditory perception. This frequently results to drop – outs, lack of interest in school and fall into antisocial behaviors. This adds to the challenges of the teachers in the regular classroom and contributes to their stressors both in work and personal stamina. Teachers with no special education background found out to be stressed and burnt out because they don’t have proper training on how to handle learners with learning difficulties and how to provide interventions to let these learners cope up with the lessons.

In the study of Amstad & Muller (2020), stress experienced by teachers are also attributed to students’ behavioral problems of learners with special needs. This is often caused by work stressors such as lack of support from the administration, school demands and workloads, relationships with other people around them and the like. This may imply that regular teachers handling learners with difficult learning circumstance get stressed and burned out because of the additional workloads (Sanchez, 2019).

In the Philippines, teachers still doubt their capacities to teach in an inclusive education classroom with learners with learning cognitive factors (Muega, 2019). Common learning difficulties of the learners include dyscalculia, slow in reading and spelling and very low performance in academics. Many public schools whether in rural or urban areas remain to be ill-equipped with resources for the learners with various special needs. Teachers are willing to handle these kinds of learners but are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle learners with disabilities. The same problem is faced by the teachers of Carcar City division handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting. These learners need proper assessment, varied teaching approaches and wide understanding. Some of the learners came from inclusive education and now mainstreamed in the general classroom setting. This situation doubles the stress of the teachers because teaching children with difficulties need more than one lesson planning and preparations to meet their learning demands and needs. Based on the discussion of the administrators during School Measurement, Evaluation and Adjustment (SMEA), secondary teachers complain on the presence of learners with learning difficulties inside the classroom. The reading performance and Mathematics achievement are one of the challenges of the secondary teachers handling learners with learning difficulties. These foundation subjects should be laid during the elementary years and yet, learners are not yet able to read, comprehend and even solve basic calculations.

With this, the researcher determined the teachers’ level of knowledge and attitude, stressors and coping mechanisms in handling learners with learning difficulties at Carcar City division, Carcar City, Cebu for the school year 2019 – 2020.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study made use of mixed method type of research employing qualitative and quantitative data techniques. This was used for the purpose of accumulating complete and breadth understanding and corroboration of a certain phenomenon. Additionally, in gathering data on teachers’ level of knowledge, attitude, stressors and coping mechanisms in handling learners with learning difficulties, an adapted research instrument will be consumed employing quantitative means of

presenting and analyzing of data. Survey questionnaires were administered to monitor and evaluate the researches done in Carcar City Division.

This research followed the Input - Process - Output (IPO) continuum which will serve as structure and map for the direction of this study. The Inputs are the demographic profile of the teacher - respondents as to educational attainment, number of years of teaching, relevant trainings and number of learners with learning difficulties. These inputs were obtained through survey questionnaires. These data of their profile were correlated to their level of knowledge, attitude, and coping mechanisms of the teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties. This is to determine if their selected socio - demographic profile affects their level of knowledge, attitude and coping mechanisms. An interview questionnaire was used to determine the stressors encountered by the teachers.

The process of this study includes the seeking of permission from higher authorities for the conduct of this research, administration of the survey questionnaire, validating the data, presenting the data including its statistical treatments and analysis and interpretation. Facilitation of the instrument was done by the researcher herself. The outputs of this study include the research results, conclusion, recommendations and the proposed action plan. Assessment findings and measures will be forwarded to the Schools Division Superintendent for possible policy implementation. The researcher will also make an action plan for the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties.

This study was done in the City of Carcar, province of Cebu. It is located in the southern part of Cebu province with 15 barangays. It is bounded on the North by the Municipality of San Fernando; on the South by the Municipality of Sibonga; on the West by Municipality of Barili; and on the East by Bohol Strait.

This research was conducted in the three (3) High Schools in Carcar City Division namely; Carcar Central National High School (CCNHS), Gelacio C. Babao Memorial National High School (GCBMNHS), and Roberto E. Sato Memorial National High School (RESMNHS). These school integrated learners with learning difficulties in the classrooms with the regular learners.

Among the three schools, Roberto E. Sato Memorial National High School, is situated in a pinnacle part approximately 9 - 10 kilometers from Carcar City. It is a medium school with around 500 learners and 24 teachers. The main livelihood of the parents is farming. On the other hand, Gelacio C. Babao Memorial National High School (MNMNHS) is about two (2) kilometers from the highway. It is considered as a big school with population of over 1,500 learners with more or less 50 teachers. Meanwhile, Carcar Central National High School (CCNHS) is the nearest school among the three (3) schools in the rural community. The school's location is at the Carcar City proper where there is easy access to shopping malls, internet connection and others. It is also considered as a big school with more or less 2,000 learners and more than 80 teachers.

To determine the focus of this study, universal sampling was utilized following two criteria. The first criterion was the teacher-respondent must handle learners with learning difficulties integrated in an inclusive classroom setting. The second criterion, the said teacher is handling learners with Learning difficulties in Carcar City division as recognized by the division administrators. The number of respondents was selected using universal sampling technique. There will be twenty (20) respondents who are handling learners with learning difficulties in the three schools in Carcar City division.

The instrument of this study is a survey questionnaire which consists of four parts. Part I is the profile of the respondents based on their number of years in teaching, educational attainment and number of learners handled with learning

difficulties. This determined the background of the respondents. Part II of the research instrument contains statements that will determine the teachers' knowledge on handling learners with learning difficulties. There are twenty (20) indicators in which the respondents are given the scale of 1 (Less Knowledgeable) to 4 (Highly Knowledgeable). These indicators will measure on how the teachers handle these types of learners based on their academic background and prior know - how.

Part III of the research tool determined the level of attitudes of the teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties. There are fifteen (15) indicators in this section. The last part of the instrument sought to identify the coping mechanisms of the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in a general classroom setting. Among the coping resources identified are cognitive, social, emotional, physical and philosophical/spiritual.

The questionnaires were adapted from Cassie Glidewell on the Teachers' Knowledge on how to handle learners with LD, Soren Sanchez on the coping mechanisms of teachers handling these types of learners. The tool is a four - point Likert scale which describes the knowledge, attitude and coping mechanisms of teachers at varied levels.

Meanwhile, the stressors of the teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties were identified using an interview questionnaire consisting of five (5) questions.

The researcher submitted a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent of Carcar City, Dr. Ronald G. Gutay, asking permission to conduct this study. Upon approval of the letter, the researcher purposively chose the participants of this study. They are teachers handling learners with learning difficulties as reflected in their class records, assessment tools and anecdotal records. The teacher - participants were given an informed consent to analyze the nature and target of the study. After the participant's approval, the questionnaire was given to the respondents and asked them to answer it given an ample time. Since the gathering of the data falls on COVID - 19 pandemic crisis situation, the researcher utilized varied forms of social media including facebook, messenger, gmail, yahoo mails and others to gather accurate data from the respondents.

After gathering the necessary data, they were collated, tabulated, and interpreted to reach a conclusion on the level of knowledge, attitude, stress and coping mechanisms of the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

The demographic profile of the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties are based on their educational attainment, number of years in teaching, relevant trainings and seminars attended and number of learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive setting. This is discussed in separate table.

Educational Attainment. This includes the highest educational attainment of the teachers whether they are only graduates of their bachelor's degree or pursue their post-graduate studies for personal and professional development. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent (%)
College Graduate	4	20
With Master's Units	12	60
Master's Degree Holders	4	20
Total	20	100

Table 1 presents the highest educational attainment of teachers handling students with learning difficulty. The results show that majority of the teachers have units in their master's degree program while there are only twenty percent who are only graduates of their Bachelors' degree programs and still twenty percent who are graduates of their respective master's degree courses. However, there are no teachers who did pursue any doctoral degree.

The results mean that majority of the teachers handling students with learning difficulties pursued graduate studies to improve their knowledge, skills and perceptions in handling students of varied levels and interests. The table also displays that there are already graduates of the different master's degree programs in the different universities in Cebu. On the other hand, none of the teacher respondents have enrolled in doctoral degree program. Furthermore, there are still teachers who did not enroll yet in any master's degree program after graduating from their undergraduate studies.

The findings implies that majority of the teachers manifested their desire to finish or continue professional growth as needed in their day to day encounter with the learners. Though only 20 per cent of them had graduated their master's degree, this means that in due time they will also proceed to their post-graduate studies. The 20 per cent who has not started their master's degree needs to be motivated by the administration to pursue their further studies and gain strategies, enhance capabilities and update new trends in education.

The results are in consonance with the study of Francis (2004) that teachers need more professional development programs to further suggest ways on how to handle learners with learning difficulties. Furthermore, this also gives them

background and understanding of the academic achievement and behavior of the students with learning difficulties mainstreamed in the regular classroom setting.

Number of Years in Teaching. The number of years in teaching learners with or without learning disabilities is gathered and summarized below. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Years in Teaching

Length of Service	Frequency	Percent (%)
1 - 5	8	40
6 -10	6	30
11- 15	1	5
16 - 20	1	5
21 - 25	4	20
Total	20	100

The number of years of teaching of the teachers enables them to become stronger and wiser in the teaching profession. Table 3 presents the length of service of the teachers in teaching both private and public-school students. The results show that most of the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties have one (1) to five (5) years teaching experience. This corresponds to forty percent (40%) of the total sample. This is followed by teachers with six (6) to ten (10) years in the profession which corresponds to thirty percent (30%) of the total respondents. Moreover, the results indicate that there are only few teachers handling students with learning difficulties who have eleven (11) to twenty (20) years of experience.

The results suggest that most of the novice teachers or new in the teaching industry handle students with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom. Normally, teachers encounter a lot of adjustment periods during their first years of teaching. Additionally, the results further means that some of the teachers handling students with learning difficulties are experienced enough in teaching students across levels and learning styles as they have already rendered more than ten years in surpassing all the challenges in the teaching profession.

This implies that teachers who handle learners with learning difficulty in Carcar City Division come from different ranges in terms of their teaching experience. While majority of these teachers are beginners in the profession, they are already exposed to the challenges of handling normal and with learning conditions mainstreamed in the regular classroom setting. Moreover, the results imply that they really need assistance from the administration and peers whether technical or managerial as it contributes to the stressors felt by teachers during adjustment years. On the other hand, the findings also suggest that some of the teachers in Carcar City Division who handle learners with learning difficulties are experienced already and have been exposed to various policies, agenda and programs of the Department of Education towards inclusive education.

The results affirm to the study of Busch (2020) that teachers in their first year of teaching learners with learning difficulties are faced with multiple challenges and sometimes these affected with their self - efficacy in teaching. Factors that are considered to affect the attrition rate of beginning teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities are role ambiguity, support system, school climate, administrative support, teacher preparations and student characteristics.

Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended. The data on the relevant trainings and seminars attended by the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties were gathered to determine further its relatedness to the knowledge and attitude of teachers in handling these kinds of students. The data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended

Relevant Trainings/Seminars Attended	Frequency	Percent (%)
Special Education Trainings		
With Training	7	35
Without Training	13	65
In-service Trainings		
With Training	20	100
Without Training	0	0

The training of teachers in handling students under difficulty learning circumstances is important. Table 3 reveals the trainings received by the teachers handling students with learning difficulties. The results show that only 7 or 35% of the total samples received trainings in special education while the remaining 65% did not received appropriate trainings/seminars in special education. On the other hand, one hundred percent (100%) of the teacher- respondents attended in - service trainings related to teaching and learning students in a general classroom setting. All of the aforementioned trainings are conducted in the division level.

The results mean that the teachers in Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties are provided with relevant trainings in education during in-service activities. Usually, in-service activities are given during semestral breaks and summer vacation. These are trainings conducted by the division per specific discipline. Thus, teachers in the general classroom settings are trained on how to improve their specific crafts and only few are trained in handling students with learning difficulties. Meanwhile, there are only few teachers handling learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in the regular classrooms are trained in special - education related trainings and seminars. This means that inclusive education teachers are not well - equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills on how to deal learners under difficult conditions.

These imply that majority of the teachers in Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom are not given proper trainings in special education or related trainings that would equip them on how to deal these students. While these teachers are faced with various challenges and difficulties in handling inclusive education students of various difficulties with the regular students, it is but proper to give support and technical assistance through learning action cell sessions or specific trainings in order for them to provide proper guidance to students under difficult learning conditions. Furthermore, the results also imply that it is high time for Carcar City Division and other divisions to conduct trainings to teachers handling inclusive education students to achieve higher academic performance and address concerns in providing quality education to these students. Without trainings, teachers could not also assess properly learners with learning difficulties and could not address their learning needs. These may add to their burdens as teachers of regular students also.

The results are in consonance with the findings of Rudyati, Pujaningsih & Mumpuniarti (2017) that teachers lack source of special education adequate trainings in teaching students with special needs and these add to their anxiety and pressure as teachers. Teacher's perceptions on handling students with special learning needs will also be enhanced if proper trainings are given.

Number of Learners with Learning Difficulties. Learners with special learning needs are integrated in the regular classroom settings in the different schools in Carcar City Division. The number of learners with learning difficulties are counted and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of Learners with Learning Difficulties

School	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gelacio C. Babao Memorial National High School	63	71
Roberto E. Sato Memorial National High School	15	17
Carcar Central National High School	11	12
Total	89	100

The number of learners with learning difficulties is determined in each school where the teachers handling these students are stationed. They are identified based on the anecdotal records of the teachers, assessment tools, observation notes, class records and some students who have their Persons With Disability identification cards.

The results show that out of the identified three schools catering learners with difficulties, Gelacio C. Babao Memorial National High School got the highest number with 71% of the total number of learners followed by Roberto E. Sato Memorial National High School with 17% and Carcar Central National High School with 11%. The results also reveal that the number of learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in the regular classrooms totals to eighty-nine (89) among the schools identified handling learners with learning difficulties.

The results signify that there is a high number of learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in Gelacio C. Babao Memorial National High School. They are integrated in regular classroom across all grade levels. Gelacio C. Babao

Memorial National High School is a big school with population of more than 1,000 and offering Special Education classes. Meanwhile, the results also mean that there is also an increasing number of learners with difficult learning needs in medium school like Roberto E. Sato Memorial National High School with population of of 500. These learners are mainstreamed in the regular classrooms from grade 7 to grade 10. However, Carcar Central National High School, a big school, has the lowest number of learners with learning difficulties integrated in the regular classrooms based from the data gathered.

The results connote that there is an increasing number of learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in the different schools in Carcar City division. This move is in support for Education for All to cater the rights of students with special needs for quality and accessible education for all. The results also imply that learners with learning difficulties are assessed and integrated to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude despite difficult learning conditions.

The results are consonance with the finding that learners with Special Educational Needs who are educated in regular classrooms are taught using a modified curriculum that is specifically written according to their IEP goals and objectives. (Cooc, 2019) in his study also found out that teachers were concerned because they are underequipped to meet these students' emotional, psychological, social or educational needs since they were not properly trained.

Level of Knowledge of Teachers Handling Students With Learning Difficulties

This refers to how knowledgeable the teachers are in handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive setting. The results are presented in Table 5.

The table below shows the level of knowledge of teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties as to lesson planning, preparations, technologies used to cater their learning needs and how they handle discussions with learners with special needs and regular students in one classroom. The results reveal that the indicators "follow - up learners with learning difficulties in class" and "give alternative assignments to them" got the highest weighted mean of 4.0 and verbally interpreted as "Highly Knowledgeable". This is also followed by the indicator "give assistive technology to the learners with learning difficulties" with weighted mean of 3.89 and is still highly knowledgeable. However, the indicator "give available learning materials" got the lowest weighted mean of 2.15 and is verbally described as "knowledgeable". The overall weighted mean on the level of knowledge of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties is 3.20 with verbal interpretation of "Moderately Knowledgeable".

Table 5: Level of Knowledge of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. When I prepare a lesson plan, I consider the needs of learners with learning difficulties in my class.	2.85	Moderately Knowledgeable
2. When I teach I always consider the presence of learners with learning difficulties in class.	2.95	Moderately Knowledgeable
3. I encourage learners with learning difficulties to participate in co-curricular activities.	2.95	Moderately Knowledgeable
4. I give available materials to learners with learning difficulties to make them perform equally with other students.	2.15	Knowledgeable
5. I receive adequate support from school administration when learners with difficulties are enrolled in my class.	3.60	Highly Knowledgeable
6. I devote more of my time to support learners with learning difficulties.	3.00	Moderately Knowledgeable
7. I closely follow-up the participation of learners with learning difficulties in class.	4.00	Highly Knowledgeable
8. I regularly assess learners with learning difficulties in my class.	3.30	Highly Knowledgeable
9. I am sensitive to learners with learning difficulties while teaching in my class.	3.55	Highly Knowledgeable

10. I make writing assignments adaptable to learners with learning difficulties.	3.50	Highly Knowledgeable
11. I communicate openly with parents and concerned bodies about the progress of learners with learning difficulties.	2.95	Moderately Knowledgeable
12. I encourage cooperative/collaborative learning to make all students support each other.	2.45	Knowledgeable
13. I consult special needs class teachers when I face a problem in teaching learners with learning difficulties.	2.55	Moderately Knowledgeable
14. I use multi -sensory approach while teaching learners with learning difficulties.	2.75	Moderately Knowledgeable
15. I use assistive technologies accessible to learners with learning difficulties.	3.89	Highly Knowledgeable
16. I use different concrete examples to facilitate the way learners with learning difficulties understand the concept.	3.75	Highly Knowledgeable
17. I pair learners with learning difficulties to mingle with the regular students.	3.60	Highly Knowledgeable
18. I use differentiated instruction in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties.	3.00	Moderately Knowledgeable
19. I prepare alternative assignments/ activities to make learners with learning difficulties work better.	4.00	Highly Knowledgeable
20. I allow learners with learning difficulties in class to reflect what they have learned.	3.30	Highly Knowledgeable
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.20	Moderately Knowledgeable

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 - Less Knowledgeable (LK), 1.76 – 2.50 -Knowledgeable (K), 2.51 – 3.25 - More Knowledgeable (MK), 3.26 – 4.00-Highly Knowledgeable (HK)

The results mean that the teachers are moderately learned to handle learners with learning difficulties mainstreamed in an inclusive classroom setting. They monitor the student's participation as they need close attention compared to other students in the class. The teachers also give alternative school home works to these students under inclusive education to cope up with the competencies required from their level. Moreover, the teachers are also more knowledgeable in preparing lesson plans considering the varied learning needs of students with special needs. The results also show that the teachers allow the students with learning difficulties to participate in various co - curricular and extra - curricular activities in the school. This means that they are also taught on how to socialize other than learning basic concepts and skills for survival.

Additionally, the results also reveal that the teachers are highly knowledgeable in using assistive technologies in meeting the learning demands of the learners with special needs like televisions, computers, tablets and other devices that could help the students learn despite difficult learning conditions. The teachers also use pairing technique to allow the learners with special needs mingle with the regular students. This enables both the inclusive education student and the regular student to learn from each other and appreciate each other.

On the other hand, the findings which revealed the lowest weighted mean of 2.15 which says "give available learning materials" is an indication that the respondents do not have available learning materials during the survey. However, this weakness was compensated by "giving alternative assignments" and giving "follow up to learners with learning difficulties in class" as revealed to have the highest weighted mean.

The results imply that the teachers in Carcar City division handling learners with learning difficulties use varied teaching methodologies and approaches in giving quality and accessible education to these students. This also connotes that the teachers are not only focusing on achieving targets for the regular learners but also for the learners with special needs. They are also given opportunities to participate in Deped's programs like Sports. In fact, learners with learning difficulties and with disabilities have special categories in many sports activities during Sports Meet in all levels. Furthermore, the results signify that the teachers in Carcar City Division are also maximizing opportunities for learners with learning

difficulties to learn like giving assignments at home, use technologies to improve their motivation, use collaborative learning and other strategies that could supplement the teaching and learning process.

Teachers handling Learners with Special Educational Needs mainstreamed in an inclusive classrooms were not fully prepared to handle them (Walsh, 2018). Studies show that they still want to be trained on how to properly teach this type of learners. Hence, they still want to have opportunities to create a successful inclusive classroom. The results suggest that support systems were evident such as academic, physical, psychological and parental. Remedial lessons were done to help learners with learning disabilities cope up with the necessary competencies and were supported with positive learning environment.

Attitude of Teachers Handling Learners With Learning Difficulties

This refers to the responses of the inclusive education teachers and strategies that they employ in their classes in an Inclusive classroom. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Level of Attitude of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I support the right of the learners with difficulties to learn in regular classes with other students.	3.80	Strongly Agree
2. I am interested to support learners with learning difficulties in my class.	3.75	Strongly Agree
3. It is a good practice to teach learners with difficulties in a general classroom setting (classes).	3.35	Strongly Agree
4. I will be ready to support learners with learning difficulties if I get proper training.	3.75	Strongly Agree
5. As a teacher I am comfortable to teach learners with learning difficulties with regular students.	3.05	Agree
6. I am comfortable to support learners with learning difficulties when the class is large.	2.40	Disagree
7. I appreciate learners with learning difficulties in my class as they perform equally with others.	3.80	Strongly Agree
8. I am comfortable in assessing(evaluating) learners with learning difficulties in regular classes.	3.05	Agree
9. I am sensitive to learners with learning difficulties while teaching in my class.	3.50	Strongly Agree
10. I would welcome the learners with learning difficulties in my class.	3.55	Strongly Agree
11. I feel most comfortable using my usual teaching methods when learners with learning difficulties are in my classroom.	2.85	Agree
12. I like to devote my time supporting learners with learning difficulties out of class.	3.10	Agree
13. I like learners with learning difficulties to learn separately in special class.	2.90	Agree
14. I want to teach learners with learning difficulties in general classroom setting since it is more cost effective than special education.	3.20	Agree
15. I consider teaching learners with learning difficulties as a challenge as it demands my time.	3.55	Strongly Agree
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.28	Strongly Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 - Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.76 – 2.50 -Disagree (D), 2.51 – 3.25 - Agree (A), 3.26 – 4.00 -Strongly Agree (SA)

The table presents the level of attitude of the inclusive education teachers towards inclusion of students with learning difficulties. The results show that the indicator “supporting the right of the students with difficulties to learn in regular classes with other students” got the highest weighted mean of 3.80 and is verbally interpreted as “Strongly Agree” while the indicator “being comfortable to support students with learning difficulties when the class is large” got the lowest weighted mean of 2.40 which is verbally described as “Disagree”. Hence, this gives an overall weighted mean of 3.28 with an interpretation of “Strongly Agree”.

The findings mean that the teachers strongly agree in supporting the right of learners with learning difficulties to quality and accessible education through Inclusive education. This may provide challenges to the teachers but they strongly support that children with learning difficulties get adequate training and opportunities equally with regular students. The table also reveals that they are sensitive to the student’s situation inside the class which shows that teachers are learned in handling their emotions. Furthermore, the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive education agrees that they are already comfortable while having them in a regular classroom setting. They also devote time to let students with special needs cope up with the needed lessons. The teachers also support the idea that learning in an inclusive classroom setting is cost - effective than studying in special education classes. However, the teachers disagree on including students with special educational needs to be integrated in large classes. This further means that teachers are more comfortable when these students are mainstreamed in small classes so that they can monitor them, give proper remediations and would not add to the burdens of the teachers.

The results imply that the teachers in Carcar City division strongly supports the integration of learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting. They have positive attitude towards handling these types of students with the regular ones. This also connotes that though the number of learners with special learning needs increases in Carcar City division, the teachers warmly welcome them in the regular classrooms. Students with learning difficulties also receive proper interventions from the educators and this makes their learning more worthwhile despite disabilities and difficult circumstances. On the other hand, the results also suggest that learners with special educational needs be integrated in small class sizes to properly monitor them because they have special learning needs. In the public schools in Carcar City division based on profile, one large size classroom could have 60 to 80 students. All have varied learning styles and behavior and when learners with learning difficulties are mainstreamed in this type of classes, they will not be monitored closely and be given enough attention.

The results verifies the findings of Kiliyayil (2011) who conducted a study on attitude of teachers, school heads, students with hearing impairment and regular students and results showed that the respondents have different levels of attitude towards Integrated Education Programme for the hearing impaired. Favorable attitude was shown in all dimensions although there are indicators who got unfavorable response. They have varying responses and encountered varied challenges in integrating students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting.

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers Handling Learners With Learning Difficulties

These refer to the ability of the teachers to maintain a positive sense of self-worth, positive outlook and optimism about life in general while handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting. They are categorized into cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and physical. The results are presented below.

Cognitive coping mechanisms. Table 7 manifests the data on the cognitive coping mechanisms of teachers.

Table 7: Cognitive Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Try to look on the bright side of things	3.90	Extremely Useful
2. Develop other interest outside school	3.60	Extremely Useful
3. Think about how a person you know would handle a situation	3.70	Extremely Useful
4. Concentrate on what has to be done next	3.80	Extremely Useful
5. Assure yourself that things will get better	3.80	Extremely Useful
6. Cope with different solutions on difficult issues	3.68	Extremely Useful
7. Make a plan of action and follow it.	3.50	Extremely Useful
8. Don’ think it too much.	3.10	Highly useful

9. Enlist support of the other children	3.40	Extremely Useful
10. Try to get the child to a special classroom	2.50	Useful
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.50	Extremely Useful

Legend: 1.00 – 1.75 - Somewhat Useful (SU), 1.76 – 2.50 -Useful (U), 2.51 – 3.25 - Highly useful (QU), 3.26 – 4.00 - Extremely Useful (EU)

Teaching alone is a stressful career then the advent of including learners with learning difficulties in a general classroom setting doubles the stress of the educators. The table shows that the teachers find the cognitive coping mechanisms extremely useful in coping up with stressors of handling learners with special needs with a total weighted mean of 3.50. The indicator “trying to look at the brighter side of things” got the highest weighted mean of 3.9 and is verbally interpreted as “extremely useful” while the indicator “trying to send the child to a special classroom” got the lowest weighted mean of 2.50. Other indicators show positive responses of extremely useful and highly useful in helping out the teachers release their stress through cognitive - related activities.

The results signify that the teachers find it very useful to look at the brighter side of things amidst burdens in handling learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom setting. This positive outlook enables them to assure that the stressors that they are feeling will pass through. They also develop interest outside school to combat stress, plan things out and assess on how they can improve themselves better. As respondent 2 recounted,

“Ni enroll ko sa ako Masteral para ma improve ako skills unsaun pagdala aning mga bataa ug ang ako sang pagtan-aw nila”.

(“I really enrolled in my Master’s degree program to further improve my skills and attitude towards handling students”.)

This statement connotes that teachers try to improve themselves personally and professionally to grow in teaching and in building skills. They pursue their interests outside school to gain more positive outlook in life and in teaching. However, the results suggest that the teachers only find “getting a child into special classroom” useful. This supports the idea that public high schools have limited classrooms and learners with special needs integrated in an inclusive classroom are have limited opportunities to be isolated in a special classroom. They are usually taught in regular classrooms together with their classmates. The teachers only follow up their participation and performance through varied approaches but not getting them in special classes.

Hence, the results imply that teachers in Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom are using different coping mechanisms to improve their cognitive abilities and to cope up with stressors in teaching students with special educational needs. The teachers maintain a positive self – worth amidst challenges in this profession. They also plan on how could they improve themselves and how to handle learners with special needs effectively. It is a general idea that teachers are bombarded with a lot of subject preparations, school reports, DepEd’s programs and policies henceforth, teachers must handle stress properly through conditioning their minds positively.

These findings affirm the study of Kebbi & Al - Hroub (2018) that teachers cope up stress due to heavy workloads in handling learners with learning disabilities through taking courses or workshops to improve their skill. The administration sent their teachers to workshops to update their knowledge and widen their understanding with learners with special needs.

Social coping mechanisms. The findings on the social coping mechanisms of teacher respondents are manifested in Table 8.

Table 8: Social Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Discuss your situation with your school head	3.58	Extremely Useful
2. Discuss the situation to the child’s parents	4.00	Extremely Useful
3. Seek help from teachers	4.00	Extremely Useful
4. Seek professional help for yourself	3.60	Extremely Useful

5. Ask a relative/friend for advice	3.30	Extremely Useful
6. Increase the support personnel to visit your class	3.00	Highly useful
7. Discuss situation with specialist	3.50	Extremely Useful
8. Discuss situation with colleagues	3.00	Highly useful
9. Keeping others from knowing how bad things really are	2.60	Highly useful
10. Discuss situation with the guidance counselor/designate	3.00	Highly useful
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.40	Extremely Useful

Social coping mechanisms refer to the individual's way of reducing stress through socialization and getting help from other people around them. The table above reveals that the indicators "discuss the students case to parents" and "seek help from teachers" got the highest weighted mean of perfect 4.0, extremely useful. Meanwhile, the indicator "keeping others from knowing how bad things really are" got the lowest weighted average of 2.6 which is verbally interpreted as "Highly useful". This gives a total weighted mean of 3.40 and the teacher - respondents find the social cognitive coping mechanisms extremely useful in coping up with stressors in handling students with learning difficulties.

This means that the teachers are using various social coping mechanisms to combat additional burdens and preparations in handling learners with special educational needs. They discuss the cases of the learners with learning difficulties to the parents/guardians of the students to help in supporting the child's development in homes. The results also signify that the teachers in Carcar City Division get help from other teachers in the school to ease their work while teaching both regular students and learners with learning difficulties. They usually do it during lunch break and other vacant times to seek assistance and listening ears to listen their experiences positive or negative to their co - teachers. Furthermore, they only find highly useful in keeping others know how things went bad. This is maybe because they do not want other teachers to absorb the negative energies from experiences of handling students with difficult learning needs. Additionally, the teachers also find it extremely useful to discuss situations with administrators, friends, and professional experts to release their tensions, feelings and significant experiences.

The results may imply that the teachers of Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting use several social mechanisms to cope up with stressors. They talk with professional colleagues as a strategy to reduce the stress effects to their physiological being. The results also emphasize the importance of sharing one's challenges with other people to alleviate their sense of positivity amidst challenges in handling learners with special needs.

The results are in consonance with Kebbi & H-roub (2018) that teachers handling students with disabilities seek alternative outlets like talking to co - workers, friends and family members as strategy to combat stress. They share their emotions to lighten their loads in both teaching and personal life.

Emotional coping mechanisms. Table 9 reveals the emotional coping mechanisms of the teacher respondents.

Table 9: Emotional Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Write down your feelings	2.80	Highly useful
2. Share your feelings with children in class	2.10	Useful
3. Try to keep your feelings to yourself	1.60	Somewhat Useful
4. Hope that the situation will get better soon	3.70	Extremely Useful
5. Apply for sick or vacation leave	1.40	Somewhat Useful
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	2.326	Useful

Emotional coping mechanism refers to stress resource of an individual by reducing stress through journaling and reflective thinking. The table above presents the adaptive coping mechanisms of teachers to improve their emotional well - being. The results reveal that the indicator "hoping the situation that will get better soon" got the highest weighted mean of 3.7 which is also interpreted as extremely useful as perceived by the respondents. Writing down the teacher's feelings or journaling is found to be highly useful. Meanwhile, the indicator "apply for sick or vacation leave" got the lowest weighted mean of 1.4 which is perceived by the teacher - respondents as only somewhat useful. The results also reveal

that “keeping their feelings to themselves” are somewhat useful but it got a lower weighted average of 1.6. This gives an overall weighted mean of emotional coping mechanisms of 2.326 and is verbally interpreted as only useful.

The results signify that the teachers found the emotional coping resources useful in their day - to - day experiences in handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom. The results mean that the teachers are usually consoling themselves that their challenges and difficulties will get better soon through journaling, sharing their feelings with other people around them and reflective thinking on their current practices in teaching. However, the teachers seldom apply for sick or vacation leave when burnt out from work. This follows the idea that teachers have limited leave opportunities provided by the Department of Education. Absences incurred by the teachers may have a domino effect to the performance of the teachers, school and their yearly performance rating as well. The administration also calls the attention of teachers who frequently absent from work. Additionally, keeping their feelings also are seldom done by the teachers. The previous result in social mechanisms supports this finding that teachers often share their feelings to their co - workers, friends and family to express and lighten their burdens.

The results may imply that teachers in Carcar City Division handling learners with learning difficulties use varied emotional coping resources to combat the different stressors encountered in their teaching experiences. They express themselves through journaling, sharing thoughts with peers even getting help and through thinking positively. The teachers also rarely use their leave credits to have a vacation away from workloads. This may imply that they are aware of the effects of frequent absences from their classes. Learners with learning difficulties should also be well - facilitated by the teachers because of their special needs, interests and demands.

To cope with these stressors, various coping mechanisms are also used by the teachers to solve current situations. They actively find support from family, friends, co-workers, parents and changing pedagogical approaches (Skalvik, 2007). Additionally, a positive outlook found out to have a significant help to teachers handling learners with special needs. How much less the achievement of the child, appreciation of the effort exerted should also be given consideration to enhance their motivation.

Physical coping mechanisms. Manifested in Table 10 is the physical coping mechanisms of the teacher respondents.

Table 10: Physical Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Take some form of exercise	3.70	Extremely Useful
2. Spend leisure time with co-teachers in the beach or mall	2.20	Useful
3. Go to salon and beauty clinics	1.70	Somewhat Useful
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	2.526	Highly useful

Table 10 reveals the physical coping mechanism of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting. The results show that the overall weighted mean is 2.526 which is interpreted as “Highly useful”. Moreover, the indicator “taking some exercises” got the highest average of 3.7 followed by the indicator “spending leisure time with co - teachers in the beach” with weighted mean of 2.2 (useful) and the indicator “going to salon/beauty clinic) got the lowest weighted mean of 1.7 (somewhat useful).

The results indicate that the teachers also use various physical coping resources to relax and get away from stressors in handling learners with learning difficulties. As perceived by the teacher - respondents, doing exercises by any means is exceedingly useful in reducing stress and anxiety. They also find it useful to spend time with co - teachers in the beach or malls. This further means that they do not often do this maybe because of time constraints, financial resources and too much workloads. For most teachers, going to the beaches are often taken during summer breaks. Thus, the teachers iterated that spending time with the teachers are only useful to cope up with the stressors in the teaching professions. Additionally, the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties find it somewhat useful to go to salon and beauty clinics to unwind. This finding supports the idea that the public-school teacher has a monthly gross income of at least 20,000 pesos every month. There are still deductions from this amount and this gives presumptions that teachers seldom go to salons and beauty clinics to relieve stress and anxiety in teaching especially with difficult learning needs.

The results may imply that the public-school teachers still spent time to cope up with stressors encountered in handling students with learning disabilities through physical coping mechanisms despite financial constraints and limited resources. They still have time to go to salons, clinics, beaches and do recreational activities to take a break from the different stressors in teaching learners with special needs. This is to help them manage stress that soon can affect teaching effectiveness.

The results of Chen and Chong (2010) assert the findings of this study that teachers manage stress by relaxing, socializing with friends, watching television and even do exercises to maintain a healthy level of stress in the body. This is also done to improve teaching practice and express their emotions on their experiences with the difficulties encountered while handling students with learning needs.

Spiritual Coping Mechanisms. Data on spiritual coping mechanisms is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Spiritual Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Practice meditation	3.30	Extremely Useful
2. Seek religious support	3.10	Highly useful
3. Draw on past experiences	3.10	Highly useful
4. Maintain a sense of humor	3.70	Extremely Useful
5. Use medication/alcohol	1.30	Somewhat Useful
6. Seek transfer to other school	1.10	Somewhat Useful
7. Join religious organizations	3.00	Highly useful
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	2.586	Highly useful

Stress is an external condition that affects our mind and body negatively. Thus, efficiency of teachers as well as their behavior and values is affected with stress. Table 11 shows how teachers handling students with learning difficulties use different spiritual or philosophical coping resources in managing levels of stress that could have adverse effects to the teaching and learning process. The results reveal that the teacher - respondents find it extremely useful to maintain a sense of humor and practice meditation with weighted means of 3.7 and 3.3 respectively. Other indicators are highly useful for the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties to seek religious support, draw on past experiences, and join religious affiliations to combat stressors in the teaching career. However, they find it least useful to use medication or alcohol and seek transfer to other schools to maintain stress level.

The results mean that the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting practice varied spiritual coping acts to feel relax from the challenges in teaching learners with special needs. While teaching itself is a stressful career, teachers in Carcar City Division still considers laughing or having sense of humor a good way to relieve stress. Filipinos are fond of throwing jokes amidst difficulties. The teachers also join religious affiliations to stay connected with God recognizing that a superior being exists and a source of strength for everything. However, the teachers seldom use medicines and alcoholic beverages to feel relax. Seeking transfer also got the lowest weighted mean because this opportunity is less likely possible to happen. The Department of Education has guidelines and considerations before a teacher could transfer from one station to another. For most teachers, this move cannot be done easily when they feel unsatisfied and exhausted with their teaching profession.

The results signify that special needs and general classroom teachers use several spiritual coping strategies to offset from stress. These coping ways may improve the internal well - being of the teachers. When teachers suffer from too much stress, this could affect their health status, mental wellness and teaching effectiveness. Teachers handling learners with learning difficulties in Carcar City Division are bombarded with workloads, preparations and constant monitoring to both regular and special students. When stress is well - managed by teachers, job satisfaction and high performance are achieved. The teachers also consider the presence of Supreme Being that comforts a weak heart. As respondent 5 said,

“Usahay, kapuy gyud pero we just pray and have an open mind na musabut sa tanan tungud kay tawo pud sila ug hinimu sa Guinoo.”

(“Sometimes, we feel exhausted and we just pray to have an open mind to understand everything and serving students with special needs are God’s beautiful creations”.)

Kebbi & Al - Hroub (2018) also found out that teachers who have good interpersonal, social, psychological and well - rounded minds enjoy better job satisfaction and strong commitment towards achieving career goals. Teachers who work in a less stressful environment perform better than in a stressful environment.

Table 12: Summary of the Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Coping Mechanism	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Cognitive	3.50	Extremely Useful
Social	3.40	Extremely Useful
Emotional	2.326	Useful
Physical	2.526	Highly Useful
Spiritual	2.586	Highly Useful
Overall Weighted Mean	2.868	Highly Useful

Table 12 reveals the summary of the coping mechanism of teachers in handling the different stressors encountered while teaching learners with learning difficulties. The results show that the overall weighted mean is 2.868 which is interpreted as Highly Useful. This means that the teachers consider the different cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual coping strategies highly useful in dealing with learners with learning difficulties in the classrooms.

This implies that the teachers manage their stressors well using the varied coping resources. They develop their positivity and well – being in order to cope up with the adversities encountered in teaching especially in dealing learners with learning difficulties and of different levels in terms of their performances in the school. This also signifies that teachers in Carcar City Division already know how to handle stressors in teaching using myriad of coping strategies.

The results agree to the findings of Sanchez (2019) that teachers use varied coping resources to combat stress in their teaching career while also balancing their personal lives. Teaching learners with learning difficulties is really stressful and this needs teachers to be resourceful and knowledgeable in handling varied stressors to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities as teachers.

Significant Relationships Between Teachers' Demographic Profile and Some Identified Variables

Teachers' knowledge on handling LSEs and their socio – demographic profiles were correlated in this study to determine if the two variables have relationships.

Demographic Profile and Level of Knowledge

Significant relationship between the profile and level of knowledge of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties was analyzed using Chi - square Test of Independence. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. This is presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Demographic Profile and Level Of Knowledge

Demographic Profile	Knowledge		Strength	Decision	Interpretation
	p-value	r-value			
Highest Educational Attainment	0.018	0.38	Slightly positive	Reject H ₀	Significant
Teaching Experience	0.000	0.41	Moderately positive	Reject H ₀	Significant

Level of Significance = 0.05

The table above reveals the significant relationship between level of knowledge of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties and the teachers' highest educational attainment and teaching experience. The results show that there is a positive significant correlation between teacher's level of knowledge and highest educational attainment with p - value of 0.018 lesser than the level of significance of 0.05. Meanwhile, with p - value of 0.000 lesser than the level of significance of 0.05, there is a positive significant relationship between teacher's knowledge and years of experience in teaching.

This indicates that if a teacher's educational attainment increases, his/her level of knowledge in handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting increases and vice - versa. Hence, teachers must pursue post - graduate studies to improve its knowledge and skills in properly handling and teaching learners with special needs in the classroom. Additionally, the positive relationship between level of knowledge and teacher's years of experience in teaching further means that a teacher's experience has detrimental effect to how he/she handles learners with learning difficulties. As one ages, he/she has more understanding of the situations around them and shows more compassion towards other people because of the different challenges one encountered and surpassed.

With the data provided in the profile of the respondents that majority of the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties have units in their Masteral Degree programs. This goes to show that the teachers in Carcar City Division pursue higher studies to improve themselves personally and professionally. Handling students under difficult learning circumstances entails a lot of hardships with the given workloads and burdens while also handling regular students. Post - graduate studies may add additional theories, background knowledge and underlying principles in handling students with special needs in the classroom. Moreover, the teaching experience is also related to the knowledge of the teachers. The greater the number of years in teaching, the higher is their level of understanding on the principles of the behavior of learners with learning difficulties inside the classroom and vice - versa.

The results are affirmative of the findings of Essa & El - Zeftawy (2015) that the challenge of full integration of children with learning difficulties in the society can easily be attained when teachers possess better knowledge and skills that lead them on handling these students properly.

Demographic Profile and Level of Attitude. Highest educational attainment of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties and their years of experience were correlated to their level of attitude in handling learners with special needs. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Demographic Profile and Level Of Attitude

Demographic Profile	Attitude		Strength	Decision	Interpretation
	p-value	r-value			
Highest Educational Attainment	0.016	0.45	Moderately positive	Reject H ₀	Significant
Teaching Experience	0.000	0.521	Moderately positive	Reject H ₀	Significant

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 14 shows the significant relationship between the profile and level of attitude of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties. The results reveal that computed p - value between highest educational attainment and level of attitude of teachers is 0.016 which is lesser than level of significance of 0.05 hence, significant. The correlation of value is 0.45 and interpreted as positively substantial correlated. The results mean that the educational attainment of teachers has bearings on the attitude of teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties. This suggests that the higher is the level of educational attainment of teachers, the more positive is their attitude in understanding and coping up with the challenges in managing learners with special learning needs in an inclusive classroom. The more teachers pursue their post - graduate studies and strive to improve themselves, the more positive is their attitude in facilitating learners with difficulties in the classrooms.

In addition, between years of teaching experience of teachers and their level of attitude in embracing Inclusive Education, the computed p - value of 0.000 is lesser than the level of significance of 0.05. This shows that there is a significant relationship between the two aforementioned variables. With r - value of 0.521, this shows that there is a substantial correlation between years of teaching experience and their attitude on managing students with learning difficulties.

The data mean that the longer the years rendered by the teacher in the teaching profession, the more positive is their attitude in facilitating and understanding demands and interests of the teachers learners with special needs in an inclusive classroom setting. This positive attitude over the years of teaching would influence on how the teacher would treat students with learning difficulties in the classroom.

The results may imply that Carcar City Division teachers facilitating learners with special needs in the classroom have favorable attitude in embracing difficulties of Inclusive Education and giving varied interventions to these learners because of their years of teaching experience and high educational attainment. This further suggests that teachers with longer years in teaching should handle learners with learning difficulties because they already understand the nature of inclusive education and how to properly manage various stressors in handling both regular students and students with special needs. Furthermore, the data also signify that the school heads and other administrators should encourage teachers to study post - graduate programs to widen their understanding and broaden their knowledge on how to properly handle learners with learning difficulties.

The findings of this study disagree on the results of Emam and Mohamed (2011) that teachers' years of experience is not significantly related to their level of attitude towards inclusion. Teachers with more years of experience show less positive attitude than those who have few years of experience.

Demographic Profile and Level of Usage of Coping Mechanisms. Highest educational attainment of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties and their years of experience were correlated to their level of usage of the different cognitive, social, physical, emotional and spiritual coping mechanisms to combat the different stressors in handling students with special needs. The results are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Demographic Profile and Coping Mechanisms

Demographic Profile	Coping Mechanism			Decision	Interpretation
	p-value	r-value	Strength		
Highest Educational Attainment	0.020	0.48	Moderately positive	Reject H_0	Significant
Teaching Experience	0.000	0.60	Moderately positive	Reject H_0	Significant

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 15 shows the significant relationship between socio - demographic profile and coping mechanisms of the teachers on how they handle the different stressors in teaching learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom. The results reveal that between highest educational attainment and average coping mechanisms of teachers, the computed p - value is 0.020 lesser than alpha of 0.05, hence, significant. Likewise, the table shows that there is a significant relationship between years of experience and coping mechanism with p - value of 0.000. Both have moderate/substantial positive correlation.

The results mean that the higher the level of educational attainment and years of experience of the teachers, the higher is their level of coping mechanisms. This suggests that a teacher handling student with learning difficulties must also pursue post - graduate studies to study more about the different coping mechanisms on how to manage stress properly. This could be physical, social, emotional, cognitive or spiritual means as coping resources. The longer their years of teaching and in handling different attitudes and levels of students also widens their horizons on how to properly use varied coping mechanisms to combat stressors in life and in teaching.

The findings may connote that teachers in Carcar City Division who handle learners with learning difficulties are knowledgeable on how to appropriately use myriad of coping references to cope up with stress that soon may affect teaching effectiveness and their well - being. This positive results on utilizing coping mechanisms may also be associated to their dedication in pursuing their masteral degree programs and years of experience in teaching. Hence, teachers must be encouraged to enroll post - graduate courses to understand more on how to handle learners with learning difficulties and how to properly adapt Inclusive education in the educational arena. Teachers also with already teaching experience may be chosen to handle students with special needs in an inclusive because of their experiences and they already adjust to how Department of Education works in the system.

The results are in consonance with Kebbi & H-roub (2018) that teachers who enjoy attending courses and workshops can easily cope with the effects of stress caused by too much demand and workload of handling learners with learning difficulties. The authors also opined in their study to deploy experienced teachers especially with special education background to help learners get adequate education under Special Needs Education system.

Knowledge, Level of Attitude and Coping Mechanisms. Teacher's knowledge and attitude were correlated to how they use the different coping mechanisms to combat stress in handling learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom setting. The results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Knowledge, Level of Attitude And Coping Mechanisms

	Coping Mechanism		Strength	Decision	Interpretation
	p-value	r-value			
Knowledge	0.049	0.539	Moderately positive	Reject H ₀	Significant
Level of Attitude	0.041	0.797	Highly positive	Reject H ₀	Significant

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 16 presents the correlation between teachers' level of knowledge and attitude and their level of using varied coping mechanisms to combat stressors in handling learners with learning difficulties. Between knowledge and level of usefulness of coping resources, computed p - value is 0.049 which is lesser than the level of significance of 0.05, ergo, significant. Its correlation value of 0.539 suggests that there is a moderately positive correlation between the two variables. Meanwhile, between level of attitude of teachers handling learners with special needs and the level of usefulness of coping mechanisms, the results also show that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. Its correlation value is 0.797 which indicates a high positive correlation between attitude and level of usage of coping resources.

The positive correlation between level of knowledge of teachers in handling learners with learning difficulties and their level of usage of the varied coping mechanisms suggests that teachers with high level of knowledge have high level of usage of the different coping resources whether cognitive, social, emotional, physical or spiritual. This indicates that they have several options on how to release their stressors and relax from the burden of handling learners with learning difficulties. Meanwhile, the positive correlation between level of attitude and level of usage of coping resources of teachers means that teachers who have positive attitude in embracing inclusive education have high level of utilization of coping resources to relieve their stress. The previous results revealed that the teachers do physical exercises, do journaling, think positively, share experiences with colleagues and practice spiritual meditations to take a break from the difficulties and challenges encountered in teaching learners with learning difficulties.

The results signify that teachers in Carcar City Division facilitating learners with learning difficulties coped up well with the different stressors caused by too much workloads, challenges and difficulties encountered because of their sufficient background in handling learners with special needs and their positive attitude in embracing the expectations and challenges in providing quality and accessible education to the students with learning difficulties mainstreamed in an inclusive learning environment.

The results affirm to Dapudong (2014) that teachers have favorable attitude towards Inclusive Education. Teachers foster acceptance and understanding on the varied differences of the students. This positive attitude supports favorable experiences of students in an inclusive classroom setting.

Stressors Experienced by Teachers Handling Learners With Learning Difficulties

Interviews were conducted to get the varying stressors of teachers handling learners with learning difficulties among the research participants. The following shows the results of this study.

Stressors Experienced by Teachers Handling Learners with Learning Difficulties. Stressors refer to the Imbalance between the demands encountered by the inclusive education teachers and his/her available resources to cope up with its changing demands. Stressors of the teachers were identified through an interview questionnaire. The results are clustered into themes:

Theme No. 1. Administrative Concerns

The participants identified some administrative issues and concerns towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in the public schools of Carcar City division. These are related to allocation of funds, addition of workloads, inadequate

trainings and provision of technical assistance. The following are support feedback from the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties:

Respondent 1 said, *“Usa ka challenge ako na encounter kay support from the admin kay bisag training wla man ka provide”*.

(“One of the challenges that I have encountered is lack of support from the administration. I have not even attended a training about learners with special needs.”)

Respondent 2 also supported this statement by saying *“Seminars were only for selected teachers. I have also concerns on provision of learning materials for students with learning difficulties in my classes. I have to make one for them and that’s an additional burden”*.

Respondent 7 also agreed that, *“Ang admin kay wala kahatag ug technical assistance kay wla man sad sila kahibaw gud”*.

(“The administration does not provide technical assistance because they too don’t have the capacity”.)

These statements expressed by the participants signify that they lack support from the instructional leaders and division personnel in equipping them with knowledge and skills on how to properly handle learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive learning environment. It can also be deduced from the responses that they need relevant trainings in special education to be confident and ease their difficulties in handling special students in the classrooms mainstreamed with other regular students. Additionally, the administration must also be trained so that they can provide technical assistance and learning materials to the teachers.

Respondent 7 remarked, *“Naka attend ko ug training kausa unsaun pagdala aning mga studyanteha pero sa ako lang, dili gyud enough kay lisud dad un sila”*.

(“I attended a training once on handling students with disabilities but I think it is not enough for me to understand more about the strategies in handling students with special needs”.)

This further implies that the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties seek support from the school leaders because handling learners with special needs requires more attention and proper responses. Usually, students with learning difficulties need additional time, focus and understanding because of their behavior, changing needs and emotional instability. They also need more trainings to equip them with the necessary attributes on how to handle these types of learners.

The results are supported by Capella University (2013) that teachers lack support from the administrative authorities and even have non - instructional responsibilities that burdened them with too much responsibilities.

Theme No. 2: Parental Issues

The participants expressed their concerns on dealing with the parents and how parents make follow - ups with their children with learning difficulties at home. Among the concerns are barriers of communication, socio - economic situation, unwillingness of the parents to cooperate with the school and not knowledgeable on how to deal with their children with academic concerns. The following statements are support responses from the teacher - participants:

“The parents are supportive but they do not know how to handle their child at home and are less likely to make follow - ups with school works”.

“They lack cooperation and interest since they are too busy with their business, work or other personal matters that they don’t have time to guide their children at home”.

“Parents are denial of their child’s situation and it’s a big barrier for me because I can’t reach up to them.

“Parents lack support and only rely to the teachers. This problem should be addressed because teachers too have other classes”.

It can be deduced from the above statements that teachers encountered stressors on how the parents take charge of their children with learning difficulties in their academics. Learners with learning difficulties need constant follow - up and attention because of their special needs. Parents at home must help teachers in developing the child’s knowledge and

skills for them to survive when they get older and choose their paths. The parents normally rely on teacher's capability in handling their children and this sometimes hinders the child in achieving their maximum potential.

The results signify that administrators of schools catering students with learning difficulties must constantly communicate to their parents and conduct seminar - workshops on how they could monitor their children and help the school in the delivery of quality and accessible education to these students with special needs. Furthermore, to help teachers cope with the stressors in dealing with parental issues, administrators and school leaders must help them in reaching out with the child's parents to reduce their too much workloads in handling both regular and learners with learning difficulties.

The results are in consonance with the findings of Capella University (2013) that some parents of children with special needs fail to provide them with adequate care. Disinterested parents also have less involvement with their child's education. They have negative attitude and often are denial with the child's situation.

Theme No. 3: Behavioral Issues of Learners with Learning Difficulties

The participants expressed their issues on the varied behaviors of students with special needs in an inclusive learning environment. Mostly, big schools offer Inclusive Education and students with learning difficulties are mainstreamed in big class sizes. As Respondent 10 recounted,

"Another roadblock is when these kinds of students are not well - behaved. Oftentimes, they tend to cause trouble in the class. Since they find it hard to understand the lesson, they poke their classmates and do side conversations to catch the attention of the teacher".

This shows that learners with learning difficulties contribute to the stressors of the teachers because of their inappropriate behaviors in class. Learners with learning difficulties are defined with very low performance in academics and seek immediate attention.

This also implies that they manifest uninterested behavior in class and this caused too much difficulty for teachers handling students with special needs and regular classes. Hence, teachers must have reduced workloads to properly monitor these types of students.

Among the stressors of the teachers in a regular classroom are irregular support from the student's parents, behavioral problems of the students and demands of the system from the teachers handling both regular and special students (Sanchez, 2019). These factors are also correlated with lack of support from the administration which often leads to teachers' burnouts. This is just one of the most challenging jobs teachers have in a regular classroom with students with learning difficulties.

4. CONCLUSION

The results evidently show that the teachers' knowledge, attitude, and the use of Coping Mechanisms in managing stressors play a vital role in the success of dealing learners with learning difficulty in an inclusive setting. They also consider coping resources are highly significant in addressing the needs of learners with special educational needs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion derived from the findings, the following recommendations are given:

1. Specialized trainings in curriculum and instruction which includes the use of Strategic Intervention Materials (SIM) and appropriate assessment strategies in Special Education may be done to the teachers handling learners with learning difficulties to enhance their competencies on how to facilitate learners with special needs integrated in an inclusive setting.
2. School and division administrators may conduct seminars and programs on the varied coping resources teachers, knowledge enhancement and emotional stability awareness to help teachers cope up with the different stressors encountered in teaching learners with learning difficulties.
3. Policies may also be crafted to improve the knowledge and attitude of Inclusive education teachers towards learners with difficult learning needs.

4. Additional SPED center may also be constructed to help learners in mountainous areas avail the services of Special Education.
5. This study also recommends for capacitating the teachers in making research – based interventions to properly address the needs of the learners with learning difficulties.

REFERENCES

- [1] Amstad, M., & Muller, C. (2020, January 22). Students' Problem Behaviors as Sources of Teacher Stress in Special Needs Schools for Individuals With Intellectual Disabilities. *Frontiers in Education*.
- [2] Brown, J. (2019, March 12). What Really Causes Special Education Teachers to Burn Out? *Education Week*.
- [3] Busch, T.W. (2020). Teaching students with learning disabilities: Perceptions of a first - year teachers, all about learning disabilities and adhd. *LD Online*, <https://www.ldonline.org/article/5791/>
- [4] Chhabra, S. et.al. (2010). Inclusive education in Botswana: the perceptions of school teachers. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 20(4), 219 - 228
- [5] Cooc, N. (2019). Teaching students with special needs: International trends in school capacity and the need for teacher professional development. *Elsevier*, 27-41.
- [6] Dapudong, R. (2014). Teachers' knowledge and attitude towards inclusive education: Basis for an enhanced professional development program, *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 4(4)
- [7] Department of Education. (2017, 17 November). Inclusion: Core principle of the k to 12 basic education program. Quezon City, Philippines.
- [8] Elbaum, B. E., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M. T., & Moody, S. W. (1999). Grouping practices and reading outcomes for students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 65, 399-415.
- [9] Essa, H. A.-G., & El-Zeftawy, A. M. (2015). Teachers' knowledge, attitudes and reported strategies to assess and support students with learning difficulties. *IOSR Journal of Nursing and Health Science (IOSR-JNHS)*, 79-92.
- [10] Fuchs, D. & Vaughn, S. (2014). What is intensive instruction and why is it important? *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 46, 13-18
- [11] Friedman, I. (2000). Burnout: shattered dreams of impeccable professional performance, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 56, 595 - 606
- [12] Hopkins, M.L. (2014). The sources of work stress and coping resources for high school teachers in the Gauteng Province within different career stages
- [13] Kebbi, M. & H-Roub, A. (2018). Stress and coping strategies used by special education and general classroom teachers. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 33(1), 34 – 61
- [14] Kumar, J. & Dev, S. (2015). Teacher's perception towards integration of learning-disabled students into regular classroom - a study in Dubai and Abu Dhabi schools. *2nd Global Conference on Business and Social Sciences*, 17 – 18
- [15] Logsdon, A. (2020, July 15). How to Teach a Child With Learning Disabilities. *Very Well Family*.
- [16] Marks, J. (2021, March 6). Medical Definition of Learning disability. *MedicineNet*.
- [17] Mittelmark, M. B., & Bauer, G. F. (2016). *The Handbook of Salutogenesis*. NCBI.
- [18] Muega, M. G. (2019, May). Inclusive education in the Philippines: Through the eyes of teachers, administrators, and parents of children with special needs. *ResearchGate*, pp. 5-28.
- [19] O'Connor, E., Yasik, A., & Horner, S. (2016). Insights in Learning Disabilities. *SAGE Publications*, 7-18.
- [20] OSERO, P. O. (2016). Challenges Teachers Encounter In Implementing Inclusive Education In Public Primary Schools in Kenya. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*.

- [21] Rudiwati, S. et. al. (2017). Teachers' knowledge and experience dealing with students with learning disabilities in inclusive elementary school, *Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research*, Volume 66, 272 - 278
- [22] Sanchez, S. R. (2019). *Lived Experiences of Inclusive Education Students with Intellectual Disabilities*. Cebu City: Cebu Normal University.
- [23] Schwartz, A. E., Hopkins, B. G., & Stiefel, L. (2021). The Effects of Special Education on the Academic Performance of Students with Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management*, 480-520.
- [24] Udgaonkar, S. R. (2018). Influence of Gender and Age of Teachers on Teaching: Students Perspective. *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences*, 2436-2441.
- [25] Vergou, M., et.al. (2018). Learning disabilities and disruptive behavior: Research of observing students in primary school. *International Journal of School and Cognitive Psychology*, 5(3)
- [26] Walsh, M. (2018, May). *Dominican University of California*. Retrieved from Dominican Scholar: <https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2018.EDU.ST.01>