

# Pillars of Strength: Meeting the Demands of Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) in Surigao City National High School

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**Abstract:** This sequential exploratory research was methodologically separated into two phases - the qualitative and quantitative. On its qualitative phase, certain thematic constructs were generated to provide themes on the lived experiences of the learners with special educational needs. Three (3) informants were interviewed from the Junior High School and two (2) from the Senior High School categorized as hearing impaired individuals who were placed under the K-12 Curriculum. They were in full inclusion with the regular students and were treated as regular learners. Problems encountered by these LSENs include like seeking help from others on their lesson, teachers' lack of knowledge on using sign language, lack of resources, and being bullied. However, the support of parents, regular teachers and other stakeholders were extensive consistent to the vision-mission-goals of Department of Education (DepEd) in achieving the increased commitment and resiliency among learners with special needs. While this study was designed as an empirical study with certain methodology, the process showed the integration of the two phases- the qualitative and quantitative phases leading to the development of four major themes like the need for *sign language training for teachers, development of school policies on discrimination and bullying, assistance on their provisions, and full acceptance.*

**Keywords:** Special Education, school, regular teachers, inclusion.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of inclusive education has become one of the significant core principles of the K to 12 Basic Education Program which include inclusion for everyone, responsiveness to right, and sincerity to context. It also supports the mandate of the Department of Education (DepEd) which is to protect and to promote the rights of all citizens or individuals to quality education at all levels, and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible as emphasized in Article 14, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution. Constituting to this inclusive education are programs for the Gifted and Talented, Indigenous Peoples, Madrasah Education, Special Education, Alternative Learning System, and Learners under Difficult Circumstances. However, with its varying components and concerns, this study focused only to Special Education which based on interviews, experiences and research, the school had a poor implementation of the program due to less training among regular teachers, lack of curriculum adaptation, and the lack of physical facilities and equipment that can support the learning of learners with special educational needs (Ruaya, 2019). This supported to the results of the study of Carrington (2020) that challenges on the implementation of SPED program included the lack of resources and infrastructure, poverty, geographical challenges, preparation school leaders and teachers, importance of local, cultural, and historical context, and policy borrowing that may be driven by foreign and international relations.

### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusion education is when all students regardless of any challenges are placed in age-appropriate learning to receive high quality instruction, interaction, and support. According to Plows and Whitburn (2017), the underpinning of emergent

field of inclusive education is the ideology that everyone can participate in learning and teaching and that the culture and organization of learning environments complement democratic and free citizenship. Greenstein (2016) supported such view that inclusive education are norms and standards of supporting children to better understand themselves, their world and their relation to others in the other world, while taking into account the full range of human embodiment and support needs.

In the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Actions on Special Needs Education as cited by Dreyer (2017), the concept of inclusive education in the school is described as *the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of difficulties they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities.*

According to Walton and Moonsamy (2015), the school must see to it that learners with special needs truly belong by simply not excluding them due to untransformed behaviors, attitudes, cultural differences and disabilities. With their meaningful participation from school and community (Watkins & Donnely, 2013), teachers must be able to create a warm and welcoming classroom for all and must use an inclusive curriculum that is suitable for all kinds of learners which are interactive, rich and acknowledge multi-intelligences (Lawrence & Brown, 2015). Inclusive education does not focus only to students with disabilities (Ainscow et al., 2006) but also to possible inclusion, thus, a systematic approach must be employed towards raising the achievements of all learners, as well as the overall system of the SPED implementation (Watkins and Meijer, 2016).

As bodied also in Republic Act 7277 known as Magna Carta for Disabled Person, the State shall ensure that disabled persons are provided with adequate access to quality education and ample opportunities to develop their skills. It shall also take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all disabled persons. It shall be unlawful for any learning institution to deny a disabled person admission to any course it offers by reason of handicap or disability. Further, it stressed that *the State shall take into consideration the special requirements of disabled person in the formulation of educational policies and programs. It shall encourage learning institutions to take into account the special needs of disabled persons with respect to the use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements, and other pertinent considerations.*

With the foregoing facts on inclusivity, it still supports the claim that no children are left behind regardless of their learning disabilities. As explained also in DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017 which emphasized the gender responsive basic education policy, such no rejection policy fits to inclusive education where learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic, or other conditions are accommodated. With “zero reject policy” of DepEd, no learners are deprived of their education and learning, however, the challenge is placed among teachers on their behavioral problems and manifestations (National Association of School Psychologists, 2017).

In the Philippines, out of 84.4 million Filipinos, approximately 5.486 million (13%) are individuals with special needs. Around 4.8% are provided with appropriate educational services, but the 95.2% of those with exceptionalities are unserved. In 1995 to 1996 about 80,000 special needs children were enrolled, 156,270 by school year 2004 to 2005: 77,152 were mentally gifted, 79,118 were children with disabilities; 40,260 learning disabilities, 11,597 hearing impaired, 2,670 visually impaired, 12,456 intellectually disabled, 5,112 behavior issues, 760 orthopedically disabled, 5,172 children with autism, 912 speech defectives, 142 chronically ill, and 32 children with cerebral palsy (Suarez, 2018).

Schools or SPED centers become helpful in addressing the needs of these special learners. Through DepEd Order No. 27, s. 1997, all divisions are required to organize at least one SPED Center to cater to children with special needs. As of February 2017, DepEd has recognized a total of 648 SPED centers in the Philippines and regular schools offering the program—471 of which cater to elementary students and 177 are provided for secondary education to students.

In Surigao City Division, there are two (2) central schools that cater to the special educational needs of these learners through its Special Education Program (SPED) - the Mariano Espina Memorial Central Elementary School, located in Brgy. Taft, Surigao City and Surigao City National High School located at Brgy. San Juan. With the aim of inclusivity, these schools with special children became successful in the implementation of the program, however, met challenges

along with the learners, curriculum, learning resources and delivery, assessment, environment, teachers' development, partnerships, and governance support.

It is clear, therefore, that special children have special needs and from that, the Special Education (SPED) Program of the DepEd must strive to address issues and concerns regarding special education learning especially to learners who are the primary participants in the curriculum development and planning. As Special Education becomes the newest agenda in inclusive education (Kauffman, et.al., 2017), the researchers were interested in finding out how these children reached out in spite their adversities and how care was more extended by the school, parents, community partners, and stakeholders in support to their needs as special learners.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

While access to education as a human right is globally understood and sought after, schools and other institutions compete using their educational investments to foster scientific innovation, inclusive education has only recently attained the status of a global norm where charity, welfare, and rehabilitation are provided among children with special needs (Powell, 2015).

In addition to assurances of civil rights of students with disabilities, other legislation exists that addresses educational rights. The Philippine Constitution of 1986 stipulated the right of every Filipino to enjoy the right to education regardless of age, ethnic group, and sex, regional and cultural differences even by physical, mental, social, and behavioral differences. This was also orchestrated by DepEd in their "Education for All Policy" (EFA) where learners with special needs must be understood as the result of partnership with educational institutions and interactive processes and may not be abridged to embody differences because of their conditions. Environmental and attitudinal barriers must also be removed where ableism is not accepted to schools and teachers must therefore provide harmonious relationships like accessible and inclusive free classrooms.

Further, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, children with specific learning disabilities are hard to deal it, but the creation of special education programs that support cognitive, emotional and social development (Schwab, Susanne, et.al., 2015) are very helpful in developing their academic skills, self-help skills, social proficiency, positive attitude, and self-confidence. In the Philippines, DepEd issued DECS Order No. 26 s. 1997 which states *in support of the implementation of the Republic Act 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) and to achieve the target set for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons that 75% of the 4 million children with disabilities should provide equal educational opportunities, special needs education shall be institutionalized in all schools, that the aim of the institutionalizing is to provide access to basic education among children with special needs through the formal system and other alternative delivery services in education.*

Similarly, DepEd released guidelines for schools which shall be observed in institutionalizing special needs education which special children whether mentally or physically disabled, deformed, autistic, or different in any other way — should never be rejected, either when conceived, when born, or when they reach adulthood. Their lives are a clear testimony to the fact that each person, no matter how weak and vulnerable, is a gift from God and they should be supported by people and other external partners (Matthew, 2015). The plan laid also by the educational department supported the results of the study based from the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children (2015) which children with disabilities should be cared since they are the most vulnerable to suffer from physical and humiliating environment (Council for the Welfare of Children, 2016).

Malipot (2018) stressed that Special Education (SPED) is a continuing program in the department, thus, its expenses are lodged under the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) along with the other programs. External partners are necessary to sustain the program and its relevant needs such as the enhancement of their progressive curriculum, instructional materials that are needs-based and equipment and facilities. In the 2019 proposed budget, the P562-million was the SPED budget which became a program support fund for schools with SPED learners through the allotment of P1,000 for each of the 400,732 learners with special education needs (LSEs); P160 million for learner development activities, training, educational visits, camp activities, sports, learning participation and SPED-related activities and P140 million for procurement of instruction and reference materials, early intervention materials, science manipulative materials and other assessment tools.

In this research study, developmental disabilities among learners were being studied like hearing impaired from Surigao City National High School. According to Krista (2011), it is common for children with developmental disabilities to have problems with their behavior because of their deficiency. If a child has deficits in language and social skills, it can significantly impact the way they need to be parented. Not only is it important for their education, but it is also important for managing their behavior and caring them. Thus, it is very much important that they are managed well and should not be labelled as “*curse or punishment*” for parents, and “*shameful, embarrassing, and abnormal*” for others. It is also important that parents with hearing impaired children or even disabled in nature should be able to provide interventions that are consistent and predictable, creative, and innovative of their limitations, supportive to accommodation and modification in their educational programs, careful to handle their frustrations, (Palencia, 2020).

### ***Hearing Impairment***

This research study looked at the case of learners with hearing loss or hearing impairment. As emphasized by Lowe (2016), these learners may have poor pronunciation, as they are largely unable to hear their own voice or the voices of others. The deaf ESL learner lacks access to a primary form of the L1", arguing that as such "the design of typical ESL programs, with their initial emphasis on conversational English, is not appropriate". In addition, teachers need to be aware of the placement of hearing impaired students in their classroom, as these students may find it difficult to understand instructions or explanations if they cannot see the lips of their teacher moving. Teachers may need to reinforce spoken instructions or explanations with visual cues such as board work or pointing to relevant sections in their textbook. Focus on reading and writing for deaf students is both beneficial and attainable (Kontra, et al. 2015), and that the use of sign language can help deaf students in their foreign language learning.

Further, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), hearing impairment is "*an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a person or child's educational performance.*" It also includes a range of difficulties with hearing, including deafness. People may be born with reduced hearing or may lose all or part of it due to accident or illness. It can range from mild to profound, and some people may be able to hear certain frequencies but not others, so that increased loudness does not necessarily result in greater clarity. Some people may rely on lip/speech reading to communicate, and some may rely on sign language or a combination of both while many others may prefer the use hearing aids.

### ***Parents' Responsibility to Handling Hearing Impaired***

Having a hearing impaired child will have more patience, and more work, thus, parents must become informed about the challenges faced in education and interventions like cognitive strategies could be given when it is necessary (Ashman, et.al., 2017). For the hard of hearing, it is important to raise him as much like hearing child as possible in order to facilitate future success in life.

In school where these children study, teachers should help them in their academic learning. Whether they learn to speak, use sign language or combine the two, children with hearing disabilities can develop important language skills with practice through the help of the ‘shadow teacher’. Setting up activities that encourage verbal communication and listening skills, such as an inviting dramatic play area is a great way to help them exposed to language in a natural setting. Further, they should be given special attention to participate fully in the different activities. Thus, caring is necessary to communicate effectively with them. This is because communicating can be difficult and it takes a lot of patience to ensure that both understood.

Wang (2007) revealed that families of children with disabilities particularly hearing impaired have far ranging concerns and may be overwhelmed about their future. Parents wonder how they can meet the basic needs of their children, how to ensure that their children enjoy the highest possible quality of life; and how to support them with their daily activities since they receive little or no financial support, physical support or emotional support from extended family or friends.

Cancian et al., (2010) stressed that family support is vital to the outcome for children who are hearing impaired. This is because children rely upon their parents and siblings to guide them through proper child growth and development. The added complication of children with hearing impairment is the requirement of additional supportive efforts ensuring the needs of the child are met and the needs of the entire family. Muderez (2007) supported this view that the child needs more care and may not be considered to have the potential to support him or herself let alone. In addition, Mandra &

Murray (2000) supported that the relationship between the parents is a factor that can influence the family's well-being. When the parent's relationship is strong and supportive one, the parent-child relationship is of very good quality.

Further, Barnes (2007) punctuated that parents must also develop the skill of reflective listening and this enables them to bring the child in touch with his own feelings. Children do not know how to explain their anger, frustration, or even their joy and more so difficult for the hearing impaired. Therefore, listening through paying close attention to children's verbal and non-verbal messages and allowing children to learn by solving their own problems is important. Parents of children with disabilities need also information, support, resources and a long term plan to help ensure their children's right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which is a right to all children. Masood, et.al (2007) stressed that healthy parental attitudes results in acceptance of the child's disability and facilitates therapeutic progress. This supported the view of Antshel & Joseph (2006) which stressed that the attitudes of persons with disabilities and their families are important. At the same time, different sets of attitudes clearly interact, so that negative views about people with disability in the broader community are likely to be internalized in many cases by people with disabilities and their household members.

Hearing impaired children and their families form a unique group different to that of healthy children, the physical and psychological needs of hearing impaired children and the time and energy to take care of them are unique challenges for parents or caregivers, parents feel responsible and sometimes guilty, often leading to a need to obtain more information on child disability and extreme support solution. Hearing impaired children can exacerbate their negative self-attitudes and may lead to the social isolation of their parents. Parents are able to cope with their child's hearing impairment and consequently feel greater reward for their effort (Naraian, 2015).

#### ***Stakeholders' Support & Mechanisms towards Special Education***

The history of inclusive education dates back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which emphasizes that everyone has the right to education. Moreover, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (20 December, 1993) emphasized rights of education children with special needs. Another globally significant agreement supporting CSN is UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Article 7 of that convention decisively declared that parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights. These three main foreign declarations inspired special needs education of the Philippines which calls the first step towards inclusive education. The root to inclusive education lies in the integration, mainstreaming schooling, or normalization initiated by different organizations and even in schools. However, that sense of belongingness, social interactions, and instruction should always be supported by stakeholders to realize the learners' needs and interests.

In this research, crucial to the implementation of special education is the support system that each stakeholder (internal or external) shared. With the challenges confronting special education program, strong partnership and linkage should be strengthened. Leadership of schools including parents, classmates, and community members should be a system of collaboration, teamwork, and transformation taking into assumptions on the understanding of their situation, clarity of vision towards the children, engagement across all levels, and commitment to change.

Further, stakeholders in special education like administrators, parents, teachers and community members are the people who are something at stake. Parents are delegated with the responsibility to act for the best interest of their children like keeping the communication open, being supportive to their education, and keeping abreast of their performance at school by monitoring their homework activities (Business Mirror, 2018). Teachers should support their instruction and social interaction, promote safe learning, and build respect and good relationship. Administrators should supervise on how these children are cared and monitored. Community members as a whole should educate other people on how these children be treated with respect and that no stigmatization happens. Since everyone in a community also is a stakeholder in the education system, every stakeholder plays a different significant role in supporting the system. Carrington, 2020 stressed that these stakeholders must observe ethical leadership anchored to *care* which means concern for others, *justice* which includes just, feasible, and democratic processes of work, and *critique* which includes questioning and challenging unfair problems. There should be no stigmatization to LSENs and that no one should be secluded because it is extremely harmful (Save the Children, 2020).

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to explore the experiences of children with special needs and how support systems led to realizing their needs and demands. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

Core Question: What were the needs and demands of learners with special needs?

#### Phase 1 - Qualitative Phase Questions

1. What was the profile of the learners with special needs in terms of age, sex, monthly income, number of years in school, category of the disability (diagnosed and manifestations), and origin of the disability?
2. What were the challenges encountered by learners with special needs as to academic performance, social relationship, school environment, and home environment?

#### Phase 1 - Quantitative Phase Questions

1. What was the profile of the regular teachers in terms of sex, designation/position, educational attainment, number of training attended, and number of years in teaching?
2. What was the profile of the stakeholders as to age, sex, educational attainment, monthly income, and number of trainings attended?
3. What was the profile of the other LSENs as to sex, number of years in school, type of disability, and number of trainings attended?
4. What was the level of support among regular teachers and other external stakeholders on the issues and concerns as experienced by the learners with special needs in terms of instruction, learning environment, human relations, and home environment?
5. What was the level of support to SPED practices of the school among other LSENs as to instruction, learning environment, human relations, and home environment?

#### Specific Questions - Synthesis of RQs from Qualitative Phase to Quantitative Phase

1. How was the survey instrument developed and confirmed the qualitative themes?
2. Based on the results from the quantitative phase, how would the recommendations from the qualitative phase be prioritized?
3. How did the instrument being designed based on the qualitative data provide a better measure of the phenomenon?
4. Based from the thematic constructs developed from the qualitative phase, what eidetic framework was offered highlighting the demands and needs of the LSENs?
3. What monitoring and evaluation plan was proposed to further sustain the SPED Program in school?

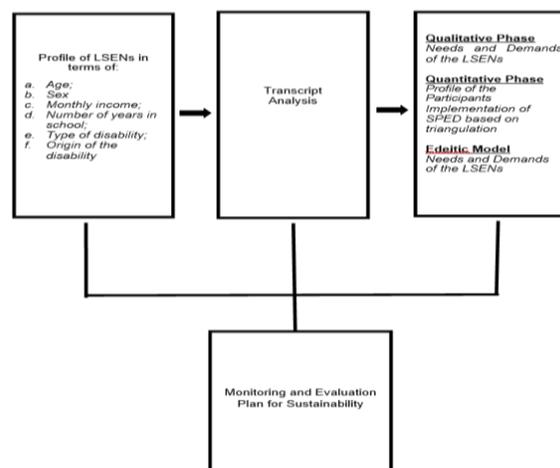


Figure 1: Schematic Diagram of the Study

#### IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The Special Education Program was given attention for this research study. With the hearing impaired students enrolled at school, it aimed to explore their lived experiences. It covered six months of implementation from November 2019 until April 2020. The Division of Surigao City especially Surigao City National High School, the biggest secondary school, was chosen as the locale of the study which supported the implementation of special education. The informants of this study were the hearing impaired students both inclusive and mainstreamed in the classroom, regular teachers and principals implementing the Special Education Program which responses were used for triangulation or data support. The said study was limited only to the issues, concerns encountered by LSENs, and practices of the regular and receiving teachers and principals.

#### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### Sampling

The informants of the study were the mainstreamed learners of Surigao City National High School for S.Y. 2019-2020. The researchers identified these informants using the purposive sampling method. The selection of the informants was based from the recommendation of Dr. John Carlo M. Ruaya, the school's SPED Focal Person. With its hope to deepen the needs and demands of the phenomenon, triangulation was employed since this study further sought various responses and data from stakeholders to offer in-depth understanding. As defined by Kratochwill (2015), triangulation is a search for convergence of, or consistency among, evidence from multiple and varied daily sources (observations/interviews; one participant and another; interviews/documents).

##### Data Gathering Method

Qualitative Phase. There were certain procedures followed for the conduct of this research study. First, a letter was sent to the Principals of Surigao City National High School and SPED Focal Person on the conduct of the study. Second, the researchers sent letter to the parents asking permission on their child's participation and their involvement. This was the first step of the qualitative phase which the recorded/noted interview aimed at gathering and exploring narrations to develop an understanding of the phenomenon. The qualitative data was then used as basis to develop a survey instrument culled from the themes or qualitative themes/constructs on its first phase of analysis. Questions were prepared and asked, however, definitive. Further, the interview of the informants was done through a focused group discussion. After collecting the information, coding then followed. Coding as defined by Patton (2002) and as cited by Arcayera (2016), it is a systematic classification procedure to organize the data collected. On its initial stage of analysis, the informants' own language is done on the text and line by line to preserve their meanings of views. The researchers then coded the statements, provided the transformed meanings and generated themes based on what ideas fitted together; however, deviant cases were identified and grouped according to its data extension and close meaning (*selective coding*). To separate also the existential investigation from the researchers' reflection, memoing was done since one researcher became an adviser of some LSENs and the other held a responsibility of being the SPED Coordinator of the school. Pierre (2010) as cited by Arcayera (2016) emphasized that when doing qualitative research, memoing is needed to further know the relationships of the data gathered to the reflective experiences of the researcher without contaminating the data with the researcher's experience. Memoing as defined is the act of recording reflective notes about what the researcher is learning from the data such as from the interview or document collected.

Quantitative Phase. The use of formulated research questionnaire was relevant to this research study since thematic constructs were used to validate the research questions in order to achieve its second research phase - the quantitative data. On this procedure, the aim of the data was to validate and to support the discussion. The constructs were then based from the interview transcripts which would help in generating a model/framework/theory relevant to the output of this research. With this, the researchers proposed an "*interpretive theory*" to serve as an action and future guide of users of this study. Further, the model would serve as foundation in the development of the survey instrument which formed part the quantitative phase. This part ended the process of sequential exploratory design which showed a transformation of data presentation from its qualitative phase to quantitative phase. The instrument developed was conducted by the researchers and basic statistical analysis was used to further increase its discussion and validation. Further, the quantitative data were analyzed through *Simple Frequency Count* to determine the profile of the participants like age, sex, designation, and training attended; and *Standard Deviation* to determine the impact of implementation as perceived by

SPED implementers and other support system like parents and stakeholders. Ending up this last phase of data analysis was the formulation of conclusions and implications essential also in doing this research study, thus, completing the data analysis. Below showed the process of data analysis from its first phase until its last phase.

## VI. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### Part I- Qualitative Phase

**Research Question 1.** *What was the profile of the LSEs as to age, sex, parents' monthly income, number of years in school, type of disability, and origin of disability?* There were three (3) informants being interviewed from the Junior High School and two (2) from the Senior High School. Historically, they were LSEs before from Mariano Espina Memorial Central Elementary School SPED Center and studied secondary education at Surigao City National High School. These learners were profiled as hearing impaired individuals since birth whose conditions included unable to hear and the lack of conversational English. They were in full inclusion with the regular students in a regular academic setting with modified instructional delivery.

**Table 1: Profile of the Informants**

Profile	Informant A	Informant B	Informant C	Informant D	Informant E
Age	22	26	22	22	19
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
Parents' Monthly Income	P30,000.00	P4,000.00	No work	P25,000.00	No work
No. of years in school	15	15	15	15	15
Type of Disability	Hearing Impaired				
Origin of Disability	Since birth due to sickness				

From the table, it generated an idea that most of them were of higher age, however, were still considered high school learners labelled as hearing impaired. Their disabilities originated since birth. Their parents' salary also varied with two who had no work, one received P4,000, one was P25,000.00 and one received P30,000.00.

**Research Question 2.** *What were the challenges encountered by the learners with special needs as to academic performance, social relationship, school environment; and home environment?*

**1.1. On Academic Performance.** Following the coding process as part of the analysis of this research study, relevant constructs were developed like *being different, being sad, being true, ignoring lessons, being quiet, being resourceful, and being inquisitive*. It is said that creating an inclusive and child-friendly environment means that all LSEs regardless of their disability have always the right for education, that is, they can learn in spite their conditions. This supported the claim of UNESCO's Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action which emphasized the principle of equal primary, secondary, and tertiary educational opportunities for children in an integrated setting, however, there were unavoidable circumstances that these LSEs felt disrespected, quiet, sad, and inquisitive. When informants were asked about their experiences being inclusive in terms of their academic performance, two of the informants shared "*I'm happy with my classmate inside the class. I'm aware for being different, I also see people like me. I entertain them. I speak mostly in school problems. Most of my friends came from the other section in my previous section which I consider my original section.*"

Alongside with social responsibility, effective educators consider classroom environment and make necessary adaptations in order to make sure that it facilitates academic and social needs of students (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Since one of the essential preliminaries of inclusive classroom is suitable classroom arrangement that contributes to learning and development including those with special needs, it is important to create unique designs suitable for them. In the context of academic learning among these LSEs, they disclosed similar strategies to be understood like *asking teachers for help to write the lessons and relevant statements on board, doing sign language with their classmates or regular teachers, peer coaching or being silent* sometimes because of incapacity to do the sign language. As emphasized by Moore, et al.,

(2016), peer coaching is associated with positive effects to learning and is supported with the positive attitude on learners' participation. Among the responses of the informants were *"I just ignore it when I don't understand the lesson, mostly Tagalog. It's hard for me to understand. Sometimes I just remain quiet, then if I really need to know what she wants us to understand, I try to write it on a paper and give it to the teacher to let her know that I don't understand. I ask help to my classmate sometimes to let the teacher know that I don't understand the lesson, sometimes I just still keep quiet."*

Further, inclusive education is not just about placing LSEs to regular classroom but also facilitating education with a whole suite of provisions which include *adapting curriculum, adapting teaching methods, modifying assessment techniques, and arranging accessibility* (Kontra et al., 2015). In short, inclusive education is a multi-component strategy or, perhaps, a mega-strategy (Mitchell, 2008). Looking at this as one important idea on inclusive education which any learners should follow K-12 curriculum with instruction modification, this research study dealt on how receiving teachers provided academic learning to these learners with special needs especially on the use of visual cues to teaching. However, one regular teacher said that her *difficulty to use instructional materials and their assistance* was an important construct developed here which she shared

*"My challenge here is how to deliver effectively the lesson for that specific day since there are many things that I have to consider. First, the preparation of the lesson plan. Although they have the same lesson plan because they were inclusive but once you are going to administer that one, you are going to put all the text written in the lesson plan into the simplest form. And that what we are called broken English. You cannot separate them with the regular students because whatever your learning competencies today that you achieve, it should be the same learning to the LSEN. Also, you have to find materials in your lesson that will fit to their level. So, meaning, if you are a teacher who graduated with Magna Cum Laude and you are handling a student like them, you have to level yourself to them."*

**1.2. On Social Relationship.** Skjørten (2001) viewed inclusion as welcoming people with social care. With the impetus of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities, inclusive education is an idea which extends beyond the mere placement of such learners in regular classes, embraces vision, improves curriculum, provides simple assessment, teaching, acceptance, access, support, resources and leadership (Mitchell, 2015). Such modification becomes an integral part of humanism and remains inspiring for some regular teachers. In this research study, relevant constructs on social relationship emerged like *having difficulty of some teachers and other classmates to use of sign language leading to poor communication with each other*. For LSEs, simple observation or the use of sign language explains more than detailed instructions. Further, participation in class environment or other social activities within the school works better for them. Through the help of their peers or classmates to do sign language is a way also of their involvement into the different classroom activities. One of the informants shared

*"I speak and write in English. During oral recitation, I chose to remain in silence even if I know the answer in some instances. I don't care at all. I sometimes observe and follow their mouth. I used sign language whenever I talk to a person like me, I feel difficult in talking to everyone so I just wrote it to let them know what I think and some of my classmates know how to use sign language so that's also my way of talking to them, sometimes when they want to inform me, they write it on a paper and hand it to me."*

Vygotsky (1978), a known sociologist, emphasized that children with disabilities are supplied with alternative ways of communication and development. By alternative ways, Vygotsky implies psychological tools which are especially suitable for a disability. For LSEs, their way of communication is provided through sign language or even direct observations which become essential to learning academically or growing socially (Kontra, et al, 2015). One of the regular teachers in response to this said that:

*"The difficulty is the communication. It's very hard for me because my lesson is all about Science. There are more topics in Science that you cannot do in sign language. For example atom, how will you do it for them to understand? So what you are going to do is to finger spell it. But some of them don't understand the word even you already finger spell it. The best thing to do for that is to provide them the definition of the word or teaching them together with the visual aids or visual presentation will help them to understand."*

However, one challenge that sprung on this experience of difficulty among LSEs was the *lack of teacher assistants* which deprived them to be in contact with other regular learners especially when involved into different school programs. One informant clarified that being silent was the easiest thing to do since some teachers didn't have the idea on how to do

sign language. Though regular teachers were trained in some aspects of sign language, but a license SPED teacher would definitely help in shaping the learning their learning. Practically, it was also impossible for one SPED teacher to do the shadowing, so, these teachers handling them should be trained to effectively deliver special education. Adding up to this was a sharing of one of the regular teachers which he said

*“We cannot deny the fact that there are regular teachers trained in handling them but still they refuse to accept the LSENS because they insist in their minds that these LSENS are disruptive and an additional work. Sometimes in choosing the right person to be sent in a training, some incapable teachers are sent. They choose teachers to be in the trainings who are not handling LSENS and schools that are not implementing the program.”*

Further, LSENS also encountered problems in school like a testimony being shared by one of the informants telling that *“I encounter problems sometimes in school when talking to my classmates not informing me having an assignment. I am sometimes misinterpreted by others and only a few can do sign language. They only make adjustments in terms of my way of learning.”*

The school also acted assertively with regard to the implementation of Special Education such as the lack of SPED teacher assistants in the presence of the Schools Division officials and the Local Government Unit of Surigao City. Although its main purpose was to cater the needs of learners with special needs, still, there were drawbacks like their sacrifices and the less training on sign language. This new sense of problem among human resource is strongly attested by one school principal which he said

*“There were common issues and concerns as to SPED implementation which include lack of sufficient facilities, appropriate trainings for teachers. As regards to insufficiency of facilities, I always ask to for the assistance of LGUs and other stakeholders. As to the trainings, I always ask the assistance of these SPED teachers who have attended seminars relative to SPED programs to share what they have learned to their co-SPED teachers through SLAC. We consider benchmarking from other schools, encourage teachers to attend seminars/ trainings. I also require them to do online research and the like.”*

**2.3 On School Environment.** For Fisher (2017), academic achievement refers to successful performance in schooling due to its environment. Schooling, in its term, includes academic skills such as writing, reading, problem solving etc. which are integral parts of academic content. School environment is critically important for educational performance among learners with special needs. One important condition is the use of teaching strategy which is proven to improve academic success. Other techniques which would boost educational attainment are the usage of didactic materials and use of technology. Most informants were positive to where they studied since regular teachers tried to deliver modified instruction. On school environment, one relevant construct that emerged was the *perceiving anxieties to participation of school activities* as evident on the responses of the informants which these learners joined in the local activities like the National Disability and Prevention Week. This is one example of participation appropriations among them which they worked and playd with others in the hope of social development, but sometimes feared to be misinterpreted by other people because of their human condition.

One informant shared *“I’m happy when we danced in the covered court, I also participate in class group activities in some subjects. I try to participate in school because it is what I need to do, sometimes I just do what is needed to do to have grades and I join in dances even if sometimes we are being laughed at.”*

Bruner (1960), a known sociologist, believed that a child needs to learn main principles of a subject rather than master facts or data. He emphasized that any learner needs guidance of an educator who accelerates thinking in an environment where he/she is in. Just like these learners with special needs, they needed assistants or regular teachers who can expand more their complete understanding through sign language and other modified instruction. Proving this point was the sharing of one regular teacher whose intentions on academic learning was for the good of all LSENSs, however, *felt incompetent for doing translation*

*“Your challenge here is to deal with their different kinds of behavior. I have a student who is entirely different. He has the difficulty in understanding the lesson. So you cannot just call him like “special”. Whatever cases that he faced with difficulty on learning, you have to use an appropriate term for a condition like him. For the case of learners with hearing impairments, if there teacher is handling Filipino subject, the challenge of the teacher here, is how will she/he going to translate Filipino language to English language in order for them to understand the lesson.”*

In school where these LSENs study, cooperative learning cannot be detached as a strategy in the classroom since it would allow them to work as a team with the regular students for the implementation of a task or activities. Such participation would mean that the effects of cooperative learning proved to be an efficient tool to increase academic achievements. Sometimes individualized instruction becomes difficult due to *poor knowledge on sign language among regular teachers*, but, using cooperative learning coupled with curriculum adaptation would benefit them to promote sense of gregariousness. One of the regular teachers shared

*“Whatever strategies or techniques that we employ to the regular students, it should be the same to the LSEN. In their case, you have to move forward, put more extra effort for them to effectively understand the lesson. If you are going to give them a text, provide them together with a picture. If you are going to let them watch movies, provide them with a subtitle or a transcript and let them read it for them to understand the movie. You can also group them with those who know sign language. The point there is, you have to modify the instructions into simplest form. If this is the curriculum, you are going to give modification but not totally or something that will not deviate to the learning competencies.”*

With the help and support of some regular teachers whose dedication and commitment were evident, LSENs were given special attention through their modified teaching applications. When parents were interviewed, they experienced challenges like when going forth and back to the school to provide the needs of their children. Supporting to this was an experience that served as a contemplation for parents which simply added up to their work, however, they were positive to the opportunities that they were in school learning especially with the help of their regular teachers. Regardless of lacking resources just like they couldn't be provided and entertained, being immersed in the regular setting provided a good practice of social and cognitive development because of their environment. As a testimony, one parent said

*“So in terms of giving instructions, I always draw in the board for things she needs. Day by day, I always communicate and I slowly understand her and it makes a bit easy to connect with her because I already know how to form a sentence through sign language. I always try to find some strategy for her to meet her educational needs. We don't disregard her, in fact, she is being cared.”*

**1.3. On Home Environment.** Regular teachers were satisfied to plan and to use their own strategies in dealing with LSENs. Just like the parents of these learners, they were confident in what they were doing to their children just to be understood at home and be supported of their needs. Kauffman, et.al. (2017) emphasized that learners with special needs be given special attention just like how they are given special respect in school. In other words, their family support is vital (Cancian, et al., 2010) and the more respect and care (Muderez, 2007) are given to them, the more they become engage at home. Participation in the home activities can also be a good indicator of LSENs engagement where they are involved. Home environment should always display a good behavioral and emotional engagement. While teachers invested much resources for its commitment to special education, the effects that would it bring is the brighter future that awaits them. In school where these children studied, parents were optimistic as to how these children behaved and be successful at their own. One informant shared

*“It is more satisfying when you notice them that they are improving. In regular students, you can find job satisfaction when that certain students will land a job. But with the case of the LSEN, once you notice them that they were able to write even a single letter in spite their disabilities, it's a big help to them especially with the conditions of some. I am not the only person who will feel satisfied but also their parents and their teachers in elementary. In a simple thing, you contributed a big help for their future. Cassandra is an NCII passers who are now currently studying in Surigao State College of Technology, when she got the NCII, Ma'am Johnson and her family was very happy and overwhelmed that time. And for us teachers. It's great satisfaction in our job.”*

Emotional engagement is one important affective behavior among LSENs like they should feel that they are considered by other people. At home where these children were, parents also felt their stress and sometimes they would allow their children to do their usual things. LSENs had also their way of dealing with stress in home and school like most other people feel and do. It was also vital for parents to practice reflective listening as it enables their children to feel in touch with their feelings (Barnes, 2007). From the interview conducted, these children coped up with stress through eating, chatting with friend online, sleeping, talking to classmates and or even sometimes ignoring them. One informant shared *“I just go, chat and use my cellphone. I feel stress when the lesson is too hard to understand. I just go to sleep when I cannot catch up the lesson. It is stressful and I just don't mind if I feel stress, I just ignore.”*

Doing the sign language at home is also a difficult thing which gives a problem to LSEs. From the interview, informants shared the difficulty of some family members to do sign language, however, they can practice a little bit. Consultations sometimes were halted due to less knowledge of these people surrounding the family. With this, LSEs became primary authority at home because they were experts on their own communication style. In a sharing of one informant, he shared, “*They don’t know, they do chat when talking to me.*” However, there were also some parents from other LSEs who knew how to do sign language at home or even when telling them to go to school. One informant shared “*I don’t experience encounter with the drivers so far, my mom and sister fetch me every afternoon and they know how to do sign language. My father will fetch me. Sometimes, I talk to my classmates to help me ride a tricycle, told the driver where I will go or else I write on the paper and show it to the driver.*”

It also emerged from this research study that the problem on bullying at home was a challenge for LSEs because there were some neighbors who bullied them. One important theme that revealed to this was *displaying bullying to LSEs* as evident on their conditions. In an interview, bullying emerged as one response and a problem to be considered since they were sometimes subjected for bullying due to their disabilities. While they were aware of their disability, they were unable to articulate their feelings and in this case consulted their parents on what they were telling. Parents also felt the need to address such concerns through simple talk with the people and for them it was a great reward of their efforts (Naraian, 2015). Experiences of these informants shared during an interview that “*Sometimes it happens to me, and it hurts me so much, I hate being bullied each time they look at me and laugh and talk with other students. They just hurt me the way they look and take even I don’t understand but I’m also thankful because they do not hurt me physically.*”

## Part II- Quantitative Phase

*Instrument Development.* The instrument was developed to check and to validate responses from the informants during the qualitative phase. The purpose further measured an important criteria like *knowing the issues and concerns of the LSEs*. Further, the inclusion of this relevant variable and transcripts from other respondents form part of the triangulation process as they were necessary as strong support to concepts of special program education. Table 2 showed a sample in one of the themes identified after the analysis done in the qualitative phase and the pool of recurring words as evident in the informants’ transcripts. In this part, some items were merged and shortened to make them more direct and easily readable in terms of coming up of statements relevant to theme constructs. On the first column, it showed the common transcripts taken from the interview, the second column showed the pool of words derived from the transcripts, the third column showed the development of themes, and the fourth column showed the statements which included merging and shortening of words.

**Table 2: Sample Construct Validation for Instrument Development**

Common Transcripts	Pool of Words	Theme	Proposition
I ask help to my classmate sometimes to let the teacher know that I don’t understand the lesson, sometimes I just still keep quiet.	Seeking help	<i>Seeking help from others through the use of sign language</i>	<i>LSEs seek help from others as they are having difficulty in knowing the lessons, however, feel shy and sad when no one entertains them.</i>
I’ll tell to my teacher that I don’t understand. I will go to my teacher and tell her I don’t understand. Ma’am it’s hard for me to understand.”	Being true	<i>Having difficulty in lessons</i>	<i>LSEs are true to themselves when things are getting wrong, so, instead of just sitting, they ask their teachers or even their classmates.</i>
I used sign language whenever I talk to a person like me, I feel difficult in talking to everyone so I just wrote it to let them know what I think and some of my classmates know how to use sign language so that’s also my way of talking to them, sometimes when they want to inform me, they write it on a paper and hand it to me.	Being creative	<i>Having difficulty in lesson</i>	<i>LSEs feel sometimes isolated because of their condition, but want to be involved in the academic setting</i>

I'm happy when we danced in the covered court, I also participate in class group activities in some subjects. I try to participate in school because it is what I need to do, sometimes I just do what is needed to do to have grades and I join in dances even if sometimes we are being laughed at.	Being laughed at	<i>Being discriminated</i>	<i>LSENs feel sometimes being discriminated because of their condition.</i>
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**Research Question 1.** What was the profile of the participants like teachers, external stakeholders, and other LSENs based on its indicated indicators?

**Table 3: Profile of the Participants**

For Receiving Teachers	Sample (N=30)	Percentage (100%)
<b>SEX</b>		
<i>Male</i>	5	17%
<i>Female</i>	25	83%
<b>POSITION</b>		
<i>Secondary School Teacher I</i>	12	40%
<i>Secondary School Teacher II</i>	1	3%
<i>Secondary School Teacher III</i>	13	43%
<i>Master Teacher I</i>	4	13%
<i>Master Teacher II</i>	0	0%
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	13	43%
<i>MA Academic Requirements</i>	10	33%
<i>Master's Degree</i>	5	17%
<i>Doctoral Academic Requirements</i>	1	3%
<i>Doctor's Degree</i>	1	3%
<b>NUMBER OF TRAININGS ATTENDED RELEVANT TO LSENs</b>		
<i>0</i>	0	0
<i>1</i>	30	100%
<i>2</i>	0	0
<i>3</i>	0	0
<b>NUMBER OF YEARS</b>		
<i>1-3</i>	2	7%
<i>4-6</i>	3	10%
<i>7-9</i>	7	23%
<i>10-12</i>	5	17%
<i>13-15</i>	13	43%
<i>For external stakeholders</i>		
<b>SEX</b>		
<i>Male</i>	8	27%
<i>Female</i>	22	73%
<b>AGE</b>		
<i>25-30 years old</i>	0	0%
<i>31-40 years old</i>	15	50%
<i>41-50 years old</i>	10	33%
<i>51-60 years old</i>	5	17%
<i>61-70 years old</i>	0	0%
<i>71-80 years old</i>	0	0%
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		
<i>Elementary Graduate</i>	5	17%
<i>Elementary Undergraduate</i>	2	33%
<i>High School Graduate</i>	8	27%
<i>High School Undergraduate</i>	5	17%

<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	10	33%
<i>MA Academic Requirements</i>	0	0%
<i>Master's Degree</i>	0	0%
<i>Doctoral Academic Requirements</i>	0	0%
<i>Doctor's Degree</i>	0	0%
<b>MONTHLY INCOME</b>		
Below P5,000.00	5	17%
P5,000-P10,000.00	15	50%
P10,000.00- P20,000.00	5	17%
P21,000.00 -P30,000.00	5	17%
P31,000.00- P40,000.00		0%
P41,000.00-P50,000.00	0	0%
<b>NUMBER OF HI TRAINING ATTENDED</b>		
0	0	0
1	30	100%
2	0	0
3	0	0
<i>For other LSEs</i>	N=5	100%
<b>AGE</b>		
<i>10-15 years old</i>	4	80%
<i>16-20 years old</i>	1	20%
<i>21-25 years old</i>	0	0%
<b>SEX</b>		
Male	2	40%
Female	3	60%
<b>PARENTS' MONTHLY INCOME</b>		
<i>Below P5,000.00</i>	3	60%
<i>P5,000-P10,000.00</i>	1	20%
<i>P10,000.00- P20,000.00</i>	1	20%
<i>P21,000.00 -P30,000.00</i>	0	0%
<i>P31,000.00- P40,000.00</i>	0	0%
<i>P41,000.00-P50,000.00</i>	0	0%
<b>NUMBER OF YEARS IN SCHOOL</b>		
<i>3 years below</i>	1	20%
<i>3-5 years</i>	3	60%
<i>6-10 years</i>	1	20%
<b>TYPE OF DISABILITY</b>		
<i>Hearing Impaired</i>	5	100%
<b>NUMBER OF HI TRAINING ATTENDED</b>		
0	0	0%
1	1	100%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%

Sex of the participants was one important characteristic in understanding the composition of the participants whose responsibilities like teachers and stakeholders formed part in the success of these LSEs, hence, such variable was investigated for this study. From the table, one indicator was studied like sex. With a total population of 30 especially teachers, there were 5 (17%) males and 25 (83%) females. As to stakeholders' sex profile, there were 8 (27%) males and 22 (73%) females. While to other LSEs, there were 2 (40%) males and 3 (60%) females. With the data presented, most participants were females. Age was also considered as one variable in this study. For the stakeholders, there were 15 (50%) whose age were 31-40 years old, 10 (33%) were 41-50 years old, and 5 (17%) were 61-70 years old. There were 4 (80%) of the other LSEs whose age were 10-15 years old while 1 (20%) age from 16-20 years old. With the data presented, most were 41-50 years old. As to the position of teachers, there were 12 (40%) Secondary School Teacher I, one (1) Secondary School Teacher II, 13 (43%) Secondary School Teacher III, 4 (13%) Master Teacher I and 0 (0%) Master Teacher II. It can be concluded that teachers in respect to their varying functions and responsibilities held different

positions. Supporting also this view was the fact that school heads have the power to increase the levels of job satisfaction of other members by defining their role as support to LSENs and to demonstrate certain leadership behaviors (Alonderiene, et al. (2016). With the guidance from the School Heads, School SPED Focal Person and even the Division SPED Coordinator whose knowledge, skills, and will were indubitable, learners were provided with the relevant skills needed for the implementation of SPED Program.

Education is one of the most important characteristics that might affect the person's attitudes and the way of looking and understanding any phenomena. In this study, educational background of the participants was imperative. As to educational attainment among receiving teachers, there were 13 (43%) who obtained Bachelor's Degree, 10 (33%) receive academic requirements in Masters, 5 (17%) were Master's Degree holder, 1 (3%) holds academic requirements in Doctor's Degree and 1 (3%) is a graduate of Doctor's Degree. On the other hand, stakeholders' profile in terms of educational attainment showed varying results like there were 5 (17%) of them were elementary graduate, 2 (33%) were Elementary undergraduate, 8 (27%) were High School Graduate, 5 (17%) were High School Undergraduate, 10 (33%) hold Bachelor's Degree while none holds MA and Doctorate Degrees. It can be concluded from this part that by and large the participants held Bachelor's Degree and less in Graduate School Studies which was an important factor in assisting the K-12 curriculum implementation and in improving quality educational performance in many forms.

As to trainings attended, most of the receiving teachers, stakeholders and even LSENs had attended only 1 (100%) training for S.Y. 2019-2020. It can be concluded from this part that an organization can achieve the competitive advance by regularly upgrading the workforce skills. Training and development is an essential task that any individual in the organization should be involved because this fosters learning at various teaching work (Golhar, et al, 2017). It can also be an important tool for job satisfaction, employee engagement and employee commitment is one is sent for a training and development (Shah, C., & Gupta, A, 2018). Once regular teachers are sent to training, they become resourceful and innovative in providing appropriate educational needs for LSENs suited to their level of understanding and capacity to learn.

In terms of the number of years among receiving teachers, it can be gleaned from the table that 2 (7%) serve for 1-3 years, 3 (10%) served for 4-6 years, 7 (23%) served for 7-9 years, 5 (17) served for 10-12 years, and 13 (43%) served for 13-15 years. On the other hand, in terms of the number of years in school among other LSENs, 1 (20%) studies for 3 years below, 3 (60%) for 3-5 years and 1 (20%) for 6-10 years. In this research, serving for a number of years as to teachers' longevity is an important criterion to disclose individual's competency and widest knowledge of certain lessons and experience. The longer an individual serves, the longer he/she becomes effective. This knowledge puts teachers for reaching distinguished positions at advantage. A good reason is for this is his/her mastery of the craft that is possible to look at. Ruaya (2019) emphasized that these teachers who have long experiences in handling learners with disabilities and special needs to provide learning action cell sessions, orientation, trainings and seminar to the new teachers in dealing with learners with different needs and disabilities. However, due to the increasing workload of teachers and the process in conducting trainings and seminars in Special Education Programs, these teachers found difficulty in complying the necessary requirements. In terms of monthly income among stakeholders, there were 5 (17%) who received below P5,000.00, 15 (50%) received P5,000.00-P10,000.00, 5 (17%) received from P10,000.00-P20,000.00 and 5 (17%) received from P21,000.00-P30,000.00. As to the monthly income among parents of other LSENs, there were 3 (60%) who received below P5,000.00, 1 (20%) received P5,000.00-P10,000.00 and 1 (20%) received P10,000.00-P20,000.00.

**Research Question 2. *What was the level of support among regular teachers on the issues and concerns as experienced by the learners with special needs?*** Learners learn in various ways and paces. To develop their academic abilities in school, teachers should create an environment that will help them grow academically. It is always a fact that when children are involved and free from any discriminatory acts, then a greater chance of full acceptance is achieved. It is for this reason that this research question on issues and concerns outflow with its need to validate perceptions from the teachers who are able to provide support in small or big tasks for the learners with special needs. Table 4 showed the issues and concerns which emerged from the construct validity of the responses from its qualitative phase. Statements were culled out from the responses of the informants from its qualitative phase which underwent a process of construct validity.

**Table 4: Quantitative display of survey based on teachers' assessment on the level of support to LSENs demands**

<b>SEEKING HELP FROM OTHERS</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>QD</b>
1. I give quality time to my LSENs to develop their skills.	3.27	0.13	SA
2. I modify lessons to suit to their level of understanding.	3.23	0.13	SA
3. I provide individualized instruction and collaborative learning.	3.17	0.12	SA
4. I deliver lessons appropriately with modified strategies.	3.13	0.13	SA
5. I provide face-to-face instruction to check their learning.	3.27	0.11	SA
Mean	3.21	0.12	A
<b>HAVING DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING LESSONS</b>			
1. I develop social games to make them engaged and involved.	3.33	0.16	SA
2. I support their active participation in school though difficult for us.	3.63	0.11	SA
3. I give activities that would develop their academic confidence.	3.47	0.12	SA
4. I welcome them in different forms.	3.63	0.10	SA
5. I use sign language in teaching the lessons.	3.73	0.10	SA
Mean	3.56	0.12	SA
<b>BEING DISCRIMINATED</b>			
1. I develop my policy for no discrimination.	3.67	0.11	SA
2. I provide sign language activities to them.	3.33	0.14	SA
3. I support them in the classroom activities.	3.50	0.12	SA
4. I extend patience on their mode of learning.	3.67	0.10	SA
5. I give sufficient examples during class discussion.	3.43	0.13	SA
Mean	3.52	0.12	SA
<b>BEING BULLIED</b>			
1. I constantly remind classmates of LSENs not to bully them.	3.63	0.11	SA
2. I develop policies to keep them informed of the sanctions.	3.47	0.12	SA
3. I remind them to be respectful of their LSENs rights.	3.67	0.10	SA
4. I provide pledge of commitment on not to bully anyone.	3.43	0.13	SA
5. I value rights and protection among LSENs.	3.13	0.13	SA
Mean	3.47	0.12	SA
Over-all Mean	3.44	0.12	SA

The rapid acceptance and inclusion of these LSENs is forming part in the plans of the Department. School heads are tasked to monitor the implementation of the Special Education Program to ensure the continuity of the curriculum and competencies. As part of their function, they should constantly remind regular teachers to incorporate contextualization and modification in the curriculum and most importantly should provide technical assistance emphasizing the processes and products in special education. With the progress it brings to the educational system, this research however found assessment of the teachers very relevant as part of its triangulation process. Based on their optimistic evaluation that these LSENs experienced, an honest data management behavior shows that *support for their needs like seeking help, having difficulty in understanding the lesson, being discriminated and being bullied* were part of their work as reflected from the results.

As shown above, it reflected the strong support of the teachers in terms of seeking from others which this issue sprung among the LSENs with its over-all mean of 3.21 or 0.12 SD and with its supporting indicators like *giving quality time to develop their skills and knowledge* evaluated as 3.27 M, 0.13 SD, *modifying lesson to make it more relevant to their level of understanding* evaluated as 3.23 M, 0.13 SD, *providing individualized instruction and collaborative learning* evaluated as 3.17 M, 0.12 SD, *delivering lessons appropriately with modified strategies* evaluated as 3.13 M, 0.13 SD, and *providing face-to-face instruction to check learning* with 3.27 M, 0.11 SD. As emphasized by Kiely, et al., (2015), teachers' work and responsibilities don't go away with the nature of their function on helping learners regardless of their type especially the LSENs. As inclusion becomes more pervasive, teachers' attitude and their obligation towards LSENs like helping on their academic performance and regular learners never change. Claiming also the same point was the intervention that each teacher and parent performed to facilitate LSENs successes in life in spite their challenges faced in education (Ashman, et al., 2017).

On the other hand, as to the *having difficulty in understanding the lesson* which was one theme that emerged from this research study revealed an over-all mean of 3.56 and with its supporting indicators like *developing social games to make*

them engaged and involved with 3.33 M, 0.16 SD, supporting their active participation in school with 3.63, 0.11 SD, giving activities would develop their social confidence with 3.47 M, 0.12 SD, welcoming them in the classroom with 3.63 M, 0.10 SD, and stopping bullying with classmates with 3.73 M, 0.10 SD. Supporting those results is a literature reviewed from Kontra, et al (2015) who emphasized that teachers in the academic setting may focus to different sign language activities to help deaf students in their socialization.

*“We do have classmates. We are being motivated by our teachers to cooperate and be in one with others. I play and I believe it’s our second home. We participate and in school we are taught with cooking skills. I was able to follow and I learned the job and I also made new friends during work immersion.”*

As to being discriminated which was one theme that also emerged from this study revealed an over-all mean of 3.52 and 0.12 which most indicators were strongly agreed like *helping them in their learning and exposure in the different activities* with 3.67 M, 0.11 SD, *providing sign language to help them in their ways of learning* with 3.33 M, 0.14 SD, *supporting them in the classroom activities* with 3.50 M, 0.12 SD, *extending patience on their mode of learning* with 3.67 M, 0.10 SD, and *giving sufficient examples during class discussion* with 3.43 M, 0.12 SD. Supporting to these results was the claim of Walton and Moonsamy (2015) that the school must see to it that learners with special needs truly belong by simply not excluding them due to untransformed behaviors, attitudes, cultural differences and disabilities.

In terms of being bullied, specific actions done by teachers to answer such issue revealed an over-all mean of 3.47, 0.12 SD as supported by its indicators like *constantly reminding classmates of LSENs not to bully them* with 3.63 M, 0.11 SD, *developing policies* with 3.47 M, 0.12 SD, *reminding to be respectful of the right* with 3.67 M, 0.10 SD, *providing pledge of commitment on not to bully anyone* with 3.43 M, 0.13 SD, and *valuing rights and protection* with 3.13 M, 0.13 SD.

**Research Question 3. What was the level of support of stakeholders (internal and external) to meeting the needs of LSENs as to instruction; learning environment; and human relations?** In school where these children study, teachers should help them in their academic learning. Whether they learn to speak, use sign language or combine the two, children with hearing disabilities can develop important language skills with practice through the help of the ‘shadow teacher’. Setting up activities that encourage verbal communication and listening skills, such as an inviting dramatic play area is a great way to help them exposed to language in a natural setting. Further, they should be given special attention to participate fully in the different activities. Thus, caring is necessary to communicate effectively with them. According to the responses based on the qualitative phase, informants’ understanding on support system is quite exceptional since they are supported by people around them, however, expressed their feelings on discrimination to include their disability. In here, inclusion is evident and it is seen as addressing their diversity, but the feeling of negativity still exists.

It is said that all individuals are unique, and hence, special. However, there are those in our community who, by virtue of their physical and intellectual abilities, require a more relevant or appropriate instruction and support than is usually available within formal and informal educational structures. As new brand of education known as inclusive education, this research study delved also on the support extended by parents, stakeholders and even school. As orchestrated by DepEd in their “Education for All Policy” (EFA), learners with special needs must be understood as the result of educational institutions and interactive partnership with parents and community members and may not be abridged to embodied differences because of their conditions.

**1.1. On providing instruction.** The creation of school support programs is relevant to LSENs cognitive, emotional, and social development (Schwa, Susann, et al., 2015). On this research, three types of support systems were considered. One was asked on the support of the parents extended to the LSENs, particularly on their engagement on school and at home. From the interview, parents identified themselves as primary support to their children since they were the only persons left to understand their conditions. One relevant theme that emerged to this research was *encouraging parent engagement* which refers to the responsibility of the parents to help their children learn and meet their needs. Also, as said by the informants, commitment to them should always be the top priority as it is arguable in their living conditions. Supporting also to this view were the responsibilities of parents to educate their children, a reiterative phrase, which most parents considered it necessary no matter how special they were. Although considered by some people as problematic due to their conditions, parents argued that their children should never be segregated and any differences should be considered as negative impartiality. One informant shared

*“There are parents who are overprotective, but on my case, I feel the need of giving what she needs. I should say that there is a need to extend your patience and be supportive of their needs like giving them phone since it is the only for them to know the world through social media.”*

Teachers as stakeholders also comment that some problems emerged from the fact that the implementation of Special Education Program is not that extensive since the school lacks the rightful SPED teachers. Though, it is supportive to the conduct of SPED programs, but still, the need to deliver inclusive education through quality SPED teachers should be a priority. Consultations done by the SPED Focal Person were evident from the interview and a reasonable point for understanding inclusive education. For teachers who supported LSENS, it is an opportunity to learn from their ways of communication or LSENS learning from their teachers’. One informant disclosed his experience in terms of support he extended to his learners which he said

*“Actually, I am not a SPED Teacher by profession because I am not a SPED graduate. According to my teacher from Davao City, once that you are already started teaching LSENS, you are start to be called a SPED teacher regardless with your major in college, though if you have no background. So far, this is my first time handling LSENS because Dr. Herlene L. Johnson, the SPED teacher before is not here in the Philippines anymore. In terms of support activities in school, Dr. Johnson usually coordinates to the subject teacher. We approach them and ask if the LSENS are allowed to excuse their self for the practice of opening prayer for the program. The main reason why we do this because we want them to improve their socialization skills and self-confidence. Although they are have problems academically due to their conditions at least they improve their confidence by involving to the different programs in school.”*

**1.2. On achieving quality learning environment.** The support of the Local Government Units was positive as it brought serious intentions of delivering inclusive education. Teachers were witnesses to this as these LSENS were participative to the different programs of the LGUs like sharing their skills and competence in sign language, however, the drawbacks as emphasized by them was the lack of resources it gave to the school like hiring of more regular teachers who can handle them since there is only lone SPED teacher trained. Moreover, stakeholders considered further training of teacher assistants to be important in terms of updating skills and competence. One informant said, *“As there are no more training I try to improve myself with the aid of other sources like websites which are not as effective as professional training.”* Further, he added

*“It pushes me because there is only one SPED teacher in Surigao City National High School, and no one will guide them since Ma’am Johnson left already. If you give this to the other teacher, maybe no one will accept it because this job is not easy, you need to put an extra effort, love, patience. But, there is always training to keep you guided.”*

With the idea of equal opportunity, the school as one SPED implementer encouraged these LSENS to be part in the different programs of the school. As their participation increased, their engagement also rose which means that they became engaged in school and their value increased. While there were drawbacks on its implementation like the lack of teachers, facilities, and instructional materials, this doesn’t mean to discontinue education and involve rejection, but it is by developing innovations on how regular teachers which could improve instruction and learning environment. One informant shared his process-based innovation

*“I used to have written instructions like visual aids, or in a projector. Don’t let them stay at the back and you have to use sign language when you are going to communicate them. Through sign language, I’m using the synonyms and antonyms, different approaches and I’m using the simplified form for them to easily understand. I communicate them by using sign language. Just like what I said earlier, everyday I always try to learn on how to do sign language and slowly I am able to learn it and I get to connect with them easily.”*

School like Surigao City National High School has one SPED Focal Person considered as an expert to teaching learners with SEN and who is responsible for organizing their provisions. This was also but one of the many conditions of learning environment where LSENS were cared and given importance by their parents. To make it sure that any necessary assistance is addressed and that any one of them receives support, the school should ensure that provisions are given like instructional materials and regular teachers. However, the demands increase since until now no licensed SPED teachers are hired by the school and LGU. During the interview, one participant shared his willingness to help since the former SPED Coordinator left and the school is having a problem as to who would facilitate in supporting the learners. From

here, the problem on learning was affected due to the lack of regular teachers which was considered an important factor to supporting learners' development. One informant shared

*“So far, this is my first time handling LSEN because Dr. Johnson, the SPED teacher before is not here in the Philippines anymore. In terms of activities, she usually coordinates to the subject teachers. We approach them and ask if the LSEs are allowed to be excused for practice of opening prayer for any program. The main reason why we do this because we want them to improve their socialization skills and self-confidence. Although they have problems academically but at least they improve their confidence by involving to the different programs in school.”*

Technically, the school is supportive to the needs of the LSEs such that their program and trainings were lodged into school Mean an Other Operating Expenses (MOOE). In fact, as emphasized by Malipot (2018), schools should sustain the relevant needs of the LSEs such as their progressive curriculum, instructional materials, equipment, and facilities. However, this contradicted to the responses as supported by the interview of some informants claiming that funds and other expenses were not enough to upskill and reskill teachers' performance on sign language training.

**1.3. On establishing human relations.** Special education is not only perceived as an influence to learners but also a primary mechanism for individuals of special needs be defined on their rights. International declarations of human rights identify special education as fundamental, thus, the support of any one like parents, teachers, and other stakeholders is indispensable towards achieving access to education. As emphasized by Powell (2015), inclusive education is charity, welfare, and rehabilitation, thus, any LSEs need responsible teacher, parent, personnel or staff who is able to provide his/her provisions and wants. It is also equally important to address concerns on human relations since it is crucial to their social development. As stressed by one informant, he shared

*“My concept of inclusive education is the access to basic quality education. It is an equal opportunity given to them. It is helping through our own respect and love. It's eliminating discrimination and bullying. There are some instances that they get bullied but we can approach them as a way of respect to them. We are not allowed to bully them because we will be punished by the law. If that certain students cannot understand the lesson while the class is going on, then we don't label or even stereotype.”*

With the increasing demands of these LSEs in the education system, the need for the school heads to support on their provisions is indispensable. One important thing that every regular teacher should consider is how relations can tie learning and development within them. This research found out the lack of training opportunities and support to achieve mainstreaming of education among them, however, human relations should never be forsaken as an important bridge for their learning and understanding their behavior (Krista, 2011). From the interview with the informants alongside with the parents and stakeholders, human relations emerged as an important thing since any LSEs should be provided with care and love in spite of their disability. They do consultations, mentoring and even supported in the different school programs to realize the teaching and learning of them.

**1.4. On supporting quality home environment.** Learners with special needs should not also be deprived of their rights for a stable home environment. To provide them with quality home environment in the home where they are, it is necessary to have also a critical look at their own home and practice to feel that they are accommodated well in spite their diverse education needs. Wang (2007) emphasized that families of children with disabilities particularly hearing impaired must meet the basic needs of their children in ensuring the highest possible quality of life; and in supporting what they want. In this research, parents were also given questionnaires to check on their practices at home. According to informants, issues on discrimination were observable, but should not be tolerated and this was further supported by parents emphasizing that inclusive education should be relational as it should expose their children to social interaction. Interview affirmed that their biggest challenge was to communicate since most didn't know how to do the sign language. At home also, family members were trained with the help of experts and these LSEs must be supported in whatever mainstream.

**Quantitative Display of Survey.** One important feature relevant to this study also was how stakeholders were able to support the demands and concerns of these LSEs. All the participants on the qualitative phase showed remarkable results that the help extended to these learners were their beyond doubt responsibilities. This evidence coincided with the over-all mean of 3.51, 0.22 SD with its indicators evaluated below such as *providing instruction, achieving quality learning environment, establishing human relations, and supporting quality home environment.*

**Table 5: Quantitative display of survey based on stakeholders' assessment on the level of support to LSENs demands**

<b>PROVIDING INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>QD</b>
1. <i>I give my very best to my students like giving modified instruction.</i>	3.30	0.13	SA
2. <i>I show competence in handling diverse learners.</i>	3.27	0.11	SA
3. <i>I provide resources to understand lessons immediately.</i>	3.13	0.13	SA
4. <i>I use sign language for instruction of LSENs.</i>	2.97	0.16	A
5. <i>I use ICT as a form of visual learning.</i>	3.20	0.12	SA
Mean	3.17	0.13	A
<b>ACHIEVING QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>			
1. <i>I provide child-friendly environment for them</i>	3.73	0.08	SA
2. <i>I support their active participation in classroom like collaborative learning.</i>	3.63	0.09	SA
3. <i>I give activities that would improve their socialization skills.</i>	3.47	0.12	SA
4. <i>I ask them to participate using sign language</i>	3.50	0.10	SA
5. <i>I support them of their learning</i>	3.43	0.15	SA
Mean	3.55	0.11	SA
<b>ESTABLISHING HUMAN RELATIONS</b>			
1. <i>I handle them with care and love.</i>	3.80	0.07	SA
2. <i>I extend patience.</i>	3.77	0.79	SA
3. <i>I put more efforts through individualized instruction</i>	3.40	0.11	SA
4. <i>I avoid conflict/bullying with others.</i>	3.83	0.84	SA
5. <i>I make them aware of the happenings around.</i>	3.67	0.11	SA
Mean	3.69	0.38	SA
<b>SUPPORTING QUALITY HOME ENVIRONMENT</b>			
1. <i>I care and love these LSENs.</i>	3.73	0.08	SA
2. <i>give provisions of their needs</i>	3.63	0.09	SA
3. <i>perform sign language on the things needed</i>	3.83	0.84	SA
4. <i>follow their needs and wants</i>	3.67	0.11	SA
5. <i>support financially</i>	3.27	0.11	SA
Mean	3.63	0.25	SA
Over-all Mean	3.51	0.22	SA

As presented above, support system is relevant to LSENs learning, success, and development. Primarily, they need people to support them, encourage them, and facilitate them on their conditions to reach their dreams. It can be noticed above that a common element in the support system among these people was the fact that they supported them much in the instruction at school, learning, relationship with other people, and at home. One of the informants shared that LSENs had the difficulty in understanding some lessons because there were no shadow teachers to correct them. In this part, four factors were considered like *instruction, learning environment, human relations, and home environment*.

Teachers supported much in the delivery of instruction to LSENs. Based from the results, participants expressed varying results on how instruction became meaningful to them like *giving their very best in giving modified instruction* evaluated as 3.30 M, 0.13 SD which means that they strongly supported to this, while *showing competence* is 3.27, 0.11 SD evaluated as strongly agree, *providing resources* to them evaluated as 3.13 M, 0.13 SD, *using sign language* evaluated as 2.97 M, 0.16 SD and *using ICT* evaluated as 3.20 M, 0.12 SD. It can be noticed that using sign language had low Mean which meant that this coincided with the responses of the LSENs that there were people who did not know how to use sign language which simply was affecting their learning at home and school. As mentioned above, the case for this was true on the absence of knowledge on using sign language and such phenomenon was therefore investigated, thus, it is one indicator that needs to be mastered and trained. Therefore, school heads should look at on this as a tool to effective instruction towards their success in the classroom. A good regular teacher should be able to use sign language properly to deliver the content and that no drawbacks on learning will lag the process of teaching. Considering such area of concentration, this needs a social action that any school administrator needs to upskill and reskill teachers' competence in the hope of providing specialized instruction with the most intensive support and opportunities (Shepherd, et al. 2016).

*“In school, the regular classroom is helping me. My friends respect me and even my teachers. In the room, some of my teachers don’t know how to do the sign language, but they are trying. When there are activities, I work with others and when it is snack time, I also socializes with others”*

The care to learning environment was considered as unique to LSENS since they should be provided conditions like providing child-friendly space, supporting to their needs, giving them activities, asking them to participate in school, and supporting them in their studies. In a class environment like this will therefore boost their mutual relations with others and sympathy for learning and classroom activities. From the results above, it was evident that those indicators mentioned were given by the stakeholders as evidenced by its 3.55 M, 0.11 SD which meant that they strongly supported to the endeavors of these LSENSs like *providing child-friendly environment* evaluated as 3.73 M, 0.08 SD, *supporting their active participation in classroom like collaborative learning* evaluated as 3.63 M, 0.09 SD, *giving activities that would improve their socialization skills* evaluated as 3.47 M, 0.12 SD, *asking them to participate using sign language* evaluated as 3.50 M, 0.10 SD, and *supporting them of their learning* evaluated as 3.43 M, 0.15 SD. In view of the statements, those should be considered inevitable since according to Armstrong, et al., (2016), special education should bring change in the practices of these learners like enjoying safe learning environment and such would bring connections to their special lives against struggle of inequality. LSENSs should be united in the struggle for equality like what others have felt and experienced and that is essential for their human rights.

*“I am in school and at home. I am able to mingle with others. My parents always looked at me everything I go home. In school, my friends do help in buying snacks and when going home.”*

Recent trends in inclusive education and legislations promoting access of children with exceptionalities to public schools have brought human relations to be one of the foci of attention to these LSENSs. It is therefore relevant to say that it should always be practiced for schools handling Special Education Program since it would increase and support the learners’ inclusion. Based from the informants, they considered themselves as individuals who need love and be accepted in spite their conditions. Human relation is therefore relevant as it is a phenomenon that includes them. From this point of view, it is therefore critically important to find out how educators and other people, with the help of them manage to develop a good relationship. With its general mean of 3.69, 0.38 SD, it can be concluded that these participants strongly supported to their initiatives of special education like *handling them with care and love* evaluated as 3.80 M, 0.07 SD, *extending patience* evaluated as 3.77 M, 0.79 SD, *putting more effort through individualized instruction* with 3.40 M, 0.11 SD, *avoiding conflict/bullying with others* with 3.83 M, 0.11 SD, and *making them aware of the happening around* with 3.67 M, 0.11 SD. This supported the claim of Schonert-Reichl, et al., (2015), that relative to the involvement of these learners into different school programs, they would (a) improve their cognitive control and stress physiology; (b) have greater empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness, (c) show greater decreases in self-reported symptoms of depression and peer-rated aggression, and (d) increase peer acceptance.

*“We are mainstreamed. We have a place in school. We do have classmates. We are being motivated by our teachers to cooperate and be in one with others. I play and I believe it’s our second home. We participate and in school we are taught with cooking skills. I was able to follow and I learned the job and I also made new friends during work immersion.”*

Learners with special needs should not also be deprived of their rights for a stable home environment. To provide them with quality home environment in the home where they were, it is necessary to have also a critical look at their own home and practice to feel that they are accommodated well in spite their diverse education needs. Wang (2007) emphasized that families of children with disabilities particularly hearing impaired must meet the basic needs of their children in ensuring the highest possible quality of life; and in supporting what they want. In this research, parents were also given questionnaires to check on their practices at home. Looking at the results above, it can be gleaned that parents strongly supported to the needs of their children with general mean of 3.62, 0.25 SD and were supported by actions like *being caring and loving* evaluated as 3.72, 0.08 SD, *giving provisions of their needs* with 3.63 M, 0.09 SD, *performing sign language on the things needed* with 3.83 M, 0.84 SD, *following their needs and wants* with 3.27 M, 0.11 SD, and *supporting them financially* with 3.27 M, 0.11 SD. As stressed by Fonseca (2018), parents who have more engagement with their learners with special needs at home are likely to be integrated, that is, they are engaged into what they are doing which practice serves as a tool to linking good relationship and parental involvement.

**Research Question 4. What was the level of support to inclusive practice among other LSENSs in terms of instruction, learning environment, and human relations?**

**Table 6: Quantitative display of survey based on other LSENs' assessment**

<b>PROVIDING INSTRUCTION</b>		Mean	SD	QD
1.	<i>I am given modified instruction.</i>	3.30	0.13	SA
2.	<i>I am handled and cared by my teachers with competence.</i>	3.20	0.12	SA
3.	<i>I am provided with resources to understand lessons immediately.</i>	3.13	0.13	SA
4.	<i>I use sign language for instruction of LSENs.</i>	2.97	0.16	A
5.	<i>I use ICT as a form of visual learning.</i>	3.67	0.11	SA
Mean		3.23	0.13	A
<b>ACHIEVING QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>				
1.	<i>I am provided with a child-friendly environment.</i>	3.73	0.08	SA
2.	<i>I am supported in classroom like collaborative learning.</i>	3.63	0.09	SA
3.	<i>I am given activities that would improve my socialization skills.</i>	3.47	0.12	SA
4.	<i>I am asked to participate using sign language.</i>	3.50	0.10	SA
5.	<i>I am supported in different forms of learning.</i>	3.73	0.08	SA
Mean		3.61	0.4	SA
<b>ESTABLISHING HUMAN RELATIONS</b>				
1.	<i>I am handled with care and love.</i>	3.80	0.07	SA
2.	<i>I extend patience.</i>	3.13	0.13	SA
3.	<i>I put more efforts through individualized instruction</i>	3.40	0.11	SA
4.	<i>I avoid conflict/bullying with others.</i>	3.83	0.84	SA
5.	<i>I make them aware of the happenings around.</i>	3.67	0.11	SA
Mean		3.69	0.38	SA
<b>SUPPORTING QUALITY HOME ENVIRONMENT</b>				
1.	<i>I am cared and loved by the people around me.</i>	3.77	0.79	SA
2.	<i>I am given provisions of their needs</i>	3.63	0.09	SA
3.	<i>I perform sign language on the things needed</i>	3.83	0.84	SA
4.	<i>I follow their needs and wants</i>	3.27	0.11	SA
5.	<i>I am supported financially</i>	3.27	0.11	SA
Mean		3.56	0.39	SA
Over-all Mean		3.52	0.33	SA

The inclusion of other LSENs in this research study was also relevant as they were necessary to knowing how inclusive practices were also practiced. It is also important to note that other LSENs apart from those who were interviewed were also considered since their participation was needed to highlight their data on SPED practices. As shown in the table above, the responses of these other LSENs showed that they were strongly supported by teachers and stakeholders as evident of its 3.52 M, 0.33 SD. Such was manifested on indicators like *instruction, learning environment, human relations, and home environment*. This implies that in spite their needs and demands, still, they were supported in different areas indispensable to their needs. Obviously, in terms of instruction, other LSENs were *given modified instruction* with 3.30 M, 0.13 SD, *handled and cared by teachers with competence* with 3.20 M, 0.12 SD, *provided with resources to understand lessons immediately* with 3.13 M, 0.13 SD, *use sign language for instruction* with 2.97 M, 0.16 SD, and *use ICT for visual learning* with 3.67 M, 0.11 SD.

This research was directed not only by focusing instruction but also understanding its learning environment. Learning environment as used in this study refers to how LSENs were supported with their learning in spite their conditions. As shown, the responses of these LSENs show that they were strongly supported by teachers and stakeholders as evident on its 3.61 M, 0.4 SD with indicators like *providing child-friendly environment* with 3.73 M, 0.08 SD, *supporting in classroom like collaborative learning* with 3.63 M, 0.09 SD, *giving activities that would improve socialization skills* with 3.47 M, 0.12 SD, *asking to participate using sign language* with 3.50 M, 0.10 SD, and *supporting in different forms of learning* with 3.73 M, 0.08 SD. This implies that most LSENs were not restricted to enjoying inclusivity as they were engaged to different activities in a free learning environment.

With instruction and learning environment both indispensable to LSENs, human relations also contribute to inclusive practice as most of them share the same responses that they were strongly supported with 3.69 M, 0.38 SD. Such was manifested with indicators like *being handled with care and love* with 3.80 M, 0.07 SD, *extending patience* with 3.13 M, 0.13 SD, *putting more efforts through individualized instruction* with 3.40 M, 0.11 SD, *avoiding conflict* with 3.83 M,

0.84 SD, and *making them aware of the happenings around* with 3.69 M, and 0.38 SD. This implies that generally, these LSEs enjoyed sense of gregariousness through human social activities to help them improved and boosted their confidence. Further, relations between teachers and stakeholders were also consistent.

LSEs who were part of this research study were supported by their parents which is therefore important also to inclusive practice. As shown in the table above, LSEs were strongly supported by their parents at home with 3.56 M, 0.39 SD. Such was manifested by indicators like *being cared and loved by the people around them* with 3.77 M, 0.79 SD, *being given with their needs* with 3.63 M, 0.09 SD, *performing sign language on the things needed* with 3.83 M, 0.84 SD, *following their needs and wants* with 3.27 M, 0.11 SD, and *being supported financially* with 3.27 M, 0.39 SD. With the results, this implies that home is also vital for LSEs as it becomes their foundation of learning where they are primarily taught with the basics of living, social interaction, and belongingness.

**Table 7: Summary on the Quantitative Display of Survey based on the Assessment of Regular Teachers, Stakeholders, and Other LSEs**

INDICATORS	Mean	SD	QD
<b>REGULAR TEACHERS</b>			
Seeking Help From Others	3.21	0.12	A
Having Difficulty In Understanding Lesson	3.56	0.12	SA
Being Discriminated	3.52	0.12	SA
Being Bullied	3.47	0.12	SA
		0.12	SA
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
Providing Instruction	3.17	0.13	A
Achieving Quality Learning Environment	3.55	0.11	SA
Establishing Human Relations	3.69	0.38	SA
Supporting To Quality Home Environment	3.62	0.25	SA
	3.51	0.22	SA
<b>OTHER LSEs ASSESSMENT</b>			
Providing Instruction	3.23	0.13	A
Achieving Quality Learning Environment	3.61	0.4	SA
Establishing Human Relations	3.69	0.38	SA
Supporting To Quality Home Environment	3.56	0.39	SA
	3.52	0.33	SA
<i>Over-all Mean &amp; Standard Deviation</i>	3.50	0.24	SA

Table 7 showed the construct validity of receiving teachers, stakeholders and other LSEs. It clearly showed how relevant to them were the support from the other people they received and even LSEs perceptions. With this, administrators must be aware of the benefits that these persons had given as they were effective to giving concrete outcomes of support and partnership. They must also recognize that their assessment and effective triangulation are evidences to support the claim of this study.

From the table, it can be gleaned that regular teachers strongly supported to the demands of LSEs like *seeking help from others* (3.21 M, 0.12 SD), *having difficulty in understanding the lesson* (3.56 M, 0.12 M), *being discriminated* (3.52 M, 0.12 SD), and *being bullied* (3.47 M, 0.12 SD) while stakeholders including parents and other partners also strongly support the LSEs' instruction (3.17 M, 0.13 SD), learning environment (3.55 M, 0.11 SD), human relations (3.55 M, 0.11 SD) and home environment (3.62 M, 0.25 SD). According to Tzivnikou (2015), learners with disabilities depend upon how special education teachers in partnership with parents help in providing effective instruction and in improving their growth and development (Cancia, et al., 2010). However, this also depends upon how the school leaders provide conditions necessary to learn and to engage in effective instructional practices for learners with the most significant learning needs like care and strong support (Mandra & Murray, 2000). Further, healthy parental attitude (Masood, et.al., 2007) should always be the top priority among parents and teachers as it allows full acceptance among the LSEs that they interact and that no discrimination happens (Antshe & Joseph, 2006). Administrative support and school culture further influence the teachers' effectiveness and learners' achievement.

On the other hand, as part of this research, other LSEs apart from those being interviewed were tasked to participate also. As shown from the table above, it showed that they were strongly supported by teachers and stakeholders based on it 3.52 M, 0.33 SD. Such was also manifested by indicators like *providing instruction* with 3.23 M, 0.13 SD, *achieving*

quality learning environment with 3.61 M, 0.4 SD, establishing human relations with 3.69 M, 0.38 SD, and supporting to quality home environment with 3.56 M, 0.39 SD.

**Synthesis of RQs from Qualitative Phase to Quantitative Phase.** This research study was designed as an empirical study with a focus on certain methodology. The sequential exploratory design was employed in this study which the qualitative data were collected, analyzed, and developed into quantitative items which were in turn used for quantitative purposes. The integration of the two phases was necessary to complete the process of the method used. However, there remained mixed research questions to be addressed which condensed the point of this study like (1) *How is the survey instrument developed and confirmed the qualitative themes?* (2) *Based on the results from the quantitative phase, how would the recommendations from the qualitative phase be prioritized?*, and (3) *How does the instrument being designed based on the qualitative data provide a better measure of the phenomenon?*

**Table 8: Sample Joint Display of Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Strands**

Theme	In-persons Interview	Survey
Core Question: <i>What are the needs and demands of LSEs?</i>		
Qualitative Phase		
RQ 1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of age, sex, monthly income, number of years, category of the disability, and origin of the disability?	<i>(data taken from the interview which details were presented from the results)</i>	Not applicable
RQ 2: What are the challenges encountered by learners with special needs as to: academic performance; social relationship; school environment; and home environment?	<i>"I feel sad being inside the class, because I am not able to talk to them like they do that's why I remain silent and feel sad. I don't try to as somebody why I was born like this because I can see my parents being happy with me that is why I feel happy too."</i>	Not applicable
Quantitative Phase		
RQ 1: What is the profile of the participants in terms of age, sex, monthly income, number of years, category of the disability, and origin of the disability?	<i>(data taken from the questionnaire which details were presented from the results)</i>	Varied data presented based on the profile from parents, teachers and stakeholders
RQ 2: What is the level of support of stakeholders (internal and external) to meeting the needs as learners with special needs as to: instruction; learning environment; human relations, and home environment	<i>"My teachers help me in my studies. They are skilled. They are like my parents. They let us improve our social skills through school activities. What is important with us is we are being helped in school and at home."</i>	3.51 Mean based on N=30 which results show that LSEs are strongly supported by stakeholders in terms of instruction, learning environment, and home environment
RQ 3: What is the level of support to inclusive practice among other LSEs in terms of instruction, learning environment, and human relations?	<i>"We are mainstreamed. We have a place in school. We do have classmates. We are being motivated by our teachers to cooperate and be in one with others. I play and I believe it's our second home. We participate and in school we are taught with cooking skills. I was able to follow and I learned the job and I also made new friends during work immersion."</i>	3.52 M based on N=30 which according to results these other LSEs are supported by their teachers and stakeholders in inclusive practices.
Themes Developed		
	<i>"I used to have written instructions like visual aids, or in a projector. Don't let them stay at the back and you have to use sign language when you are going to</i>	3.21 M based on N=30 which according to results are strongly supported by teachers when LSEs seek for help in academic

Seeking Help from Others	<i>communicate them. Through sign language, I'm using the synonyms and antonyms, different approaches and I'm using the simplified form for them to easily understand. I communicate them by using sign language. Just like what I said earlier, everyday I always try to learn on how to do sign language and slowly I am able to learn it and I get to connect with them easily.</i>	problems
Having Difficulty in Understanding the lessons	<i>"I am in school and at home. I am able to mingle with others. My parents always looked at me everything I go home. In school, my friends do help in buying snacks and when going home."</i>	3.56 M based on N=30 which according to results are strongly supported by teachers on their difficulty to understand lessons while at school.
Being Discriminated	<i>"I encounter problems sometimes in school when talking to my classmates not informing me having an assignment. I am sometimes misinterpreted by others and only a few can do sign language. They only make adjustments in terms of my way of learning.:"</i>	3.52 M based on N=30 which according to the results are strongly supported by stakeholders and teachers to be stopped and not to be abused by others
Being bullied	<i>"Some people can and cannot understand my or our situation. Like me who is an H.I (Hearing Impaired) learner, there should be "No Judgement" in the classroom or even to my LSEN friends to feel that we are more comfortable, that they don't hurt me or us. We are sometimes hurt due to bullying but we still play around. We just understand them."</i>  <i>"Sometimes it happens to me, and it hurts me so much, I hate being bullied each time they look at me and laugh and talk with other students. They just hurt me the way they look and take even I don't understand but I'm also thankful because they do not hurt me physically."</i>	3.47 M based on N=30 which according to results are strongly supported by LSEs that bullying be stopped and that policies concerning to it may be strictly implemented to establish good social relations and learning environment.

Table 8 above showed how research questions were crafted from the qualitative and quantitative phases which directly presented the first two parts of the sequential exploratory design. The joint display of data presented above was expanded through the development of the research instrument necessary in the entire process. A joint display allowed the integration data which was brought together to draw out new insights beyond the information gained from the separate results.

**Research Question 1. How was the survey instrument developed and confirmed the qualitative themes?** In general, the mixed method approach capitalized the strength of the qualitative and quantitative phases which at the end of this research developed an instrument to validate responses from the informants, and the relevance of their perspectives towards the entire study. Further, there were strategies developed in ensuring the quality of the instrument like identifying the transcripts, evaluating the words and creating pool of it, and condensing it to form relevant theme. Additionally, such formulated constructs were relative to the qualitative findings as presented at first. As the analysis progressed and new ideas were discovered and new model was suggested, the researchers were able to understand the process and the phenomenon being studied. With relevant reflections, the researchers believed that those who answered in response to the questions on how the survey instrument confirmed the qualitative themes. There was a similar perspective generated, however, such isn't easy to provide since the instrument development would entail time and commitment.

**Research Question 2: Based on the results from the quantitative phase, how would the recommendations from the qualitative phase be prioritized?** On the second question which asked the recommendations for the development of instrument from its qualitative phase to quantitative phase, one should consider the following things such as (1) *knowing the rationale of the instrument* which simply means that any researcher doing the mixed method approach should be able to understand the context or the phenomenon being studied, (2) *describing and presenting the process of the instrument development* which means that by providing a thematic extraction at first would provide an easy development of statements; and (3) *connecting words to clearly articulate the connections of these words*.

**Research Question 3: How did the instrument being designed based on the qualitative data provide a better measure of the phenomenon?** On the third question which asked about how the instrument provided a better measure of the phenomenon being studied, the researchers believed that reviews, consistent construct validation and scale development were necessary. It is very important that the instrument was checked and validated through a combination of strategies like identifying the transcripts and assisting in the development of major statements. The items in the instrument developed comprised potential indicators categorized and were generated from the qualitative constructs. They were ordered as follows: *seeking help from others, having difficulty in lessons, being discriminated, and being bullied*. Items are written in declarative sentences with four categories - Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree. Additionally, basic demographic profile among the participants was included like sex, position, educational attainment, and training attended. For this study, another group of people was involved to answer the instrument like teachers, stakeholders, and even other LSEs part from those being interviewed. Its development was reviewed in relevance to the qualitative constructs developed from the qualitative phase. The inclusion of scale was also necessary for the purpose of construct validity.

**Research Question 4: Based from the thematic constructs developed from the qualitative phase, what eidetic framework was offered highlighting the demands and needs of the LSEs?**

Figure 2 above showed the proposed eidetic framework on the demands of LSEs based from their themes developed and construct validity. There were four themes developed like *seeking help from others, having difficulty in lessons, being discriminated, and being bullied*. The first theme emerged because of the need to address the lack of sign language or shadow teachers which hampered the communication and learning among LSEs in their academic studies. The second theme was developed because no assistance extended to help them. The third theme was developed because of problems on bullying and discrimination which most of the LSEs encountered in school and home. The fourth theme emerged because of the demands of LSEs to provide their needs in spite their conditions from bullying to full acceptance of who they were.



Figure 2: Challenges of Learners with Special Educational Needs

### Supporting DepEd's Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is now a byword of new brand of education. It is a concept that has taken on an important light in the realm of education. Indeed, the underpinning key to this is full inclusion and acceptance when *“things are done the right*

*way for them*” and when “*customers are right*” under all circumstances. Enthused by DepEd’s goals and objectives as a fundamental approach in satisfying learners today explore different ways of teaching differences. The inclusion of SPED today in schools brings a significant impact as it caters learners regardless of their type and personality. As stressed by one informant, “*What pushes me is love and I consider them as my own kids.*” In this research, certain conditions are addressed in the future as support to inclusive education.

**Conclusions.** Based from the eidetic framework developed for the purpose of this research study, four themes emerged which were the bases for considering the lived experiences of the LSEs. These three themes included like *being bullied, being discriminated, and seeking help through sign language*. These developed themes implied that certain ideas were needed to understand the nature of the phenomenon. Being inclusive does not end with just being included in the academic setting. Different adjustments and modifications from the regular teachers and parents are to be made in order to be accommodated. These LSEs might find this not easy to adjust in a kind of environment wherein they are deemed as socially incompetent, in which they found out that are feeling socially isolated and lonely and having lower self- esteem. However, being inclusive intends to be accepted. As such, there are certain factors considered while the researchers conduct the study like the lack of shadow teachers and resources. On being inclusive, informants emphasized that they felt either sad or isolated. In some instances, some of them experienced bullying and hateful stares to physical and verbal bullying. On using sign language, most of them used sign language or either write their thoughts on papers if no one can understand them, however, confronted by problems from other people like poor knowledge on the use of sign language. With this, administrators should provide more training programs that would reskill and upskill the teachers’ competence. On social communication, informants were still struggling in coping up classes, however, they were assisted by regular teachers and classmates who knew how to use the sign language and their participation to various school activities.

**Model on LSEs Needs and Demands.** Any qualitative research must build on certain theory or framework. Thus, this research proposed a model on LSEs needs and demands which was based from the collection and analysis of its qualitative data. Since the presentation of data was generally inductive, the proposed framework on this research was discovered, developed, and verified through a systemic collection of thematic constructs pertaining to the phenomenon. In relation to its core question which asked, *What is the lived experience of hearing impaired students?*, there were multiple thematic constructs generated based from its transformed concepts like *seeking help from others, having difficulty in lessons, being discriminated, and being bullied*. In this part, the researchers provided a model which in the future would be necessary for implementing the significant practices as described and discussed above. The components included in this model provided a framework necessary to understand the phenomenon of the LSEs and its institutionalization towards the realization of the DepEd goals on inclusive education. Further, the model was presented in a structure below which contained the demands and concerns of the LSEs which such elements are necessary towards DepEd’s initiatives and reforms of inclusive education as included in the BESRA (Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda), Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, and DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones’ 10 Point Education Agenda. Since results the results would be implemented and become a basis for any plans of the organization or even SPED implementing schools, top management should be clear on its localized or contextualized blueprint in terms of systematic formulation of policies anchored in Inclusive Education guiding all policy makers in the procedures constituting the entire policy development process anchored in DepEd’s vision, mission and core values geared towards achievement of education goals and outcomes.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study tries to shed light on the concerns of LSEs from their perspectives on demands and concern and engagement of regular teachers, parents and stakeholders, However, findings suggested that the way to fulfill these demands goes through some factors and can’t be achieved immediately, thus, this needs time to enforce their needs. At the top of this is the lack of regular teachers in school who can handle specific learning disability like hearing impaired learners at Surigao City National High School. As mentioned above in this research on the challenges encountered and as the school offers SPED, it is important to initiate school reforms and plans for the realization of their provision. Sooner or later, it can be realized through partnership with other organizations whose advocacy is on inclusive education. It is therefore relevant also to do the school its functions, roles, and curriculum change with the aim of adapting the content, methods, assessment and materials of these LSEs. It is also important to hire more licensed SPED teachers who can handle issues of these learners. Regular teachers should also collaborate with the learners in providing an inclusive environment where

acceptance and love are always at the top of their priorities. Since this is a new form of education, researchers or other research enthusiasts should not stop conducting this study since this is a new source of seeing differences of people. This research study suggests that there is a need to intensify the plans of the school and study more that there are challenges and barriers on inclusive education.

**Research Question 5: What monitoring and evaluation plan was proposed to further sustain the SPED Program in school?** The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is a written document developed for LSENs' needs and the school's programs be monitored and evaluated in terms of its current needs, performance, goals, and special services to be delivered. This plan would also assist regular teachers or even stakeholders to monitor their work and provide necessary technical assistance to the learners. This will be updated monthly and such be monitored in collaboration with their parents and community members. Certain aspects also of the curriculum be modified and planned to ensure the maximum participation of the LSENs.

<i>Vision Statement:</i> To envision meaningful work and support towards inclusive education.							
<i>Background:</i> With Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, the Department of Education (DepEd) ensures that programs, projects, and activities are created towards the holistic development of learners and its personnel, sets directions for policies and standards, and establishes authority, accountability, and responsibility for achieving higher learning outcomes.							
<i>Funding Source:</i> MOOE and Partnership Source							
<i>Elements to be Sustained:</i> Sustainability Element 1: <i>Program Support</i> Sustainability Element 2: <i>Teachers' Training and Development Program</i> Sustainability Element 3: <i>Technical Assistance</i> Sustainability Element 4: <i>School Policy Development</i>							
<i>Working Partners:</i> BEST, DepEd Caraga Regional Office, Schools Division Office of Surigao City							
<i>Time Frame:</i> 2020-2021							
<i>Sustainability on Program Support:</i> Having a support system/partners to implement the program							
<i>Sustainability Objective:</i> By 2021, there will be a continued support of the program that directly impacts governance from parents, teachers, and stakeholders' partnerships.							
Steps to achieve objectives:	Persons Responsible	Strategic Considerations	Estimated Financial Plan	Timetable			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The top management determines potential partners willing to support the program.	School Principal/ SPED Focal Person	Conduct survey/interview with people who champion reforms/changes in the organization.	P100,000.00				
2. There is a need to review existing policies on Special Education Program Implementation.		Gather and collect data related to LSENs					
3. The top management considers challenges/drawbacks in terms of support.		Provide analysis on the decline/approval of the support to the program.					
4. The top management presents schedule of partnership agreement/discussion.		Discuss relevant matters on sustaining the project.					
5. Schedule of approval for support.		Development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for building support and partnership.					

<i>Sustainability on Administrators/Teachers' Training and Development Program: Giving of training to teachers to enhance sign language</i>							
<i>Sustainability Objective: By 2021, teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values to using sign language.</i>							
Steps to achieve objectives:	Persons Responsible	Strategic Considerations	Estimated Financial Plan	Timetable			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The top management determines potential administrators or teachers to attend training on Sign Language	School Principal	Screen documents/profile of potential teachers.	P100,000.00				
2. Trained administrators or teachers utilize training learned for cascading to inexpert teachers in Learning Action Cells (LAC) or any program suitable for echo.		Collect information for the re-echo of teachers.					
3. The SPED Program Focal Person develops activity design approved by the top management.		Check design's content and other necessary details.					
4. The Focal Person prepares program and informative presentation to the participants.		Plan and organize a team for the preparation of the program and for the training of teachers					
5. The Focal Person submits report and progress of the program and evaluated and approved by the top management based on its rules and regulation on reporting		Inform in-charge of the prompt submission of the progression strategy report or project briefer after the conduct of the program.					
<i>Sustainability on Technical Assistance: Having a mentoring/coaching program for teachers on using sign language and curriculum modifications</i>							
<i>Sustainability Objective: By 2024, there will be a continued support of the program through coaching/mentoring program.</i>							
Steps to achieve objectives:	Persons Responsible	Strategic Considerations	Estimated Financial Plan	Timetable			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The top management contacts teachers who will be part in the mentoring/coaching program.	School Principal	Screen profile of teachers for possible listing of mentoring/coaching.	P50,000.00				
2. The top management crafts memo and activity design duly approved by the Schools Division Superintendent or Higher Office of the institution.		Ask approval from the top management on the conduct of the activity.					
3. The Office sends memo to teachers and informs the concerned personnel on his/her involvement to assistance program.		Release memo online or have it printed for wide dissemination.					

4. The top management prepares program, evaluates its effectiveness, and disseminates results to the body.		Organize team to help prepare the program.					
5. The administrators/teachers must be able to provide more contact time with the participants for coaching/mentoring since this builds more interaction and involvement.		Instruct coaches/mentors to have more contact time in coaching/mentoring.					
<i>Sustainability on Policy Development:</i> Providing a strict implementation of the policy on No Discrimination and No Bullying.							
<i>Sustainability Objective:</i> By 2024, teachers/division personnel are guided with the policy.							
Steps to achieve objectives:	Persons Responsible	Strategic Considerations	Estimated Financial Plan	Timetable			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. The top management determines people to craft the localized/contextualized policy.	School Principal/ SPED Focal Person	Call attention of the involved personnel.	P10,000.00				
2. The top management review policies to check progress and drawbacks of the previous project implementation, results, and evaluation.		Establish connections with the team to conduct review of the policies.					
3. The top management or concerned personnel provide the policy for their guidance and action.		Immediate release of the memo.					
4. The top management holds sessions with the team for challenges/review of the policy to be stipulated in the handbook.		Agree on the location of the meeting for convergence.					
5. The top management establishes monitoring and evaluation of the policy for future action/studies.		Review and present successes and challenges of the policy developed. ( <i>see Success Story</i> )					

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