

Assessing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Library Services for Persons with Disabilities: a case Study in a Philippine Academic Library

**Ms. Judelyn Avila¹, Ms. Maila Comercias², Ms. Ma.Danica Hao³,
Joyce Pascua⁴, Marielle Torregosa⁵, Gener Nepomoceno⁶**

ABSTRACT

Academic libraries serve as essential gateways to knowledge, fostering intellectual growth and supporting the teaching, learning, and research functions of higher education institutions. In recent years, the call for inclusivity has underscored the necessity of ensuring that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are provided equitable access to library services. This study examined the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities at Colegio San Agustin-Biñan. Its purpose was to assess inclusive services in terms of physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery, and accessible learning resources, while also identifying implementation challenges and proposing improvements for accessibility and inclusivity. The study used an exploratory qualitative single case study design, combining a semi-structured questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis to gather data from library users and staff. Findings reveal that inclusivity efforts are present but remain developmental. The study concluded that while the library has made initial efforts toward inclusivity, significant gaps remain in policies, infrastructure, staffing, and resources. It recommends strengthening institutional policies and implementing a more systematic accessibility framework to better serve persons with disabilities.

Keywords: inclusive library services, persons with disabilities (PWDs), assistive technology, service delivery, accessibility

Introduction

Academic libraries serve as essential gateways to knowledge, fostering intellectual growth and supporting the teaching, learning, and research functions of higher education institutions. In recent years, the call for inclusivity has underscored the necessity of ensuring that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are provided equitable access to library services. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are defined under Philippine law as individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when combined with societal barriers, restrict full participation on equal terms (Republic Act No. 7277, 1992; Republic Act No. 9442, 2007). These statutes mandate inclusive access to education, employment, health, and public services, extending to academic libraries. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) further requires higher education institutions to adopt inclusive practices, ensuring equitable access to knowledge through their libraries.

Despite these legal frameworks, accessibility in academic libraries remains inconsistent. Physical barriers such as inadequate ramps, narrow pathways, and poor signage continue to hinder mobility (Ahmed et al., 2020; Khan, 2025). This gap between mandated inclusivity and lived experiences highlights the need for user-centered studies in the Philippine context.

Assistive technologies—such as screen readers, AI-powered tools, and adaptive devices—are critical enablers of autonomy. Evidence suggests that integration within universal design frameworks enhances accessibility, yet empirical studies on their actual use and effectiveness in Philippine academic libraries remain scarce (Johnson, 2023; Paul & Chauhan, 2024; Alcantara-Rodenas et al., 2024). Challenges of sustainability and technical expertise further complicate adoption in developing contexts.

Service quality significantly shapes user satisfaction within academic environments, with library staff responsiveness, competence, and communication channels playing a central role in meeting user expectations (Cristobal, 2018; Garcia, 2024; Seno-Sanoria, 2025). Human support remains essential even in technologically advanced systems, yet contradictions emerge as digital collections expand while many scholarly materials fail to meet accessibility standards, limiting usability for visually impaired users. Philippine studies often emphasize librarians' perceptions (Bala, 2023), whereas international research underscores the importance of adaptive, user-centered service models (Lopez et al., 2023; Purnomo et al., 2025).

While previous Philippine studies have examined librarians' perceptions of accessibility and the implementation of assistive technologies, limited research has explored inclusive library services from both provider and user perspectives within a single institution. Few have offered a unified evaluation of physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery, and information resources. To address this gap, the present study employs a case study approach at Colegio San Agustin–Biñan, combining survey data, interviews, and document analysis to assess accessibility practices, implementation challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Taken together, the literature reveals progress in policy and technology but persistent challenges in infrastructure, assistive tools, service delivery, and digital resources. This contradiction between formal compliance and lived user experience underscores the need for empirical, user-centered approaches. This study examines the perspectives of both library users and librarians to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities (PWDs). It specifically seeks to determine what inclusive services are currently implemented in terms of physical access to facilities and the environment, the availability and use of assistive technologies, the quality-of-service delivery, and the accessibility of information resources. In addition, it explores the challenges encountered in implementing these services, investigates how existing policies, programs, and practices either support or limit inclusiveness, and proposes improvements to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in library services for PWDs.

Case Study Introduction

The subject of this study is the academic library services of the Colegio San Agustin-Biñan. The College Library was established in SY 1998–1999, while the Senior High School Library was established in SY 2016–2017. It offers comprehensive services including book lending, digital access, research support, orientation, and collection development, all governed by clear policies to support the academic and personal growth of its community. The participants were purposively selected that allowed the researchers to gather diverse perspectives across different roles in the academic community. By including both users (students, faculty, staff) and providers (librarian, director), the study ensures the balanced assessment of service effectiveness from both sides of the library experience.

Scope and Limitation

This study focused on assessing the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities

(PWDs) at Colegio San Agustin - Biñan. Specifically, the study examined the implementation of inclusive library services in terms of physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery, and accessible information resources. It also explored the challenges encountered in the implementation of inclusive library services, existing institutional policies and practices, and possible improvements to enhance accessibility and inclusivity within the library.

The study was limited only to Colegio San Agustin - Biñan and did not include other academic libraries in the Philippines. Furthermore, the findings of the study were based solely on the responses, experiences, and available institutional documents gathered during the conduct of the research. Since the study focused on a single institution and involved a limited number of participants, the findings may not be generalized to all Philippine academic libraries.

Physical Access in Academic Libraries

Despite inclusive education policies worldwide, physical accessibility in academic libraries remains uneven. Access is not only about legal compliance but also about independence, comfort, and equal participation for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The present study found accessibility features in place but unevenly applied, reflecting progress alongside persistent gaps.

Nomura (2023), through the updated IFLA Guidelines, stresses that accessibility must prioritize dignity and active participation rather than minimal compliance. A study of *Accessibility in Academic Libraries: An Evaluation of Conditions and Practices of Twelve Academic Libraries in Türkiye* (2025) similarly reveals inconsistent implementation, where ramps and elevators exist but poor maintenance undermines inclusivity. These findings suggest accessibility is often treated as a technical add-on rather than a systemic design principle.

Moirangthem and Phuritsabam (2022) highlight broader institutional and financial constraints in India, framing infrastructural barriers as symptoms of weak governance and fragmented policy. In the Philippines, Carungui (2016) notes incremental progress through partnerships with the National Library, while Rosales (2025) identifies budgetary limitations and lack of prioritization as systemic obstacles, resulting in uneven improvements such as inaccessible entrances and inadequate navigation systems.

Global and local studies converge on a layered problem: international guidelines articulate robust standards, yet financial constraints and weak institutional commitment hinder realization. Infrastructure alone does not guarantee independence; user experiences continue to expose gaps in mobility and comfort. Developing contexts face deeper challenges of resource scarcity and policy fragmentation, while developed contexts struggle with integration and maintenance.

Assessing inclusive library services therefore requires moving beyond checklist compliance to evaluating lived experiences of PWDs. Accessibility must be understood as a dynamic process involving infrastructure, institutional commitment, and user-centered design. The Philippine case illustrates how resource constraints intersect with policy gaps, offering insights into the complexities of implementing inclusivity in developing academic library systems.

Assistive technologies in Academic Libraries

Assistive technologies have become increasingly important in supporting equitable access to information for persons with disabilities in academic libraries. As digital learning environments continue to expand, adaptive technologies help bridge accessibility gaps and promote independent learning.

Purnomo and Wikandani (2025) found that adaptive technologies such as screen readers, speech

recognition systems, and Braille displays significantly improve access to digital resources for visually impaired users. Their study emphasized that assistive technologies promote independence and improve academic participation among students with disabilities. Similarly, Rashid (2023) emphasized that libraries serving differently abled students should integrate assistive technologies into everyday library operations to improve accessibility and inclusivity. Both studies agree that assistive technologies enhance equitable access to educational resources and support independent learning.

Although the reviewed studies consistently recognized the value of assistive technologies in enhancing accessibility within academic libraries, they differed in their emphasis on the factors influencing successful implementation. Agabirwe and Kiyangi (2020) highlighted user-related challenges, reporting that visually impaired students continued to experience barriers due to limited ICT support and inadequate training despite the availability of assistive technologies. Similarly, Pope and Thompson-Franklin (2025) emphasized that the underutilization of these technologies was largely attributed to low user awareness and the lack of systematic promotion by libraries. In contrast, Alcantara-Rodenas et al. (2024) and Bala (2025) focused on institutional constraints, identifying limited funding, insufficient technical expertise, maintenance concerns, and inadequate staff training as significant barriers to sustaining accessibility initiatives. Collectively, these findings suggest that while assistive technologies have considerable potential to improve library accessibility, their effectiveness depends on the integration of technological resources with institutional commitment, continuous technical support, staff competency, and user engagement.

Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a gap in understanding how academic libraries can effectively integrate assistive technologies into routine library services while ensuring their sustainability and maximizing user utilization. Most studies have focused either on the effectiveness of assistive technologies or on implementation challenges, with limited attention given to combining institutional and user-related factors in assessing accessibility initiatives.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the implementation of assistive technologies in academic libraries, considering not only their availability but also the factors influencing their effective utilization, including sustainability, technical support, staff competency, and user awareness. By doing so, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how academic libraries can strengthen inclusive and accessible services for persons with disabilities.

Service Delivery in Academic Libraries

Service delivery remains a critical aspect of accessibility because the quality of interaction between library staff and PWD users significantly affects overall user experience and satisfaction.

Rabita (2021) emphasized that effective library services for persons with disabilities require librarians who are knowledgeable about disability inclusion and adaptive service approaches. The study revealed that insufficient staff preparation often leads to communication barriers and inconsistent service delivery. Pope and Thompson-Franklin (2025) also highlighted that collaboration between libraries and disability support offices improves accessibility services and strengthens institutional inclusivity. Their review found that coordinated support systems help librarians better understand and address the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

ALA (2022), in its accessibility landscape review, stressed that inclusive library services should extend beyond physical access to include accessible communication systems, flexible service procedures, and responsive user assistance. The report emphasized that staff development and institutional commitment

are essential components of effective service delivery.

Another international study by Nazim and Ali (2025) revealed that users with disabilities continue to encounter barriers in accessing library services due to inadequate staff assistance and limited awareness of accessibility practices. The study further noted that user satisfaction improves when librarians demonstrate responsiveness, empathy, and adaptability.

Locally, Bala (2025) found that librarians in the Philippines generally support inclusive library services but face constraints such as limited accessibility training, insufficient staffing, and inadequate institutional resources. These challenges affect the consistency and quality of services provided to PWD users. Similarly, Rosales (2025) observed that many Philippine libraries lack structured service systems specifically designed for users with disabilities, resulting in inconsistent accessibility practices that negatively influence user participation and satisfaction.

Taken together, the reviewed literature shows broad agreement that effective service delivery in academic libraries depends on the integration of competent library personnel, institutional support, and user-centered service practices. Across studies, staff competence and disability awareness are consistently identified as essential determinants of service quality (Rabita, 2021; Nazim and Ali, 2025), while institutional collaboration, policy support, and organizational commitment are also recognized as critical enabling factors (Pope & Thompson-Franklin, 2025; ALA, 2022). However, differences exist in the emphasis placed on human resource capacity versus institutional systems, indicating that service delivery is a multidimensional construct rather than a single-factor issue. Despite these complementary insights, existing studies generally examine these components separately, with limited effort to integrate personnel, organizational, and service-level factors into a unified analytical framework. This fragmentation is also evident in Philippine studies, which tend to highlight training gaps, resource limitations, and structural deficiencies in isolation (Bala, 2025; Rosales, 2025). The present study addresses this gap by examining service delivery as an integrated dimension of academic library accessibility, thereby contributing evidence to support more holistic and sustainable approaches to inclusive library service design and implementation.

Learning Resources in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries in the Philippines function as hubs for knowledge dissemination, resource access, and inclusive education. For persons with disabilities (PWDs), they are gateways to equitable participation in academic life. The integration of learning resources — ranging from traditional print collections to digital platforms and assistive technologies — has become central to advancing inclusive practices. Republic Act 11650 mandates universal design principles, requiring libraries to ensure accessibility through specialized materials such as Braille, audiobooks, screen readers, and adaptive software.

Studies highlight both opportunities and constraints in resource utilization. Garcia et al. (2024) and Oñez & Pabalan (2025) argue that effective integration of traditional and digital resources enhances student performance, though Garcia emphasizes systemic inequities in funding and access, while Oñez & Pabalan stress managerial practices and equity gaps. Ondong (2024) shifts focus to the lived realities of school heads and teachers, underscoring human adaptability and community support as critical coping mechanisms. Carungui (2016) documents partnerships with the National Library of the Philippines that expand access to Braille and audiobooks, but notes uneven implementation tied to institutional capacity. International perspectives, including Pope & Thompson-Franklin (2025) and the American Library Association (ALA) Accessibility Toolkits, reinforce the importance of universal design and assistive

technologies. Pope & Thompson-Franklin highlight librarians as advocates for accessibility, while the ALA toolkits provide structured frameworks for mainstreaming inclusivity. Compared with Philippine studies, these contributions reflect more standardized approaches, suggesting that local practices could benefit from adapting global models to national contexts.

Overall, the literature reveals a hybrid reality: inclusivity is legally mandated but inconsistently realized, often dependent on community partnerships and institutional resources. Assessing effectiveness thus requires not only measuring compliance with RA 11650 but also examining how global best practices can be localized within Philippine academic libraries.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The study is based on Juran's Quality Trilogy, and Mike Oliver's Social Model of disability. The integration of these frameworks provides comprehensive support for assessing the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities in Philippine academic libraries.

Joseph M. Juran (1986) introduced Total Quality Management (TQM), which consists of three related parts, namely, quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement. Quality planning focuses on identifying the needs of clients and developing services that can effectively meet those needs. Quality control focuses on setting standards, performance monitoring, and evaluating whether the offered services meet the expected quality standards. Quality improvement highlights the importance of continuously improving services and addressing gaps in performance. This serves as a dimension for service quality. In this study, assessing the effectiveness of inclusive library services are aligned with the (TQM) concept, by providing accessible facilities and improving services, by investing in assistive technologies, and expanding the library collection for diverse needs. With responsive library assistance this serves as huge help for the persons with disabilities to navigate the library independently and effectively.

Another theory used by the researchers is Social model of disability by Mike Oliver (2013) it explains that disability is not mainly caused by a person with disabilities, but by barriers present in society that limit participation and accessibility. The theory identifies barriers such as physical, technological, communication, and attitudinal barriers that may hinder persons with disabilities from fully participating in society. The social model of disability supports the present study's conceptualization of barriers affecting the effectiveness of inclusive library services for PWDs. Clients with disabilities often struggle with inaccessible facilities and library spaces (physical), which leads to difficulties in accessing library services. Similarly, insufficient availability of assistive technologies and inaccessible digital resources (technological) may hinder PWDs from utilizing the library resources. Furthermore, in communication the lack of accessible formats, such as braille materials, audio visual, screen readers, really affect the delivery of information and assistance to PWDs. Lastly, the attitudinal barriers involved with discrimination, lack of awareness toward persons with disabilities, which may negatively affect their library experience and participation.

By combining the Juran's Quality Trilogy, and Social Model of Disability, the study establishes a strong theoretical foundation for its analytical framework. The key analytical dimensions of the study are service quality, encompassing physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery, learning resources) as well as barriers including physical, technological, communication, and attitudinal barriers. The central phenomenon examined is the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities. Through these analytical dimensions, the study explores how academic libraries can create inclusive spaces that support equal access, participation, and learning opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the flow of the study from its theoretical foundations to its intended outcomes. It is grounded in Juran's Quality Trilogy, which emphasizes continuous quality improvement in service delivery, and the Social Model of Disability, which views disability as a result of societal and environmental barriers rather than individual impairments. These theories guide the analysis of four key dimensions—physical access, assistive technology, service delivery, and accessible information resources—to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities. The results of the analysis provide the basis for developing findings and recommendations aimed at enhancing the accessibility and quality of inclusive library services.

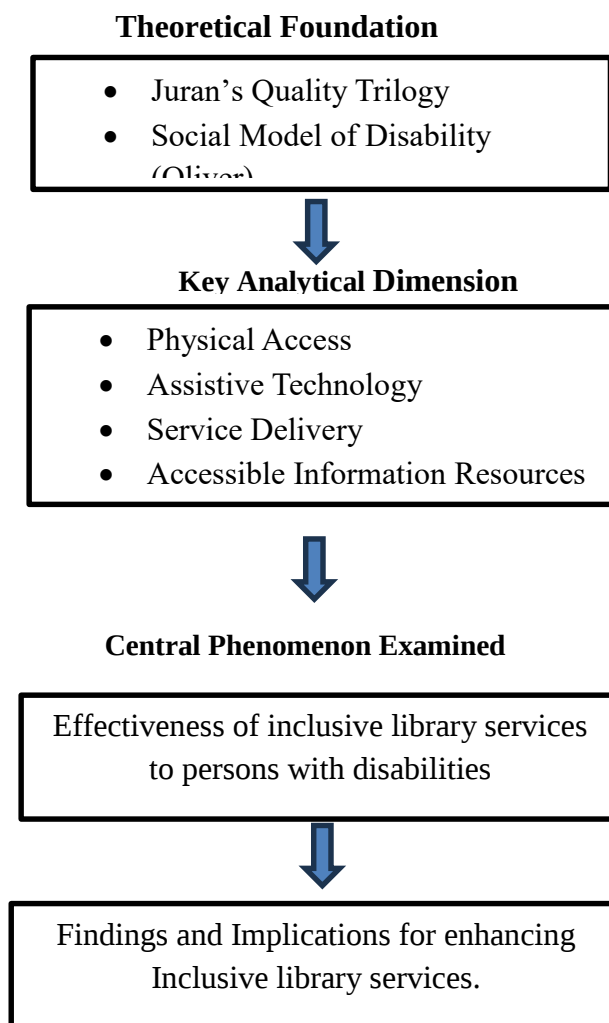


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of the Study

Methods

This study utilized an exploratory qualitative single case study design. It is a research approach that focuses on exploring specific phenomena, such as individual person, event, organizations, institutions. (Rashid et al 2019). It is characterized by non-numerical data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to further understand the complexities of social phenomena, human experiences, and behaviors. Qualitative research aims to generate in-depth, detailed insights, patterns, and themes. Understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem,

emphasizing the contextual and subjective experiences of the subject. (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D., 2017). Exploratory qualitative single case study design used to assess the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in a Philippine academic library. The approach was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researchers to conduct an in-depth examination of library's accessibility practices, assistive technologies, service delivery and accessible learning resources within real-life institutional context.

Although this study adopted an exploratory qualitative single-case study design, a structured questionnaire was used as a supplementary descriptive instrument to provide an overview of participants' perceptions regarding the implementation of inclusive library services. The numerical ratings were not intended for statistical inference or hypothesis testing but served to organize and describe participants' responses across the four dimensions of inclusive library services. The primary interpretation of the findings was derived from the integration of a semi-structured questionnaire, an interview guide, and document analysis through methodological triangulation.

The study utilized three research instruments to gather the necessary data: a semi-structured questionnaire, an interview guide, and document analysis.

The primary instrument used in the study was an IFLA-based questionnaire developed by the researchers based on the "Access to Libraries for Persons with Disabilities – Checklist" from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2005), which provides internationally recognized guidelines for inclusive and accessible library services. The questionnaire consisted of four dimensions: (1) physical access, (2) assistive technologies, (3) service delivery, and (4) accessible information resources. The instrument aimed to assess the current implementation of inclusive library services in Philippine academic libraries. The questionnaire employed a three-point descriptive scale adapted from the IFLA Access to Libraries for Persons with Disabilities Checklist. Responses were assigned numerical values solely to summarize participants' perceptions of the extent to which inclusive library services were implemented. The numerical values were used for descriptive purposes only and were not subjected to inferential statistical analysis.

To ensure its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to the research objectives, the questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in Library and Information Science, including the Chief Librarian of Shepherdville College, Tigaon, Camarines Sur; a Senior Associate Librarian from National University-East Ortigas Campus; and a Faculty Member in Library Science from University of Santo Tomas, Manila. The recommendations and suggestions provided by the validators were carefully considered and incorporated to refine the instrument in terms of clarity, relevance, organization, and suitability for the study. The content validity of the research instrument was established through expert validation involving three subject experts. The instrument obtained an S-CVI/Ave of 0.88 and an S-CVI/UA of 0.80, which indicate good overall content validity and acceptable agreement among the experts.

A semi-structured interview guide was also prepared for the library director and librarian. The interview questions focused on the implementation of inclusive services, accessibility initiatives, challenges encountered, institutional support, and proposed improvements related to inclusive library services for persons with disabilities. The interview allowed the participants to provide detailed explanations, experiences, and perspectives regarding the accessibility and inclusivity of the library.

In addition, the researchers conducted document analysis of institutional materials such as library manuals, personnel manuals, student handbooks, websites, and other related documents. Document analysis was

utilized to examine how existing policies, programs, and institutional practices support or limit the implementation of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities.

Respondents

The study gathered seventeen (17) participants composed of students, faculty members, staff, the librarian, and the library director from Colegio San Agustin - Biñan. The respondents and informants of the study included members of the Institutional Health, Safety, and Environmental Office; a SPED teacher, identified students with disabilities; faculty members; personnel; regular library users, the librarian; and the library director. The researchers used purposive sampling to select the participants for the study due to the specialized nature of the respondents and the direct involvement and experiences related to the inclusivity and accessibility of library services for persons with disabilities (PWDs). A purposive sampling intentionally finds the individuals that could provide in-depth, and experience-based insights that allowed the researcher to be associated with the research objectives. In the study of Cresswell and Cresswell (2018), qualitative research with a selected participants who hold the significant knowledge and real-life experiences which is relevant to the phenomenon being studied are commonly known as purposive sampling. Moreover, Rashid et. Al. (2019), emphasized that a case study type of research benefits from purposive participant selection to acquire detailed and contextualized information which is related to the case being examined. In line with this, the inclusion of choosing the students, faculty members, staff, and the library director allowed the researchers to gather diverse perspectives specifically to physical accessibility, assistive technology, service delivery, accessible learning resources, and institutional support for persons with disabilities.

Procedure

Before conducting the study, the researchers prepared and submitted request letters seeking approval to conduct the research at Colegio San Agustin - Biñan. Approval for the study was obtained from the Data Protection Officer (DPO), Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), Human Resource Department (HRD), and the President's Office. Upon approval, the researchers proceeded with the data gathering process, which included the administration of the survey questionnaire, conduct of interviews, and document analysis. The research instruments, which included the IFLA-based questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide, underwent validation by professionals in the field of Library and Information Science to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to the objectives of the study. The validated instruments were subsequently pilot tested among selected library users with disabilities at Shepherdville College. Suggestions and corrections from the validators and pilot respondents were incorporated into the final version of the instruments to improve clarity, eliminate ambiguous statements, and ensure ease of understanding and response. The study employed triangulation through the use of survey questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. A total of seventeen (17) participants, composed of students, faculty members, staff, librarian and the library director, were purposely selected for the study. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews and survey questionnaires to obtain both in-depth qualitative insights and structured responses regarding the effectiveness of inclusive library services. Some participants answered the questionnaire through Google Forms sent via official college communication channels, such as institutional email. Respondents were given one (1) week to complete the survey. In addition, relevant institutional documents such as library manuals and policies were reviewed to identify existing practices related to inclusive library services. At the beginning of the questionnaire, an informed

consent form was presented to ensure voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity of responses. Upon completion of the data-gathering period, all responses were retrieved. Interview transcripts, survey responses, and documents were organized and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and insights regarding the effectiveness of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities. Any personal identifiable information was removed to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Results

This unit presents the findings, analysis, and interpretation of the study, which were taken from the results of the semi-structured questionnaire, an interview guide, and document analysis administered to the research subjects.

1. Implementation of Inclusive library services in terms of Physical Access

Implementation of Inclusive library services in terms of Physical Access

The findings suggest that the library has made efforts to provide an accessible physical environment for persons with disabilities through the presence of basic accessibility features such as ramps, visible signage, and alternative access mechanisms. However, the relatively lower ratings for pathways, aisles, and restroom accessibility indicate that certain physical barriers may still affect the independent movement and overall experience of users with mobility limitations.

These findings were further supported by the interview responses. The librarian perceived the library environment as generally accessible to users with disabilities but acknowledged that certain facilities, such as library doors, may still present difficulties for independent use. Likewise, the Library Director viewed the campus as generally PWD-friendly due to its accessible layout and facilities. However, the responses suggest that accessibility is largely embedded within the broader institutional environment rather than being supported by library-specific accessibility provisions. This may explain why participants recognized the presence of general accessibility features while simultaneously identifying areas that require improvement within the library itself.

Document analysis supported these findings. A review of the library manual, student handbook, institutional policies, and other library documents showed that while general institutional policies promote equal access and inclusion, there were limited documented provisions specifically addressing physical accessibility standards within the library, such as accessibility audits, wayfinding systems, or facility improvement plans for persons with disabilities.

The findings are consistent with those reported by Çakmak and Uğurlu (2025), who found that academic libraries require continuous improvements in physical infrastructure to better accommodate users with disabilities. Their study emphasized that accessibility extends beyond the presence of basic facilities and includes the creation of environments that allow users with disabilities to navigate library spaces independently and comfortably. Similarly, Nazim and Ali (2025) highlighted the need for enhanced physical accessibility and stronger policy support to ensure equitable access to library services. The present findings align with these studies by suggesting that while accessibility initiatives are present, further enhancements may be necessary to address remaining physical barriers and promote a more inclusive library environment.

The findings suggest that physical accessibility should be viewed as an ongoing institutional commitment rather than a one-time infrastructure initiative. Within the case institution, improving pathways, aisle

spaces, restroom accessibility, and door accessibility may further enhance the independence and convenience of users with disabilities. In addition, the findings indicate the importance of conducting regular accessibility assessments and incorporating disability-inclusive considerations into library planning and facility development. Strengthening library-specific accessibility policies and guidelines may also help ensure that existing facilities continue to respond to the evolving needs of users with disabilities.

Implementation of Inclusive library services in terms of Assistive technology

The findings suggest that the case institution has initiated efforts to provide assistive technologies that support inclusive library services; however, participants perceived that these technologies remain limited in terms of availability, adequacy, and long-term sustainability. The consistency of the survey ratings across all indicators reflects a common perception that while assistive technologies are present, they have not yet reached a level that fully responds to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

The interview data further explain these findings. The librarian shared that the library continues to explore digital technologies that may improve access to information for users with disabilities. Similarly, the Library Director noted that some of the library's online databases already include built-in accessibility features that can support users with visual or other impairments. Despite these existing initiatives, both participants emphasized that assistive technologies require continuous assessment, maintenance, and upgrading to remain responsive to users' evolving needs. They also identified limited financial resources as one of the primary factors affecting the acquisition, maintenance, and expansion of assistive technologies within the library.

Document analysis supported these perceptions by revealing limited institutional documentation specifically addressing assistive technology services and accessibility provisions for persons with disabilities. Although some digital resources contain accessibility features, there was limited evidence of formal policies, implementation guidelines, or strategic plans dedicated to the provision and sustainability of assistive technologies. Taken together, the survey, interview, and document analysis findings suggest that the implementation of assistive technology within the case institution is still in its developmental stage and requires further institutional support.

The findings are consistent with the study of Ncube (2025), which reported that academic libraries encounter significant challenges in implementing accessible assistive technologies due to limited financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support. Similarly, the present case study suggests that budgetary constraints influence the availability and sustainability of assistive technologies within the selected academic library. While the case institution has begun integrating accessibility features into some digital resources, the findings indicate that additional investments and strategic planning may be necessary to ensure that assistive technologies effectively support users with diverse disabilities.

The findings suggest that strengthening assistive technology services requires institutional commitment beyond the acquisition of equipment. Within the case institution, improving inclusive library services may involve establishing a sustainable budget for accessibility initiatives, regularly evaluating existing technologies, and integrating accessibility considerations into library planning and collection development. Furthermore, providing continuous training for library personnel on the effective use of assistive technologies may enhance their capacity to support users with disabilities and maximize the utilization of available accessibility tools.

Implementation of Inclusive library services in terms of Service Delivery

The findings suggest that participants generally perceived the service delivery within the case institution as respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. The positive assessment of staff awareness, respectful treatment, and the provision of clear guidance indicates that the library has established a service culture that values fairness and equal treatment of all users, including persons with disabilities. Interview responses further support this finding, as both the librarian and the Library Director emphasized that library services are provided equally regardless of disability or social status and that the library remains open to addressing users' concerns and feedback.

Despite these positive perceptions, the service adaptation and prompt assistance suggest that equal treatment does not always translate into individualized support that addresses the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. Participants perceived that while staff demonstrate professionalism and willingness to assist, there is still a need to strengthen the library's responsiveness by adapting services to accommodate different accessibility requirements. This finding indicates that inclusive service delivery extends beyond treating users equally; it also involves recognizing and responding to their varying needs through appropriate accommodations and support mechanisms.

The present findings are consistent with the study of Ayoung et al. (2021), who emphasized that inclusive library services require knowledgeable staff, effective communication, and services that respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities. It is very important to make all the clients feel welcomed and comfortable and most likely the patron will visit the library often. Library staff should communicate with library clients in a normal manner rather than in a caregiver way. While the present study similarly found that staff demonstrate professionalism and respectful interactions, it also reveals that adapting services to meet diverse accessibility needs requires further improvement.

The questionnaire findings indicated that the participants generally perceived the library's service as respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory, particularly in terms of staff awareness, and treatment, and the provision of clear guidance. These findings were supported by the interview responses where key informants emphasized that all library clients are treated equally regardless of disability and that the library remains responsive in addressing user's concerns and feedback regardless of disability or social status. Document analysis further demonstrated that the institution's policies promote equal access and inclusive library services.

Overall, the questionnaire, interview, and document analysis suggest that although the library established an inclusive learning environment that values fairness and the staff demonstrate professionalism and willingness to assist, improvements in additional service adaptations in prompt assistance are still needed to address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. These findings are aligned with the study of Ayoung et al. (2021), which emphasized inclusive library services that require knowledgeable staff, effective communication, and services that respond to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that while staff exhibit professionalism and respectful interactions, continued staff training and sustained institutional support remain important to strengthen accessible and responsive service delivery.

Implementation of Inclusive library services in terms of Learning Information Resources

The findings suggest that the library's learning information resources provide basic academic support for persons with disabilities but remain insufficient to fully address their diverse learning needs. This may be attributed to limitations in acquiring accessible learning materials, the high cost of alternative formats, and the gradual development of digital resources compatible with assistive technologies. The interview

responses support this finding, as the respondents acknowledged that while the library provides general learning resources, there is a continuing need to expand and maintain inclusive collections. This indicates that achieving inclusive learning resources requires ongoing collection development and regular assessment of users' accessibility needs.

The questionnaire findings indicate that the library's learning information resources provide basic academic support for persons with disabilities but remain insufficient to fully address their diverse learning needs. This may be attributed to limitations in acquiring accessible learning materials, the high cost of alternative formats, and the gradual development of digital resources compatible with assistive technologies. These findings were supported by the interview data, in which key informants acknowledge that although the library provides general collection of library materials, there is a continuing need to expand and sustain accessible collections. Document analysis further showed that while inclusive collection development is recognized in institutional policies, additional efforts are needed to strengthen the acquisition and maintenance of accessible library materials. The questionnaire, interview, document analysis suggests achieving inclusive learning resources requires continued development and regular assessment of user's accessibility needs to develop a more responsive and inclusive collection that supports diverse academic requirements.

These findings are consistent with Macapodi (2022), who emphasized that accessible learning resources and digital materials compatible with assistive technologies promote equitable access to information and support the academic participation of persons with disabilities. Similarly, the present study highlights the value of accessible resources, but also indicates that their availability remains limited, suggesting that further improvement is necessary to sustain institutional support and inclusive collection development.

2. Challenges encountered in the implementation of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities in the Philippine Academic Library?

Physical Access

The findings indicate that the library generally provides a physically accessible environment for persons with disabilities (PWDs), particularly for individuals with mobility impairments. According to the respondents, the relatively flat campus terrain and the presence of accessible library spaces make it easier for PWDs to enter and move around the library. These findings suggest that the library has taken initial steps to reduce physical barriers and support accessibility. However, the participants also identified challenges that continue to affect independent access, particularly the difficulty of opening and closing library doors and the lack of more visible signages. These issues imply that while the library meets some accessibility needs, certain aspects of its physical infrastructure still require improvement to ensure that PWDs can navigate and use the library more independently.

The present findings are consistent with the study of Nazim and Ali (2025), who emphasized that accessible library facilities, clear signage, and assistive technologies are fundamental in creating library environments that are accessible to persons with disabilities. Similar to the present study, they found that although many libraries have implemented basic accessibility measures, physical barriers continue to limit the full usability of library spaces for PWDs. This alignment suggests that accessibility is an ongoing process that requires continuous evaluation and improvement to address the diverse physical needs of library users with disabilities.

The findings highlight the importance of continuously assessing and improving the library's physical infrastructure to promote greater accessibility. Addressing concerns such as installing easier-to-operate

doors and providing more visible directional signages can enhance independent mobility and improve the overall user experience of persons with disabilities. These improvements may also assist other library users, including older adults and first-time visitors, by creating a more user-friendly environment. Furthermore, the findings underscore the value of regularly consulting PWD users when evaluating library facilities to ensure that accessibility initiatives are responsive to their actual needs.

Assistive Technologies

The findings indicate that the assistive technologies available in the library support users with disabilities by improving access to digital resources and learning materials. The respondents perceived these technologies as beneficial, while the Library Director noted that databases such as Gale and World Book Britannica include accessibility features that support PWD users. Although no major concerns were raised, the respondents emphasized the need for continuous evaluation and enhancement of assistive technologies to address the evolving needs of users with disabilities.

These findings are consistent with Alabi and Okiki (2023), who emphasized that assistive technologies promote independent access to information and equal participation for persons with disabilities. Similarly, Chaurasia and Singh (2022) argued that libraries should continuously improve assistive technologies to create a more accessible and barrier-free environment. The present findings support these studies by showing that while existing technologies are useful, continuous improvements remain necessary.

The findings suggest that academic libraries should regularly assess and enhance their assistive technologies to ensure that they continue to meet the diverse needs of users with disabilities and provide equitable access to information. The library may consider expanding its accessible digital resources and conducting regular evaluations of its assistive technologies. Future studies may explore the experiences of PWD users with specific assistive technologies to identify additional areas for improvement.

Service Delivery

The findings indicate that the implementation of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities in the library is influenced by several factors that affect how services are delivered, experienced, and continuously improved. One of the themes that emerged from the interviews was the perception that **“Library staff treat the library users equally regardless of their disabilities or status”**. This perception was supported by the survey results, which indicated positive ratings for respectful and non-discriminatory service delivery.

However, while participants generally perceived that equal treatment is practiced within the case institution, the findings also suggest that equal treatment alone may not fully address the diverse and specific needs of persons with disabilities. Several participants emphasized the importance of enhancing staff competencies through continuous professional development, particularly in understanding different types of disabilities and providing appropriate assistance to users with varying accessibility needs.

These findings were supported by Farooq et al. (2021) which emphasized that training of staff should be mandatory and be trained enough as it can have a positive impact on clients with disabilities especially in the circulation and reference section in the library to prevent the discriminatory practices against students with disabilities. These trainings should be on understanding inclusion, different types of disabilities and sign language.

This implies that achieving genuine inclusivity in academic libraries requires more than equal treatment. It demands that library personnel possess the competencies necessary to recognize and address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. By investing in continuous professional development, libraries can strengthen inclusive service delivery, promote equitable access to information and resources, and foster

an environment where all users feel respected, supported, and empowered to participate fully in library services.

Accessible Information Resources

The findings in interviews, observation and document analysis suggests that the limited availability of specialized resources and services for persons with disabilities in academic libraries is hindered by broader institutional challenges. Effective accessibility initiatives require substantial financial investment for assistive technologies, accessible learning materials, and staff training. When accessibility is not prioritized through dedicated funding and institutional policies, libraries struggle to adequately support users with visual, physical, and learning disabilities, leading to insufficient resources despite general resources availability. Participants in a study identified artificial intelligence (AI) as a promising tool for accessibility, acknowledging its potential to enhance service through applications like text-to-speech, automated content conversion, and personalized support. However, challenges such as budget constraints, data privacy, and ethical considerations underscore the need for institutional support to effectively implement AI.

The questionnaire findings indicated that specialized resources and services for persons with disabilities were limited, especially in relation to accessible learning resources and assistive technologies. These findings were supported by the interview response, where key informants attributed these limitations to budget constraints, insufficient institutional prioritization, and the need for training of the staff. Key informants also recognized artificial intelligence (AI) as a power tool for improving accessibility through text-to-speech, automated conversion, and personalized support, while noting concerns regarding data privacy, funding, and ethical considerations. Document analysis further confirmed that although institutional policies support inclusive education, they provide limited guidance on dedicated allocation of funding and the implementation of accessibility initiatives.

Taken together, the questionnaire, interview, and document analysis indicate that insufficient accessibility learning materials are primarily linked with broader institutional challenges. These findings are aligned with the study of Gull et al. (2025), who reported that many students with disabilities are still facing barriers due to limited or specialized learning materials and services. Nevertheless, the present study extends these findings by highlighting the potential of AI to enhance accessibility while also highlighting the need for institutional support, sustainable funding, and implementation of policies to ensure effective adoption.

3. Policy and Document Support

The findings revealed that institutional policies and programs supporting accessibility and inclusivity library services remain limited and are still in the developmental stage. Interviews, observations, and document analysis showed that while the institution recognizes the importance of supporting persons with disabilities (PWDs), there are few formal policies and structured programs specifically designed to address their needs.

Participants identified limited policies and programs, as well as resource and budget constraints, as key factors affecting the implementation of inclusive services. The library director noted that accessibility improvements depend on available funding and institutional priorities. Participants also emphasized the importance of conducting needs assessments to ensure that future policies and programs effectively address the needs of PWDs. In addition, they highlighted the need to create a more PWD-friendly

environment through accessible facilities, assistive technologies, inclusive resources, and staff preparedness.

These findings were supported by observations and document analysis, which revealed limited accessibility features and minimal documentation related to disability-specific services. Overall, the findings suggest that although the library has initiated efforts to promote inclusivity, further improvements in policy development, resource allocation, and service implementation are needed.

The findings are consistent with Aduko Alu (2024), who reported that the absence of comprehensive disability policies often results in limited accessibility services and insufficient assistive technologies. Similar to the present study, the findings highlight the need for stronger institutional policies and structured programs to support inclusivity. The findings imply that academic libraries should develop comprehensive accessibility policies, allocate dedicated resources for inclusive services, and strengthen staff training and assistive technologies to ensure equitable access for persons with disabilities.

4. Proposed output to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of library services for persons with disabilities

PROPOSED OUTPUT OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Based on the findings of the study, inclusive library services at Colegio San Agustin - Biñan are generally implemented; however, gaps remain in physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery and accessible information resources. To address these challenges, the researchers propose the **Library Accessibility Enhancement Framework for Persons with Disabilities** together with a supporting **strategic action plan** and **policy guidelines**.

This framework is designed to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in academic library services and is anchored on the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model and aligned with the standards of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Checklist for Access to Libraries for Persons with Disabilities.

Framework Overview

Library Accessibility Enhancement Framework for Persons with Disabilities is a structured framework designed to improve inclusive library services by addressing four key domains: physical accessibility, assistive technologies, inclusive service delivery, and accessible information resources. The framework emphasizes continuous improvement through evaluation, staff development, and user participation.

Framework Components

A. Physical Accessibility Enhancement

Objective:

To ensure a barrier-free and independently accessible library environment

Proposed Strategies:

- Conduct annual accessibility audits of library facilities
- Improve wheelchair accessibility in pathways and aisles
- Install or upgrade automatic and accessible doors
- Improve restroom accessibility for PWD users

- Strengthen signage clarity and visibility
- Ensure compliance with accessibility standards in library design

Expected Outcome:

Improved mobility, independence, and safety for persons with disabilities in the library environment.

A. Assistive Technology Development and Sustainability

Objective:

To improve the availability, functionality, and sustainability of assistive technologies.

Proposed Strategies:

Establish an Assistive Technology Corner in the library

- Acquire assistive devices such as screen readers, magnifiers, and text-to-speech tools
- Ensure regular maintenance and upgrading of devices
- Allocate dedicated funding for assistive technologies
- Provide training for users and staff in using assistive tools

Expected Outcome:

Enhanced access to information and improved learning resources through assistive technologies.

B. Inclusive Service Delivery Enhancement

Objective:

To strengthen staff capacity and improve service responsiveness for PWD users.

Proposed Strategies:

Conduct disability sensitivity and inclusivity training for library staff

- Develop service guidelines for assisting persons with disabilities
- Establish a structured feedback mechanism for PWD users
- Implement regular user needs assessments
- Promote respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory service practices

Expected Outcome:

More responsive, equitable, and user-centered library services.

C. Accessible Information Resource Development

Objective:

To expand and improve access to inclusive learning materials.

Proposed Strategies:

Acquire books and materials in alternative formats (Braille, audio, large print)

- Expand subscription to accessible digital databases
- Improve cataloging and discoverability of accessible resources
- Ensure compatibility of digital resources with assistive technologies
- Conduct regular collection development evaluation

Expected Outcome:

Increased availability and accessibility of learning resources for PWD users.

A. Monitoring and Evaluation System

Objective:

To ensure continuous improvement of inclusive library services.

Proposed Strategies:

Conduct annual accessibility evaluations

- Implement user satisfaction surveys for PWD users

- Monitor compliance with accessibility standards
- Prepare annual accessibility and inclusivity reports
- Review and update policies regularly

Expected Outcome:

Sustained improvement and institutionalization of inclusive library services.

Strategic Action Plan for Inclusive Library Services

AREA	OBJECTIVE	KEY ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	TIMELINE	OUTPUT INDICATOR
Physical Access	Improve accessibility of facilities	Accessibility audit; infrastructure upgrade	Library, GSO, IHSEO	Annual	Accessible infrastructure
Assistive Technology	Enhance assistive support tools	Procurement and maintenance of assistive and technology devices	Library, IMC, Finance	Annual	Functional assistive technology equipment
Service Delivery	Improve staff responsiveness	Disability sensitivity training	Library, HRD	Semi-annual	Trained personnel
Information Resources	Expand accessible materials	Acquisition of inclusive resources	Library, Finance	Annual	Expanded collection
Monitoring	Ensure continuous improvement	Accessibility evaluation	Library, Library Director	Annual	Evaluation report

Proposed Library Accessibility and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

The library commits to providing equitable, inclusive, and accessible services, resources, and facilities for all users, including persons with disabilities, in accordance with institutional goals and international accessibility standards.

Policy Provisions

A. Physical Accessibility

- Maintain barrier-free access within library premises
- Ensure accessibility of entrances, pathways, and facilities
- Regularly assess infrastructure for compliance

B. Assistive Technologies

- Provide and maintain assistive devices where feasible
- Ensure staff support in using assistive technologies
- Allocate resources for technological accessibility

C. Inclusive Service Delivery

- Promote respectful and non-discriminatory services
- Require staff training on disability awareness
- Ensure prompt assistance for PWD users

D. Accessible Information Resources

- Develop and acquire accessible learning materials
- Ensure digital accessibility compliance
- Improve resource discovery systems

E. User Participation

- Encourage feedback from persons with disabilities
- Integrate user input in library planning and improvement

F. Monitoring and Review

- Conduct periodic accessibility evaluations
- Update policies based on findings and user needs

Summary

The Library Accessibility Enhancement Framework for Persons with Disabilities supported by a strategic action plan and policy guidelines, provides a comprehensive approach to improving inclusive library services. It addresses the identified gaps in physical access, assistive technologies, service delivery, and accessible information resources. The proposed output ensures that the library moves from partially implemented practices toward a fully inclusive and accessible environment for persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

1. The findings of the study indicates that the implementation of inclusive library services for persons with disabilities in the selected academic library is evident but remains at a developmental stage. The library has established foundational initiatives in physical accessibility, assistive technology, service delivery, and learning information resources that promote equal access and inclusion. However, gaps remain in the provision of library-specific accessibility policies, assistive technologies, accessible learning resources, and individualized service adaptations that fully address the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. Data from the questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis consistently demonstrate that while the institution is committed to fostering an inclusive environment, sustained institutional support, strategic planning, continuous staff development, regular accessibility assessments, and increased investment in accessible facilities, technologies, and collections are necessary to strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusive library services.
2. The study found that while the Philippine academic library has made considerable efforts to implement inclusive library services for persons with disabilities (PWDs), several challenges remain. Although the library generally provides an accessible physical environment and beneficial assistive technologies, issues related to physical accessibility, limited specialized resources, and the need for continuous technological improvement persist. Furthermore, while library staff demonstrate equitable treatment toward all users, additional training is necessary to better address the specific needs of PWDs. Overall, the findings indicate that achieving a truly inclusive library environment requires continuous improvements in physical infrastructure, assistive technologies, staff competencies, and

accessible information resources, supported by strong institutional commitment and adequate resources.

3. The study found that although the library recognizes the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, its policies and programs specifically for persons with disabilities (PWDs) remain limited and are still in the developmental stage. The absence of comprehensive policies, coupled with budget and resource constraints and the need to assess the actual needs of PWD users, limits the implementation of more specialized and inclusive services. These findings suggest that strengthening institutional commitment through clear policies, strategic planning, and adequate resource allocation is essential to creating a more accessible and inclusive library environment for persons with disabilities.

The study recommends the library should emphasize the implementation of assistive technologies like screen readers and audiobooks. Also, improve the usability of learning materials in different formats. Staff training in using assistive technology services must be strengthened, and improve the signage for better navigation. Furthermore, inform or widen the awareness of the community about the available services.

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