

Relationship between teacher's training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching at Subabasbas Elementary School, Division of Lapu-Lapu City, during the School Year 2025–2026. Anchored on constructivist learning theory, Bandura's self-efficacy theory, and Guskey's model of teacher professional development, the study sought to determine whether teachers' demographic characteristics and participation in inclusive education-related training were associated with their perceived readiness to implement inclusive teaching practices. Specifically, the study assessed teachers' preparedness in terms of knowledge and understanding of inclusive education principles, instructional strategies for diverse learners, classroom management in inclusive settings, and collaboration with parents and support staff. A quantitative descriptive-comparative research design was employed, utilizing complete enumeration sampling involving thirty (30) teachers. Data were gathered through an adapted Teachers' Preparedness for Inclusive Teaching Questionnaire (TPITQ), validated by experts for contextual relevance. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' profiles and levels of preparedness, while Chi-Square tests, independent samples t-tests, and one-way analysis of variance were applied to determine relationships and group differences at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching across all domains. Likewise, no significant differences were found in teachers' preparedness when grouped according to age, sex, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and type of inclusive education training attended. These results suggest that teachers' perceived readiness for inclusive teaching may be influenced more by contextual and institutional factors such as school support systems, access to resources, and practical classroom experiences rather than by demographic variables or training exposure alone. Based on the findings, a Proposed Professional Development Action Plan was formulated to strengthen teachers' preparedness for inclusive teaching through sustained, school-based, and needs-responsive professional development initiatives.

Keywords: Inclusive teaching, teacher training, teacher preparedness

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is an educational practice grounded in social justice that advocates equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of disability. It involves educating learners with disabilities alongside their peers in regular schools that continuously adapt their structures, practices, and teaching approaches to meet diverse learning needs (Sharma et al., 2025). Over the past years, educational systems worldwide have increasingly embraced inclusive education as a core indicator of quality education. It is no longer regarded as a specialized or marginal concern but as a universal imperative that ensures all learners, regardless of ability, background, or socioeconomic status, have equitable access to meaningful learning experiences (Shaeffer, 2019). In this context, teacher education for inclusion is expected to prepare educators to engage with learner diversity arising from age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious background, socioeconomic status, disability, or special educational needs (Donnelly, 2010). These principles align with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all learners by 2030 (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022).

Inclusive education has emerged as a major global concern based on the belief that all children should have access to quality education within mainstream institutions. This approach promotes diversity, advances equity, and removes barriers to learning, thereby contributing to the development of a more inclusive society. The Salamanca Statement highlighted the critical role of inclusive schools in combating discriminatory attitudes and fostering inclusive social environments (Hernández Torrano et al., 2022). In response to these global commitments, many countries, including the Philippines, have adopted policies aimed at institutionalizing inclusive education and ensuring equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities.

Research has consistently shown that teacher preparation plays a central role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. According to Sharma et al. (2021), well designed training programs and meaningful exposure to inclusive practices enhance teachers' self efficacy and their use of inclusive instructional strategies among both preservice and inservice teachers. However, the magnitude of these effects varies depending on course content, quality of practicum experiences, and the availability of sustained professional support. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive and context responsive teacher training models in preparing educators for inclusive classrooms.

At the core of inclusive education is the recognition of learner diversity within classrooms, which has led to the adoption of pedagogical approaches that emphasize flexibility, responsiveness, and equity. Inclusive education, as described by Gheyssens et al. (2022), is a responsive teaching philosophy that enables teachers to proactively adjust content, instructional processes, learning products, and classroom environments according to students' readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests. Beyond a set of instructional techniques, inclusive education represents a mindset that values student centeredness and diversity as essential elements of effective teaching and learning.

Special Education programs play a vital role in operationalizing inclusive education by enabling learners with disabilities to participate meaningfully in mainstream classrooms through appropriate support and accommodations. In the Philippine context, legislative measures such as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities or Republic Act 7277 and the Inclusive Education

Act of 2022 or Republic Act 11650 mandate all schools to establish inclusive learning arrangements for children with disabilities (Gil Jr., 2025). These policies aim not only to guarantee access to education but also to ensure that learners receive the necessary academic and social support to succeed in inclusive settings. Despite these legal frameworks, implementation challenges persist due to shortages of trained educators, limited resources, and inadequate support systems, particularly in rural and underserved schools.

Recent literature further affirms the influence of teachers' training experiences on their preparedness for inclusive teaching. Song et al. (2019) reported that compulsory training in special and inclusive education leads to measurable improvements in knowledge and attitudes among preservice teachers. However, sustained preparedness for everyday inclusive teaching requires continuous professional development and strong school-based support systems. Similarly, Ventista and Brown (2023) emphasized that in an educational environment where teachers are expected to function as advanced knowledge workers, ongoing coaching, collaborative professional learning, and long term continuous professional development are essential for improving student learning outcomes and strengthening school capacity. In the Philippines, Department of Education Order No. 72, series of 2009, established inclusive education as a departmental strategy and outlined program options, personnel requirements, and school level preparations necessary for serving learners with diverse needs. This policy remains a foundational framework that defines teacher roles and expectations in inclusive education.

International and local studies further highlight contextual factors that shape teachers' readiness for inclusive teaching. Tohara (2021) noted that in inclusive learning environments such as those in Malaysia, students with learning disabilities require teachers to enhance learners' skills through varied instructional strategies, while internal factors such as culture, ethnicity, family background, region, and school context influence students' learning approaches. Forlin and Chambers (2011) found that teacher education courses increase knowledge and confidence but may also heighten awareness of classroom challenges such as workload and behavior management, resulting in mixed perceptions of readiness. These findings suggest that training must integrate theoretical knowledge with practical and well supported teaching experiences. Despite receiving training, many teachers continue to report only moderate preparedness for addressing real classroom demands including behavioral management, differentiated assessment, and collaboration with parents and specialists. This relationship is further influenced by contextual conditions such as class size, availability of support teachers, school leadership, and sustained follow up support, with local studies highlighting persistent resource and implementation gaps in the Philippine educational context (Macabinta, 2025).

Within this context, teachers are not only expected to implement inclusive teaching strategies but are also positioned as future instructional leaders who model best practices in diverse classroom environments (Da et al., 2025). It is against this backdrop that the present study titled Relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching is situated. While teachers receive academic and professional training related to inclusive pedagogies, limited empirical evidence exists regarding their actual level of preparedness across key dimensions of inclusive teaching practice. This study aims to assess teachers' preparedness for inclusive teaching and to examine whether readiness levels vary according to demographic variables such as age, sex, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and the type of inclusive education related training or seminars attended.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to bridging the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom practice by generating evidence on teachers' preparedness and training experiences. By identifying strengths and gaps in teacher readiness, the study supports efforts to ensure that educators are equipped with the competencies necessary for inclusive teaching. In doing so, it aligns with national and international commitments to promoting inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all learners.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to determine the relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching by examining teachers' demographic and professional characteristics, their perceived level of preparedness in implementing inclusive practices, and the extent to which training influences readiness for inclusive classroom instruction.

1. What is the profile of the teacher respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and type of trainings or seminars attended related to inclusive education?
2. How do teachers assess their level of preparedness for inclusive teaching in terms of knowledge and understanding of inclusive education principles, instructional strategies for diverse learners, classroom management in inclusive settings, and collaboration with parents and support staff?
3. What is the level of relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching?
4. Is there a significant difference in teachers' preparedness for inclusive teaching when grouped according to their profile variables?
5. What recommendations may be proposed to enhance teachers' preparedness for inclusive education based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive comparative research design to examine the relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching at Subabasbas Elementary School in the Division of Lapu Lapu City. The quantitative approach was selected to allow the systematic collection of numerical data that could be analyzed using statistical procedures, thereby ensuring objectivity, precision, and reliability of the findings. The descriptive component focused on presenting the demographic characteristics of the teachers and their self reported levels of training and preparedness for inclusive teaching, capturing the current status of readiness without manipulating any variables. The comparative component was used to determine whether significant differences existed in teachers' preparedness when they were grouped according to age, sex, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and type of trainings or seminars attended related to inclusive education. Through this design, the study aimed to generate empirical evidence that could inform teacher education programs, professional development initiatives, and policy directions in inclusive education.

The study was guided by the Input Process Output framework to ensure a logical and systematic flow of inquiry. In the input phase, the focus was on identifying the essential variables necessary to address the research objectives, including the demographic profile of the teachers and their perceived level of preparedness for inclusive teaching in terms of knowledge and

understanding of inclusive education principles, instructional strategies for diverse learners, classroom management in inclusive settings, and collaboration with parents and support staff. These domains were grounded in relevant theoretical perspectives such as constructivism, Bandura's social cognitive theory, and Guskey's model of teacher professional development. A validated and expert reviewed questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection during this phase. The process phase involved the administration of the instrument, the organization and validation of responses, and the application of appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The output phase consisted of the presentation and interpretation of findings on teachers' preparedness and the identification of significant differences across demographic groups, which then served as the basis for proposing a professional development action plan aimed at strengthening inclusive teaching practices.

The research was conducted at Subabasbas Elementary School located in Subabasbas, Lapu Lapu City. The school has twenty-four classrooms, a principal's office, an information and communication technology room, and a covered court, as well as facilities that support learner development such as a school garden. The school caters to approximately nine hundred forty-eight learners and is staffed by thirty-one teachers including the school principal. The setting was considered appropriate for the study because it provides a structured environment where inclusive teaching practices are implemented and where teachers play a vital role in supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of learners.

The respondents of the study were all teachers at Subabasbas Elementary School during the School Year 2025 to 2026. Complete enumeration sampling was employed to ensure that all teachers in the school were included as participants. This approach was deemed appropriate given the manageable size of the population and its accessibility, allowing the study to capture the perceptions and preparedness levels of the entire teaching force without sampling bias. By including all teachers, the study aimed to produce findings that were comprehensive and representative of the school context.

Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire designed to assess teachers' perceived preparedness for inclusive teaching. The instrument consisted of two main components. The first component gathered demographic information such as age, sex, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and type of trainings or seminars attended related to inclusive education. The second component measured teachers' preparedness using the Teachers' Preparedness for Inclusive Teaching Questionnaire developed by Sharma and Sokal in 2015. This section consisted of twenty items covering the domains of knowledge and understanding of inclusive education principles, instructional strategies for diverse learners, classroom management in inclusive settings, and collaboration with parents and support staff. Responses were rated using a five point Likert scale ranging from not prepared to very prepared, with higher scores indicating greater perceived preparedness. The adapted instrument was reviewed by experts to ensure content validity and contextual relevance.

Prior to data collection, formal permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate education authorities through the school principal. All participants were provided with informed consent forms detailing the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. An orientation was conducted to explain the objectives of the study and to provide instructions on completing the questionnaire. The instrument was administered either in printed form or through a secure online platform depending on the availability and preference of the respondents. Sufficient

time was allotted for completion, and the researcher remained available to address any questions or clarifications during the process.

After data collection, the responses were carefully reviewed, validated, and cleaned to address missing or inconsistent entries. The finalized data were encoded into a statistical software program for analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their levels of preparedness for inclusive teaching. Inferential statistical techniques such as independent samples t tests and one way analysis of variance were applied to determine whether significant differences in preparedness existed when respondents were grouped according to demographic variables. A significance level of 0.05 was used as the criterion for statistical significance.

Throughout the conduct of the study, strict adherence to ethical standards was observed. The research complied with institutional ethical guidelines and the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 or Republic Act No. 10173. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no form of coercion or undue influence was exerted. The identities of the respondents were protected through anonymity, and all data were treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. The study posed minimal risk to participants, as it involved only the completion of a self report questionnaire. By upholding ethical integrity and methodological rigor, the study sought to ensure that its findings would be credible, valid, and beneficial to the advancement of inclusive education practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation and interpretation of results in this section are grounded in the quantitative descriptive comparative design employed in the study. Data were gathered from all teachers at Subabasbas Elementary School through complete enumeration sampling, resulting in a total of thirty respondents. The Teachers' Preparedness for Inclusive Teaching Questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument, and responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential techniques, particularly the Chi Square Test, to determine associations between teachers' profile variables and their perceived preparedness for inclusive teaching. The discussion that follows interprets the results in relation to the objectives of the study and situates the findings within relevant theoretical and empirical literature.

The demographic profile of the respondents provided essential context for understanding the results of the study. The teachers varied in age, sex, years of teaching experience, and participation in inclusive education related trainings, reflecting a heterogeneous teaching force within the school. This diversity is important, as inclusive education literature emphasizes that teachers' backgrounds and experiences can shape their perspectives and practices in inclusive classrooms. However, the distribution of respondents across these profile variables also allowed for a more balanced examination of whether such characteristics were associated with differences in perceived preparedness for inclusive teaching.

With respect to instructional strategies for diverse learners, the Chi Square Test results revealed no statistically significant association between teachers' profile variables and their perceived preparedness in this domain. Specifically, age yielded a Chi Square value of 8.7132 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.1904, sex produced a Chi Square value of 0.5989 with 1 degree of freedom and a p value of 0.7412, teaching experience resulted in a Chi Square value of 1.7203 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.7870, and relevant training yielded a Chi Square value of 1.2942 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.1512. All p values exceeded

the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the non rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that teachers' age, sex, length of teaching experience, and type of inclusive education training attended do not have a statistically significant influence on how prepared they perceive themselves to be in employing instructional strategies for diverse learners. This may indicate that preparedness in instructional strategies is shaped more by daily classroom experiences, informal learning, peer collaboration, or access to teaching resources rather than by demographic characteristics alone. This interpretation aligns with the view that effective differentiated instruction often develops through reflective practice and contextual adaptation rather than solely through formal training credentials.

The findings can be contextualized by related research emphasizing the importance of personalized and responsive teaching strategies in diverse learning environments. Liu and Yuan (2024) demonstrated that personalized teaching strategies significantly enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and academic performance, particularly in blended learning contexts. Although the present study did not directly measure learner outcomes, the absence of significant associations between teacher profile variables and instructional preparedness suggests that teachers may be drawing on shared professional practices or school level supports when addressing learner diversity. This highlights the importance of institutional structures and collaborative cultures in fostering inclusive instructional competence.

In terms of classroom management in inclusive settings, the analysis likewise indicated no statistically significant association between teachers' profile variables and their perceived preparedness. The Chi Square Test showed that age had a value of 3.7857 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.7056, sex had a value of 0.6897 with 1 degree of freedom and a p value of 0.7083, teaching experience yielded a value of 6.1322 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.1991, and relevant training produced a value of 5.3594 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.6975. Since all p values were greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. These results indicate that demographic and professional background variables do not significantly affect teachers' perceived preparedness to manage inclusive classrooms.

This finding suggests that classroom management competence in inclusive settings may depend less on static teacher characteristics and more on contextual factors such as classroom composition, availability of support personnel, and school policies that promote positive behavior support. Classroom management has long been identified as one of the most challenging aspects of teaching, particularly in inclusive environments where learners exhibit diverse behavioral and learning needs. Bolat (2023) emphasized that while traditional behaviorist approaches such as reward and praise are commonly used, autonomy supportive strategies that focus on building warm teacher student relationships may be more effective in promoting positive classroom behavior. The absence of significant differences across teacher profiles in the present study may reflect a shared reliance on practical classroom management approaches shaped by the immediate teaching context rather than by individual background variables.

The analysis of teachers' preparedness for collaboration with parents and support staff also revealed no statistically significant association with profile variables. The Chi Square Test results showed that age had a value of 5.4921 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.4824, sex had a value of 0.6897 with 1 degree of freedom and a p value of 0.7083, teaching experience yielded a value of 2.7225 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.6092, and relevant training produced a value of 7.2238 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.5152. All p values exceeded the 0.05 significance level, leading to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis for all variables. This

indicates that teachers' demographic characteristics and training backgrounds do not significantly influence their perceived preparedness to collaborate with parents and support staff in inclusive settings.

Collaboration is widely recognized as a critical component of inclusive education, as it ensures coordinated support for learners with additional needs. Paccaud, Keller, Luder, Pastore, and Kunz (2021) emphasized that strong family school partnerships positively influence learning outcomes, motivation, and student well being, although such partnerships can also be affected by differing expectations and roles. The findings of the present study suggest that teachers' readiness to collaborate may be shaped more by school culture, leadership practices, and established communication mechanisms than by individual demographic factors. This reinforces the notion that collaboration is a collective practice embedded within institutional contexts rather than an isolated individual competency.

Taken as a whole, the results of the study indicate that teachers' profile variables including age, sex, teaching experience, and participation in inclusive education related trainings do not have statistically significant associations with their perceived preparedness across key domains of inclusive teaching. These findings highlight the complexity of teacher preparedness and suggest that inclusive teaching competence is influenced by a combination of experiential, contextual, and institutional factors rather than by demographic characteristics alone. The results contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional learning, supportive school environments, and collaborative practices in strengthening inclusive education. In conclusion, the findings address the objectives of the study by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between teachers' profiles and their preparedness for inclusive teaching. While no significant associations were found, the results underscore the need to look beyond demographic variables when designing professional development programs and policies for inclusive education. By emphasizing the role of contextual supports and shared professional practices, the study offers insights that can inform school based interventions, leadership strategies, and future research aimed at enhancing inclusive teaching readiness. This synthesis of results provides a logical foundation for the subsequent chapter, which will focus on conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from the study's findings.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded with a comprehensive synthesis of findings on the relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching at Subabasbas Elementary School in Lapu Lapu City during School Year 2025 to 2026. Using a quantitative descriptive comparative design, data were gathered from thirty teacher respondents through survey questionnaires administered in person, following formal approval from the school head and clear orientation of participants regarding the purpose and procedures of the study. The results served as the empirical basis for the development of a Proposed Professional Development Action Plan intended to strengthen inclusive education practices within the school.

The findings revealed that the teaching force was largely composed of experienced educators, with half of the respondents aged forty-one years and above, and the majority being female. Teaching experience similarly reflected a concentration of senior teachers, while participation in inclusive education related trainings varied, with most respondents having attended orientations on inclusive education policies, followed by seminars on assistive technology, collaboration and co teaching, differentiated instruction, and behavioral management in inclusive

settings. This demographic and professional profile provided an important context for interpreting the results, as it reflected a mature teaching population with exposure to different forms of professional learning related to inclusion.

Across all domains examined in the study, the statistical analyses consistently demonstrated that teachers' profile variables did not have a significant association with their perceived preparedness for inclusive teaching. In terms of knowledge and understanding of inclusive education principles, the Chi Square Test results showed no significant association with age, sex, teaching experience, or relevant training, as evidenced by p values greater than 0.05 in all cases. These findings indicate that teachers' foundational understanding of inclusive education is not significantly shaped by demographic characteristics or by the specific types of trainings attended. Instead, the results suggest that other influences, such as institutional support systems, access to updated instructional resources, and individual professional motivation, may play a more decisive role in shaping teachers' conceptual readiness for inclusion.

Similarly, the analysis of instructional strategies for diverse learners revealed no statistically significant relationship between teachers' profile variables and their perceived preparedness to implement differentiated instructional approaches. Age, sex, teaching experience, and relevant training all yielded p values exceeding the level of significance, leading to the non rejection of the null hypothesis. This outcome implies that teachers' confidence in applying instructional strategies for diverse learners may be more strongly influenced by practical classroom experience, peer collaboration, and continuous mentoring rather than by background characteristics alone. The finding underscores the importance of experiential learning and ongoing professional engagement in developing inclusive instructional competence.

The same pattern was observed in the domain of classroom management in inclusive settings. The Chi Square Test results indicated no significant association between teachers' demographic variables or training background and their perceived preparedness to manage inclusive classrooms. This suggests that effective classroom management in inclusive environments may depend more on situational and contextual factors such as school policies, classroom composition, and the availability of support personnel, rather than on teachers' personal or professional profiles. The result reinforces the view that inclusive classroom management is a complex practice shaped by the immediate teaching environment and institutional structures.

The study likewise found no significant association between teachers' profile variables and their preparedness to collaborate with parents and support staff, as all computed p values were above the level of significance. This finding indicates that readiness for collaboration in inclusive education is not determined by age, sex, teaching experience, or training type alone. Instead, it suggests that collaborative practices may be embedded within the broader school culture, leadership practices, and established communication mechanisms that facilitate partnerships among teachers, families, and support professionals.

Taken together, these findings led to the conclusion that the relationship between teachers' training and their preparedness for inclusive teaching was not statistically significant across the domains examined. While teachers had varying levels of exposure to inclusive education trainings, these did not translate into significant differences in perceived preparedness when analyzed against demographic and professional profile variables. This highlights the need to move beyond demographic based assumptions when addressing teacher readiness for inclusive education and to focus instead on systemic and contextual supports that enable effective inclusive practice.

Based on these conclusions, the study recommends the implementation of the Proposed Professional Development Action Plan at Subabasbas Elementary School as a strategic response to strengthening teachers' preparedness for inclusive teaching. The action plan, grounded in the findings of the study, should be submitted to concerned school and division officials for consideration and possible implementation. By emphasizing sustained professional development, institutional support, and context responsive strategies, the proposed plan aims to enhance inclusive education practices and ensure that teachers are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of learners. Overall, this research contributes to a clearer understanding of teacher preparedness in inclusive education and provides a practical foundation for policy informed and school based professional development initiatives.

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