

**Exploring the relationship between teacher self- efficacy, attitude, and readiness for
inclusive education among Secondary Teachers**

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are equipped with the ability to manage diverse students in any classroom setting and apply inclusive practices that influence attitudes and readiness towards inclusion and their willingness to adapt instruction for students with special educational needs. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among secondary teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness to implement inclusive education at Marigondon National High School, Division of Lapu–Lapu City, during the 2025–2026 school year. The respondents were randomly selected and comprised of 49 teachers who responded to a validated 4-point Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Pizana (2022), Wilkerson (2012), Katrina et al. (2024), and Larios et al. (2022). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with a significance level of 0.05 to determine meaningful relationships.

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The findings revealed that teachers at Marigondon NHS were mostly female, aged 30–40, with MAEd degrees and 9–10 years of experience and that teachers have very high self-efficacy, positive attitudes, and readiness to implement inclusive education. Furthermore, it revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers’ self-efficacy and their attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education and has a significant relationship between self-efficacy and attitude towards the implementation of inclusive education, but no significant relationships between teachers’ attitude and readiness, or between self-efficacy and readiness. Thus, the findings suggest that a school-based intervention plan will be implemented and school principal should organize various seminars and trainings that will enhance teachers’ self-efficacy, positive attitudes, and readiness to effectively implement inclusive education for learners with diverse needs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, self-efficacy, attitude, readiness, descriptive-correlational research design

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INTRODUCTION

UNESCO believes that every learner matters equally. Inclusive education works to identify all barriers to education and remove them, and covers everything from curricula to pedagogy and teaching, which is guided by the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which emphasize inclusion and equity as the foundation for quality education (UNESCO, 2023). The global movement toward inclusive education represents one of the most transformative reforms in modern schooling.

Inclusive education emphasizes the right of all learners, regardless of ability, background, or socio-economic status, to learn together in mainstream classrooms. This paradigm shift requires not only systemic policy adjustments but, most critically, teachers’ readiness to respond effectively to learners’ diversity. In addition, UNESCO aims for teachers to deliver quality education and equal opportunities to all learners from diverse walks of life.

Research highlights that teacher readiness comprises teachers’ self-efficacy and attitudes towards implementing inclusive education, and that this is a significant milestone for the educational sector in addressing various learning gaps among students (Cate et al., 2018; Woodcock & Jones, 2020). Teachers are equipped to manage diverse students in any classroom setting and to apply inclusive practices.

These influences teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion and their willingness to adapt instruction for students with special educational needs (Savolainen et al., 2020). When teachers possess high self-efficacy, they tend to manifest positive attitudes, effective classroom management, and exhibit readiness, all of which contribute to the success of inclusive education (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Buric & Kim, 2020). While several international studies have examined the relationships among teachers’ self-efficacy, attitudes, and readiness for inclusive education (Ozokcu, 2018; Round & Sharma, 2021), there remains limited localized research on these variables in the Philippine context—particularly in the Division of Lapu-Lapu City. In the research locale, not all teachers participated in training and seminars on inclusive teaching; as a result, numerous instances occurred in which teachers lacked the knowledge to support students with special needs.

The educational landscape continues to evolve as inclusive education becomes a national priority under the Department of Education's commitment to equitable access and quality learning for all. However, there is insufficient empirical data exploring how general education teachers in Lapu-Lapu City perceive their readiness to implement inclusive practices, how their attitudes and self-efficacy influence that readiness, and how, in most cases, teachers find it difficult to address the learning gaps of learners with special needs. Moreover, there is a lack of school-based frameworks or intervention plans grounded in local data that could support teachers' professional development toward inclusion. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation into the relationships among self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness to implement inclusive education across schools within the division.

This study aims to determine the relationships among teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness to implement inclusive education at Marigondon National High School in the Division of Lapu-Lapu City during the school year 2025–2026. Findings from this research will provide valuable insights into the psychological and professional factors influencing teachers' readiness for inclusion. Understanding these relationships will enable school leaders and policymakers to identify areas requiring targeted support and professional development. Furthermore, the results will serve as the basis for designing a school-based intervention plan to enhance teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, and commitment to inclusive education practices. This study will contribute to strengthening the local implementation of inclusive education in alignment with national educational reforms and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all learners (United Nations, 2015).

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship between public school teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness in implementing inclusive education in Marigondon National High School in the Division of Lapu-Lapu City during the school year 2025 to 2026 as basis for a school-based intervention plan.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the teachers in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and relevant trainings and seminars attended?
2. What is the level of teachers' self-efficacy in handling students in inclusive education in terms of students' engagement and instructional strategies?
3. What is the level of teachers' attitude toward the implementation of inclusive education?
4. What is the level of teachers' readiness toward the implementation of inclusive education?
5. Is there a significant relationship among teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness toward the implementation of inclusive education?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what school-based intervention plan can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a quantitative approach to examine the relationships among secondary teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness to implement inclusive education in Marigondon NHS, within the Division of Lapu-Lapu City, during the school year 2025–2026.

Descriptive research is appropriate because it systematically describes secondary teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, and readiness to implement inclusive education without manipulating variables. It also provides a clear snapshot of how teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes contribute to their readiness in inclusive classrooms. It is well-suited for this study, as it allows for the description of population characteristics and the examination of relationships between variables (Morales, 2021).

The study was conducted at the selected school in the Division of Lapu-Lapu City, specifically in Marigondon National High School. These public high schools served learners from the surrounding urban community and operated under the supervision of the Department of Education, Lapu-Lapu City Division. It has an impressive educational institution located in Marigondon, Lapu-Lapu City offering junior high and senior high.

This study utilized a random sampling technique to select 56 secondary teachers in Marigondon NHS in the Division of Lapu-Lapu City who were directly involved in inclusive education classrooms, ensuring that the data collected would be relevant and specific to the research objectives. The respondents of the study were the secondary teachers from Marigondon NHS in Lapu-Lapu City. The distribution of the respondents in this study is presented in Table 1 below.

The research instrument was a validated 4-point Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Pizana (2022), Wilkerson (2012), Katrina et al. (2024), and Larios et al. (2022) to assess the significant relationship between the level of self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness of the teachers in implementing inclusive education in Marigondon NHS in Lapu-Lapu City. The Likert-scale survey questionnaire consisted of 4 parts and underwent pilot testing to assess its fit with the study's respondents and ensure reliability for use in this study. It assessed whether the process delivers consistent, replicable results to readers. In the research tool, the first part consists of the teachers' profiles, including age and gender, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, and relevant training and seminars attended. Part II contained 14 affirmative statements designed to assess teachers' self-efficacy regarding inclusive classrooms. Part III comprised 15 affirmative statements intended to assess respondents' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education, and Part IV consisted of 8 statements. Respondents were asked to select one of four 4-point options for each statement, using a Likert scale with 4 points to indicate their level of agreement.

The data collection process for this study was carried out in three key stages, first, the researchers seek an approval from relevant authorities, including the school head of Marigondon NHS and the division office, through a formal transmittal letter. This stage also involved preparing research instruments, particularly the questionnaire, which was validated by field experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the target respondents. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all respondents in selected schools, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, confidentiality procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation.

The researchers distributed the survey questionnaire and collected it from the respondents. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all respondents in selected schools, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, confidentiality procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation. This study was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical principles to ensure the rights, welfare, and dignity of all respondents were protected throughout the research process

After the information were collected, reviewed for completeness, and systematically organized for tabulation and subjected to appropriate statistical analyses to examine patterns, trends, and relationships among variables. This analysis served as the foundation for interpreting the data and drawing meaningful conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study based on data collected from fifty-six public secondary school teachers of Marigondon National High School in the Division of Lapu Lapu City during the school year 2025 to 2026. The study employed a descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship among teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness in implementing inclusive education. Data were gathered using a researcher made survey questionnaire consisting of indicators on demographic profile, teachers' self-efficacy in terms of student engagement and instructional strategies, attitudes toward inclusive education, and readiness for inclusive classroom implementation. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to describe the data, while Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the relationships among the variables. The discussion is anchored on the empirical data obtained and interprets the results in relation to the objectives of the study and relevant literature.

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined to provide context for understanding teachers' perceptions, competencies, and dispositions toward inclusive education. In terms of age distribution, the majority of teachers belonged to the 30 to 40 years old group, comprising 44.64 percent of the respondents. This was followed by teachers aged 41 to 50 years old at 35.71 percent, those aged 29 years old and below at 16.07 percent, and teachers aged 51 years old and above at 3.57 percent. This distribution indicates that most teachers are in their early to middle adulthood, a stage commonly associated with both accumulated teaching experience and continued adaptability to new educational frameworks. The predominance of teachers within this age range suggests that they are likely to have developed stable instructional routines while remaining receptive to inclusive education practices. This finding is consistent with Bukvic (2014), who reported that middle aged teachers tend to demonstrate higher self-efficacy and more positive attitudes toward teaching students with special needs.

In terms of gender, female teachers comprised 67.86 percent or thirty-eight of the respondents, while male teachers accounted for 32.14 percent or eighteen respondents. This gender distribution implies that female teachers significantly influence the instructional culture, classroom practices, and implementation of inclusive education within the school. The dominance of female teachers may shape collaborative practices, classroom management approaches, and responsiveness to learner diversity. This result aligns with Ahmad (2015), who found that female teachers generally exhibit higher self-efficacy than male teachers, which contributes to positive classroom management, effective instructional strategies, and active student engagement.

With respect to highest educational attainment, the majority of respondents were master's degree holders, accounting for 66.07 percent or thirty-seven teachers. This was followed by teachers holding bachelor's degrees at 16.07 percent or nine respondents. A further 10.71 percent of teachers had completed master's degree units, while 3.57 percent had completed units toward a doctoral degree. This high level of educational attainment indicates that most teachers possess advanced academic preparation and exposure to pedagogical theories, including those related to inclusive education. Such preparation equips teachers with the capacity to implement evidence-based practices, mentor colleagues, and contribute to school based professional development initiatives. This finding supports Burger et al. (2020),

who reported significant differences in self-efficacy among educators based on educational attainment and work experience.

The length of teaching experience of the respondents further contextualizes their competence in handling diverse learners. The largest proportion of teachers had nine to ten years or more of teaching experience, representing 39.29 percent of the respondents. This was followed by teachers with four to six years of experience at 26.79 percent, seven to nine years at 17.86 percent, and one to three years at 16.07 percent. The distribution indicates that a substantial number of teachers possess considerable teaching experience, which is advantageous in sustaining inclusive education initiatives due to accumulated pedagogical skills and professional maturity. This finding aligns with Bukvic (2014), who found that experienced teachers tend to have higher self-efficacy and more positive attitudes toward teaching students with special needs.

In terms of professional development, the respondents reported attending trainings and seminars across various administrative levels. The highest participation was observed at the division level, with 42.86 percent or thirty-three teachers. This was followed by school-based trainings at 29.87 percent, district level trainings at 15.58 percent, regional level trainings at 9.09 percent, and national level trainings at 2.60 percent. These results suggest that teachers are consistently exposed to professional development opportunities, particularly within their immediate and local contexts. Such exposure likely strengthens teachers' instructional competence and self-efficacy by providing context specific strategies for addressing inclusive education challenges. This finding is consistent with Izquierdo et al. (2025), who reported significant improvements in teachers' self-efficacy and well-being following participation in training programs and seminars.

Teachers' self-efficacy in terms of student engagement

The level of teachers' self-efficacy in terms of student engagement was found to be very high, with an overall mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.66. This indicates that teachers generally perceive themselves as highly capable of motivating and engaging students in inclusive classroom settings. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement "I am able to encourage students to believe they can do well in the school," with a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.69, reflecting strong confidence in fostering student motivation and self-belief. High mean scores were also observed for the statements "I am able to get students to value learning" with a mean of 3.39 and standard deviation of 0.71, and "I help students to think critically" with a mean of 3.38 and standard deviation of 0.68. These results suggest that teachers feel capable of promoting higher order thinking and intrinsic motivation among diverse learners.

Lower mean scores, although still interpreted as high, were observed for the statements "I can motivate students who show low interest in school work" with a mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.63, "I can improve the understanding of a student who is about to fail in my subject" with a mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.66, and "I can get through to the most difficult students" with a mean of 3.07 and standard deviation of 0.60. These findings highlight areas where teachers may experience challenges and may benefit from additional instructional strategies or support mechanisms. Overall, the results indicate strong teacher confidence in engaging students and supporting diverse learning needs, which is consistent with Emiru and Gedefaw (2024), who found that teachers' self-efficacy in student engagement contributes to effective classroom management.

Teachers' self-efficacy in terms of instructional strategies

Teachers also demonstrated a very high level of self-efficacy in implementing instructional strategies for diverse learners, as reflected by an overall mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.64. The highest mean score was observed for the statement “I can adjust my lessons to the proper level for individual students,” with a mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.68, indicating strong confidence in differentiated instruction. High mean scores were likewise recorded for “I can draft good questions for my diverse students” with a mean of 3.38 and standard deviation of 0.52, and “I can provide an alternate explanation when my students are confused” with a mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.69.

The lowest mean scores were noted for “I can provide appropriate activities for every student's needs” with a mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.66, and “I can gauge students’ reading comprehension” with a mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.63. These results suggest slight variability in teachers’ confidence when addressing individual learning needs and monitoring comprehension. Nonetheless, the overall findings indicate that teachers feel well prepared and capable of applying inclusive instructional strategies, which is essential for supporting learners with special needs. This result aligns with Quilala and Tantiado (2025), who reported a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and instructional supervision, leading to improved classroom practices.

Teachers’ attitudes toward inclusive education

The level of teachers’ attitudes toward teaching inclusive education was found to be very positive, with an overall mean of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 0.73. Teachers strongly agreed with statements emphasizing the importance of specialized classrooms for learners with autism, as indicated by a mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.73, and the critical role of self-contained classrooms in addressing behavioral and educational needs, with a mean of 3.45 and standard deviation of 0.76. These findings indicate strong teacher support for specialized instructional environments, particularly when addressing complex learning and behavioral needs.

The results suggest that while teachers are positively disposed toward inclusive education, they may feel more competent and effective when inclusive practices are supported by structured and specialized settings. This implies a preference for collaborative and flexible models that balance inclusion with appropriate support mechanisms. These findings are consistent with Kurniawati et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of institutional support in enabling teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively. Moreover, the results support Bandura’s social learning theory, which highlights the role of teachers as models of behavior, shaping students’ development through attitudes and actions, as further discussed by Rumjaun and Narod (2025).

Teachers’ readiness toward inclusive education

Teachers’ readiness for implementing inclusive education yielded an overall mean score of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 0.79, indicating a moderate level of preparedness. The highest mean scores were observed in awareness of disability laws with a mean of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.67, and understanding the roles of general and special education teachers with a mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.67. These results suggest stronger readiness in knowledge-based aspects of inclusion.

In contrast, the lowest mean scores were recorded for adequate training in handling learners with disabilities at 2.34 with a standard deviation of 0.92, and time for collaboration

with SPED teachers at 2.54 with a standard deviation of 0.81. The higher standard deviations in these areas indicate greater variability among teachers, suggesting that while some feel prepared, others lack sufficient training and support. These findings imply that although teachers possess foundational knowledge of inclusive education, gaps in training, collaboration, and hands on preparation may limit effective implementation. This result aligns with Bas (2021) and Hutzler et al. (2019), who reported that school attributes and institutional support moderate teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy toward inclusive education.

Relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and attitude

The test of the significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education revealed a strong positive correlation, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.717$ and a p value of 0.000. Since the p value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis H_{O1} was rejected. This result indicates that teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to hold more positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Teachers who are confident in managing diverse learners and adapting instructional strategies are more likely to embrace inclusive practices. This finding underscores the importance of professional development initiatives that enhance both teachers' confidence and attitudes, which is consistent with Yada et al. (2022), who emphasized that teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes are critical in building inclusive educational systems.

Relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and readiness

The relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and readiness toward inclusive education showed a weak positive correlation, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.215$ and a p value of 0.111. Since the p value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis H_{O2} was accepted. This finding suggests that teachers' confidence in their teaching abilities does not necessarily translate into readiness to implement inclusive education. Teachers may feel competent in general instructional tasks but still feel unprepared due to limited training, insufficient resources, or lack of institutional support. This result is consistent with Barni et al. (2019), who found that readiness is influenced by contextual and structural factors beyond self-efficacy alone.

Relationship between teachers' attitude and readiness

The correlation analysis between teachers' attitudes and readiness toward inclusive education yielded a strong positive correlation coefficient of $r = 0.668$. However, the computed p value of 0.453 exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis H_{O3} . This indicates that although teachers may hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, these attitudes do not necessarily result in readiness to implement inclusive practices. This finding highlights the need for concrete capacity building measures such as specialized training, collaborative teaching arrangements, and access to instructional resources. This result aligns with Sharma and George (2016), who emphasized that effective inclusive education requires not only positive attitudes but also practical skills and preparedness.

Synthesis of findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers possess high levels of self-efficacy and positive attitudes toward inclusive education, yet exhibit only moderate readiness for its

implementation. The results emphasize the critical role of professional development, institutional support, and collaborative structures in translating positive dispositions and confidence into effective inclusive practices. These findings contribute to the understanding of inclusive education implementation by highlighting the complex interaction among self-efficacy, attitude, and readiness, and they provide a strong empirical basis for the development of a school-based intervention plan aimed at strengthening teachers' preparedness and support systems.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes in the successful implementation of inclusive education are vital in students' learning, particularly in managing students with special needs. Findings indicate that teachers who are confident in their teaching abilities are more likely to embrace inclusive practices with openness and commitment. This confidence enables teachers to view learner diversity as an opportunity for meaningful instruction rather than a challenge, fostering supportive and inclusive classroom environments. In terms of teachers' contribution to student learning and professional growth, the study highlights the importance of well-designed educational programs that integrate capacity-building, mentoring, and school-based interventions. Such programs can strengthen teachers' readiness by equipping them with practical strategies, adaptive instructional skills, and collaborative competencies necessary for inclusive classrooms. Ultimately, enhancing teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, and readiness through sustained professional development empowers them to deliver equitable learning opportunities, contribute meaningfully to inclusive education initiatives, and grow into reflective, competent education professionals committed to meeting the needs of all learners.

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