

**The dynamics of teaching readiness and self-efficacy
towards inclusive education practices**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the levels of teaching readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices, as well as the relationship between these variables at Tulay National High School during the school year 2025-2026. There were 40 teacher-respondents who were sought out through convenience sampling. Using a descriptive-correlative design, the data were gathered through a survey questionnaire to examine teachers' perceived readiness towards inclusive education practices along the dimensions of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, self-efficacy along the dimensions of efficacy to use inclusive instructions, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior, and the relationship between teaching readiness and self-efficacy. The study revealed that teaching readiness was rated proficient in terms of all dimensions such as pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies. In terms of self-efficacy, teachers viewed themselves as highly efficacious in terms of efficacy to use inclusive instructions, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior. Ultimately, it was found out that there is a significant positive moderate relationship between teaching readiness and self-efficacy. The findings became the basis of designing an action plan for the inclusive education practices.

Keywords: Special Education, inclusive education, readiness, self-efficacy, descriptive-correlative design, action plan, Minglanilla, Cebu

Date Submitted: January 2, 2026

Date Accepted: January 20, 2026

Date Published: January 30, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that all learners regardless of disability, learning difficulty, language, socioeconomic background, or other forms of difference are provided with equitable access to quality education has become a central goal of contemporary education systems worldwide, giving rise to the concept of inclusive education (Cumming, 2024). The realization of inclusive learning environments depends not only on policies and material resources but also on teachers'

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS0501757>

Recommended citation:

Gallego, D. K. D. (2026). The dynamics of teaching readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. *Pantao (The International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (1), 8393-8410.
<http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS0501757>

readiness to address learner diversity and their belief in their own capacity to perform instructional roles effectively. International education conventions and global agendas consistently affirm every child's right to quality education within inclusive settings. Empirical evidence across contexts demonstrates that teachers' preparedness and confidence are decisive factors in determining whether inclusive practices are implemented successfully and whether such practices lead to positive learner outcomes. However, research also indicates that teacher readiness and self-efficacy do not necessarily develop concurrently, highlighting the need for further investigation into how these constructs interact (Woodcock et al., 2022).

In the Philippine context, strong policy commitments to inclusive education are reflected in legislative frameworks and in initiatives led by the Department of Education to integrate learners with special needs into regular classroom settings. Despite these commitments, the implementation of inclusive education remains uneven across regions and schools. Jardinez and Natividad (2024) reported that teachers often work in diverse classrooms without adequate pre service preparation, sufficient in-service training, or appropriate instructional resources, while also managing large class sizes. These gaps in readiness directly affect teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive practices and ultimately influence the quality of education received by learners with special needs. Generating empirical evidence on the relationship between teacher readiness and self-efficacy is therefore essential for informing policy decisions, curriculum development, and resource allocation aimed at strengthening inclusive education nationwide.

At the local level, public secondary schools in Cebu experience persistent challenges related to limited resources and overcrowded classrooms, as documented in School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustments reports. While many teachers demonstrate commitment to inclusive education, they frequently rely on improvised strategies due to insufficient training, limited support personnel, and shortages of teaching materials. These reports further reveal that although teachers aspire to implement inclusive practices effectively, many feel inadequately prepared to respond consistently to the diverse needs of their learners. Similar conditions are observed at Tulay National High School, where inclusive education is mandated but remains insufficiently understood due to limited emphasis during in service trainings and seminars. Consequently, concerns persist regarding teachers' readiness to implement inclusive practices and the extent to which this readiness relates to their teaching self-efficacy. Localized research is therefore necessary to guide district offices, school leaders, and policymakers in designing interventions that address these challenges, particularly as inclusive education becomes increasingly institutionalized within academic settings.

In response to these concerns, the present study investigates the relationship between teacher readiness and teacher self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices among public secondary school teachers at Tulay National High School. The study seeks to generate evidence that can inform the development of an action plan aimed at addressing identified gaps in readiness and self-efficacy, thereby enhancing teachers' capacity to implement inclusive practices, improving school performance, and promoting positive learning outcomes.

The study is grounded in several complementary theoretical and policy frameworks that collectively explain teacher readiness and self-efficacy in inclusive education. The Concerns Based Adoption Model provides a lens for understanding how teachers adopt and implement educational innovations by progressing through stages of concern and levels of use. Within inclusive education, teachers may initially experience uncertainty or personal concern, later shifting toward managing instructional demands and ultimately focusing on learner impact and collaboration as readiness increases (Olson et al., 2020; Bautista, 2025; Lau and Jong, 2022). The model also explains how teachers move from non-use of inclusive practices to routine and refined implementation through training, experience, and institutional support.

Teacher readiness is further understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and contextual support across cognitive, affective, and practical domains (Yang et al., 2024; Mabanag et al., 2024). Research indicates that teachers' understanding of disability, beliefs about inclusion, and attitudes toward learner diversity significantly influence readiness, with insufficient knowledge and persistent misconceptions undermining implementation despite policy mandates (Allassaf, 2025; Jurca et al., 2023). In this study, readiness is examined in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies.

Pedagogical knowledge includes teachers' understanding of learner characteristics, assessment of diverse needs, curriculum adaptation, and inclusive pedagogical frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning. While research demonstrates that pedagogically specific knowledge is associated with higher readiness and confidence, gaps often exist between declarative knowledge and applied skills, underscoring the importance of translating theory into practice through structured support and practical application (Mabanag et al., 2024; Beltran et al., 2025; Navaitienė and Stasiūnaitienė, 2021). Professional development is likewise critical, with evidence showing that sustained, practice based, and context sensitive programs are more effective than isolated workshops in improving readiness, attitudes, and resilience among teachers in inclusive settings (Morina et al., 2025; Kim, 2025; Sowell and McCaughey, 2023; Calandri et al., 2025).

The classroom environment also plays a moderating role in translating readiness into practice. Physical resources, class size, social climate, and organizational support influence teachers' perceived ability to implement inclusive strategies, with well-structured and supportive environments fostering greater flexibility and confidence (Fteiha et al., 2024; Čotar Konrad et al., 2024). Instructional strategies such as Differentiated Instruction and Universal Design for Learning are widely recognized as evidence-based approaches for inclusion, although research indicates that without ongoing coaching and follow up support, implementation often remains partial or inconsistent (Chad, 2025; Praveen et al., 2024; Mhlongo et al., 2023).

The study is further anchored in Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors and identifies self-efficacy as a central determinant of human action (Bandura as cited by Nickerson, 2025). Teacher self-efficacy refers to educators' belief in their capacity to influence learning outcomes, manage classrooms, and implement instructional strategies effectively, particularly within inclusive contexts (Emiru and Gedifew, 2024). Self-efficacy is shaped by mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states, all of which are relevant to teachers working in inclusive classrooms (Schoor and Stokes Francis, 2024; Li, 2023). High self-efficacy has been associated with greater use of inclusive instructional strategies, persistence in the face of challenges, and positive attitudes toward learners with diverse needs, whereas low self-efficacy is linked to resistance and reduced implementation of inclusive practices (Woodcock et al., 2022; Mary, 2023; Wray et al., 2022).

The Theory of Planned Behavior further explains teachers' intention to implement inclusive practices by highlighting the roles of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Positive beliefs about inclusion, supportive school cultures, and strong leadership contribute to greater readiness and confidence, while perceived behavioral control closely aligns with self-efficacy in managing inclusive classrooms (Ajzen, 1991; Dignath et al., 2022; Jury et al., 2023; Gülsün et al., 2023). Within this framework, the present study examines teacher self-efficacy in terms of using inclusive instruction, collaboration, and behavior management. Research consistently demonstrates that instructional efficacy is strengthened through integrated training, practicum experiences, and mentoring, collaboration efficacy

depends on structured and sustained collegial engagement, and behavior management efficacy improves with targeted professional development and access to support resources (Rusconi and Squillaci, 2023; Jones, 2021; Yim, 2023; Ødegård and Solberg, 2024; Ventista and Brown, 2023).

Legal and policy frameworks further contextualize the study. Republic Act No. 11650 institutionalizes inclusive education by guaranteeing learners with disabilities access to quality education and mandating the establishment of inclusive learning resource centers. Republic Act No. 7277 affirms the rights of persons with disabilities and emphasizes adaptive teaching approaches, teacher training, and curriculum modification as essential components of inclusive education. DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 operationalizes these commitments by directing schools to prepare facilities, materials, and systems that support learners with special needs, drawing from national and international mandates such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (RA 11650, 2022; RA 7277, 1992; DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009; UNICEF, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

Local and international studies reinforce the relevance of these frameworks while revealing persistent implementation challenges related to resources, training, leadership, and policy clarity (Alcantara et al., 2024; Arias et al., 2023; Cabañero, 2023). Collectively, these theoretical models, legal bases, and empirical findings underscore that while inclusive education is strongly supported at the policy level, its success ultimately depends on teachers' readiness and self-efficacy. Understanding the relationship between these constructs is therefore essential for transforming inclusive education policies into meaningful and sustainable classroom practices.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed the relationship between teaching readiness and teaching self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices among secondary teachers at Tulay National High School during the school year 2025-2026 as a basis for the development of an action plan.

1. As perceived by the teacher respondents, what is their level of teaching readiness toward inclusive education practices in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies?
2. As perceived by the teacher respondents, what is their level of teaching self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices in terms of efficacy in using inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teaching readiness and teaching self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan can be developed to enhance teaching readiness and teaching self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design to determine the levels of teachers' readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices and to examine the relationship between these two variables among secondary teachers at Tulay National High School. The descriptive component of the design made it possible to determine the teachers' perceived readiness toward inclusive education practices in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, as well as their perceived self-efficacy toward inclusive education in terms of using inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing behavior, consistent with the approach described by Shinija (2024). The correlational component allowed the investigation of the relationship between

teacher readiness and teacher self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices, following the framework advanced by Putri et al. (2025). This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the description of existing conditions and the examination of relationships among variables without manipulating them, making experimental methods unsuitable for the purposes of this inquiry.

The conduct of the study followed an input process output framework. The input phase focused on the assessment of teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices along the dimensions of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, and the assessment of teachers' self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices in terms of efficacy to use inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior. The process phase involved the preparation and transmittal of formal letters, securing permission from school authorities, obtaining informed consent from the respondents, administering the survey questionnaires, conducting statistical treatment of the data, and performing data tabulation, analysis, and interpretation. The output phase consisted of the formulation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations, which served as the basis for the development of a school action plan grounded on the results of the statistical analyses.

The research was conducted at Tulay National High School located in Tulay, Minglanilla, Cebu in the southern part of Cebu, Philippines. The school is a public secondary institution implementing the basic education curriculum and inclusive education policies mandated by the Department of Education. Recognized as a child friendly school, it caters to junior and senior high school learners with varied socioeconomic backgrounds and diverse learning needs, including learners identified with special educational needs. The school actively promotes differentiation as a core component of inclusive education practices and continuously encourages teachers to participate in professional development activities related to inclusive strategies. These characteristics made the school an appropriate setting for assessing teachers' readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. Data gathering was conducted on campus with official permission from the superintendent and the school head, and all participants provided informed consent and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Conducting the study in this environment provided meaningful insights into the current implementation of inclusive education practices and the factors influencing teachers' preparedness and confidence in addressing learner diversity.

The respondents of the study were the secondary teachers of Tulay National High School during the school year 2025-2026. These teachers were selected because they directly handle diverse learners in their classrooms and are supported by both school administrators and non-teaching personnel who play important roles in the implementation of inclusive education practices. Participation in the study was voluntary, and no teacher was compelled to take part. A total of 40 teachers willingly participated in the study. In terms of sex, 9 respondents were male, representing 22.5 percent of the sample, while 31 respondents were female, representing 77.5 percent. With respect to years of teaching experience, 10 teachers or 25 percent had 0 to 3 years of teaching experience, 23 teachers or 57.5 percent had 4 to 10 years of teaching experience, and 7 teachers or 17.5 percent had more than 10 years of teaching experience. The total number of respondents was 40, corresponding to 100 percent of the sample.

The study utilized convenience sampling, also referred to as availability sampling, in which participants were selected based on their immediate availability and willingness to respond to the survey questionnaire, as described by Golzar et al. (2022). This sampling technique was chosen because it is practical, time efficient, simple to implement, and cost effective, particularly in contexts where respondents are readily accessible and voluntarily agree to participate.

Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire composed of three parts, which was adopted from the study of Cola et al. (2025) titled Teachers' Level of Preparedness and Acceptance toward the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs and from the study of Butabayeva et al. (2025) titled Inclusive Practices in Kazakhstan: Validating the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice Scale for the Local Context. The first part of the instrument collected the respondents' profile information, including name, age, sex, school, and number of years of teaching, for descriptive and profiling purposes. The second part measured teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices using a 4-point Likert scale with response options of 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Agree, and 4 Strongly Agree. This section assessed readiness across four domains, namely pedagogical knowledge with 10 indicators, professional development with 10 indicators, classroom environment with 10 indicators, and instructional strategies with 20 indicators. The third part of the instrument measured teachers' self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices using a 6-point Likert scale with response options of 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Somewhat Disagree, 4 Somewhat Agree, 5 Agree, and 6 Strongly Agree. This instrument demonstrated high reliability and validity, yielding an alpha score of 0.90 during reliability and validity testing. Teachers rated their self-efficacy across three dimensions, namely efficacy to use inclusive instruction with 6 indicators, efficacy in collaboration with 6 indicators, and efficacy in managing behavior with 6 indicators.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. The nature and purpose of the research were clearly explained to the teachers, and participation was entirely voluntary. No respondent was forced to participate, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Respondents were assured that all information gathered would be treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

The data gathering procedure followed a systematic and ethical sequence. During the pre-data gathering stage, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the school heads. Upon approval, a transmittal letter was distributed to the secondary teachers requesting their cooperation and participation. Teachers who agreed to participate provided their consent. During the data gathering stage, the respondents accomplished the adopted survey questionnaire assessing their readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. All completed questionnaires were collected, collated, and tabulated for analysis. In the post data gathering stage, the analyzed and interpreted data served as the basis for the formulation of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, which subsequently informed the development of the proposed action plan.

Appropriate statistical tools were employed to ensure the validity and accuracy of data analysis and interpretation. Frequency percentage was used to summarize and describe the profile of the respondents. Weighted mean and mean were utilized to describe the teachers' perceived levels of readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. Pearson r was employed to determine the relationship between teachers' readiness and teachers' self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices.

To quantify and interpret the responses obtained from the survey instrument, a clearly defined scoring procedure was followed. Each questionnaire item was rated according to its respective Likert scale, and the obtained scores were tabulated, computed, and classified based on predetermined score ranges to identify the corresponding levels of readiness and self-efficacy. This procedure ensured objectivity, consistency, and accuracy in data analysis. Descriptive ratings were applied to facilitate clear interpretation of the numerical results. For teacher readiness toward inclusive education practices in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.75 were interpreted as Emerging Readiness, indicating that teachers were beginning to show awareness of inclusive education concepts but demonstrated limited

preparation and application in practice. Scores from 1.76 to 2.50 were interpreted as Developing Readiness, reflecting incomplete preparation and partial application of inclusive practices with developing consistency and depth. Scores from 2.51 to 3.25 were categorized as Proficient Readiness, indicating sufficient preparation and consistent application of inclusive practices with confidence. Scores from 3.26 to 4.00 were interpreted as Exemplary Readiness, reflecting an exemplary level of readiness and excellence in implementing inclusive education and serving as models of best practice.

For teacher self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices in terms of using inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing behavior, scores from 1.00 to 1.83 were interpreted as Very Lowly Efficacious, indicating very low self-efficacy. Scores from 1.84 to 2.66 were categorized as Lowly Efficacious, reflecting low self-efficacy. Scores from 2.67 to 3.49 were interpreted as Moderately Efficacious, indicating moderate self-efficacy. Scores from 3.50 to 4.32 were categorized as Efficacious, reflecting the presence of self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. Scores from 4.33 to 5.15 were interpreted as Highly Efficacious, indicating high self-efficacy, while scores from 5.16 to 6.00 were categorized as Very Highly Efficacious, reflecting very high self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices.

The interpretation of the correlation between teachers' readiness and self-efficacy levels followed the guidelines presented by Janse et al. (2021). Correlation coefficients ranging from 0.00 to 0.09 were interpreted as Negligible Correlation, values from 0.10 to 0.39 as Weak Correlation, values from 0.40 to 0.69 as Moderate Correlation, values from 0.70 to 0.89 as Strong Correlation, and values from 0.90 to 1.00 as Very Strong Correlation. This interpretive framework guided the accurate analysis and discussion of the relationship between the key variables of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from the responses of 40 secondary teachers of Tulay National High School who participated in the study during the school year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive correlational research design and convenience sampling, data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire assessing teachers' readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. The instruments measured readiness across pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, as well as self-efficacy in using inclusive instruction, collaboration, and behavior management. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and mean were used to describe the levels of readiness and self-efficacy, while Pearson r was employed to determine the relationship between the two variables. The discussion that follows is grounded strictly on the data obtained and interprets the results directly in relation to the objectives of the study.

The respondents' perceived readiness toward inclusive education practices in terms of pedagogical knowledge revealed an overall average weighted mean of 3.08, which was interpreted as Proficient Readiness. This finding indicates that teachers possessed sufficient pedagogical preparation to accommodate learners with special educational needs in inclusive classrooms, although further enhancement remains necessary. All ten indicators under pedagogical knowledge were rated within the Proficient Readiness level. The highest weighted mean of 3.18 was obtained for educational background preparation to teach all types of learners with special education needs, reflecting teachers' confidence in addressing diverse learner profiles. Indicators related to teaching learners with emotional and social problems, hearing impairment, and embracing learners with special needs in regular classrooms each obtained

weighted means of 3.15, further affirming teachers' readiness in managing social, sensory, and inclusion related demands. Other indicators such as teaching learners with communication disorders, learners aged 5 and above whose chronological age was 2 or more years below their grade level, understanding learners' specific needs in regular classrooms, and managing behavioral difficulties obtained weighted means of 3.10, 3.08, 3.08, and 3.03, respectively, all interpreted as Proficient Readiness. Slightly lower yet still proficient ratings were observed for teaching learners with cognitive delays at 2.95 and those with mental age one year below their grade level at 2.98. Collectively, these findings suggest that while teachers demonstrate adequate pedagogical competence for inclusive education, targeted professional development focusing on specific disabilities and instructional adaptations is necessary to further strengthen readiness. These results align with Alido et al. (2023), Campado et al. (2023), and Alnahdi and Schwab (2021), who emphasized that pedagogical competence is central to effective inclusive practice but often requires continuous refinement.

In terms of professional development, teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices yielded an average weighted mean of 3.05, classified as Proficient Readiness. This indicates that teachers generally perceived themselves as sufficiently supported through seminars, trainings, and collaborative opportunities related to inclusive education. Nine out of ten indicators fell under Proficient Readiness, with the highest weighted mean of 3.20 obtained for the school district's provision of district in service training opportunities. Indicators reflecting administrative responsiveness to teachers' concerns, allowance of time to attend conferences, preparedness in implementing Individualized Education Plans, provision of seminars, and collegial support all recorded weighted means ranging from 3.08 to 3.18. These results demonstrate a strong institutional and collegial culture that supports teachers' professional growth in inclusive education. However, the indicator on school district provision of monetary aid for attending seminars and trainings obtained a weighted mean of 2.35, interpreted as Developing Readiness. This finding highlights a notable limitation related to financial support, suggesting that while professional learning opportunities are available, teachers may face constraints in accessing external development programs. This outcome underscores the importance of allocating financial resources to sustain professional development initiatives, corroborating findings by Uzorka et al. (2024), Mabanag et al. (2024), and Kilag et al. (2024) that emphasize the role of sustained and well supported professional development in enhancing readiness for inclusion.

Teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices in terms of classroom environment registered an average weighted mean of 2.98, interpreted as Proficient Readiness. This indicates that teachers were generally prepared to create inclusive classroom environments that promote safety, respect, and learner participation. All ten indicators were rated as Proficient Readiness, with the highest weighted means of 3.15 observed for colleagues' willingness to help when issues arise involving learners with special educational needs and for the school's provision of a classroom atmosphere that fosters respect and acceptance. Administrative support, inclusion of learners in school and community activities, and stakeholder support for special education activities yielded weighted means between 3.10 and 2.95. Indicators related to classroom set ups, specialized assessments, and sufficient materials for accommodations ranged from 2.83 to 2.93, indicating adequate but improvable readiness. The lowest weighted mean of 2.75 was recorded for the provision of teaching and learning materials including ICT resources for learners with special educational needs, suggesting the need for enhanced access to assistive technologies. These findings imply that while social and organizational aspects of classroom environments are well supported, material and technological resources require strengthening. This interpretation is consistent with Aftab et al. (2024), Campado et al. (2023), and Mabanag et al. (2024), who emphasized that infrastructure and resources are essential complements to teacher competence in inclusive education.

With respect to instructional strategies, teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices produced an average weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as Proficient Readiness. This indicates that teachers possessed sufficient competence and confidence in employing instructional strategies suitable for diverse learners. All twenty indicators were rated within the Proficient Readiness range. The highest weighted means of 3.23 were recorded for indicators related to placing learners with autism, intellectual disability, speech and language difficulties, and those with Individualized Education Plans in special education classes. Other indicators, including administrative support in managing behavioral and learning difficulties, collaborative work with special education teachers, and responsibility sharing between regular and special education teachers, obtained weighted means of 3.20. Slightly lower ratings were noted for working jointly with colleagues at 3.00 and for placing all learners with special educational needs in one classroom at 2.80, suggesting reservations toward full clustering practices. These findings suggest that while teachers are ready to implement differentiated and collaborative instructional strategies, there remains a need to clarify shared responsibility between regular and special education teachers and to refine placement practices. These results align with Mabanag et al. (2024), Paires et al. (2023), and Ty et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of collaboration, administrative support, and ongoing training in effective inclusive instruction.

A summary of the four dimensions of teaching readiness revealed an overall mean of 3.07, classified as Proficient Readiness. Instructional strategies obtained the highest mean of 3.15, followed by pedagogical knowledge at 3.08, professional development at 3.05, and classroom environment at 2.98. This overall result indicates that teachers demonstrated adequate readiness to implement inclusive education practices, with particular strengths in instructional delivery and pedagogical competence. However, the relatively lower mean for classroom environment suggests the need for further enhancement of resources and environmental supports. These findings affirm that teacher readiness is multidimensional and requires sustained institutional and professional support, consistent with Woodcock et al. (2022), Soeharto et al. (2024), and Pozas and Letzel Alt (2023).

Teachers' perceived self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices in terms of using inclusive instruction yielded an average weighted mean of 4.86, interpreted as Highly Efficacious. This indicates that teachers possessed high confidence in designing and implementing instructional activities that accommodate diverse learner needs. All six indicators were rated as Highly Efficacious, with the highest weighted mean of 5.13 recorded for providing alternate explanations or examples when learners are confused. Other indicators such as facilitating group work at 4.98, using varied assessment strategies at 4.88, providing appropriate challenges at 4.88, gauging learner comprehension at 4.73, and designing learning tasks for learners with disabilities at 4.60 further demonstrate strong instructional self-efficacy. These results suggest that teachers are well equipped to apply inclusive instructional strategies, aligning with DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 and supported by findings from Woodcock et al. (2022), Pozas and Letzel Alt (2023), and Masongsong et al. (2023).

In terms of collaboration, teachers' self-efficacy obtained an average weighted mean of 4.83, classified as Highly Efficacious. All indicators reflected high confidence, with collaboration with other professionals in designing educational plans yielding the highest weighted mean of 4.93. Working jointly with staff at 4.85, engaging parents at 4.83, assisting families at 4.80, and informing others about inclusion policies at 4.75 further illustrate teachers' strong collaborative capacity. These findings indicate that teachers are confident in engaging multiple stakeholders to support learners with special educational needs, reinforcing the collaborative foundation of inclusive education. This outcome is consistent with Garcia Melgar et al. (2022), Woodcock et al. (2023), and Lakkala et al. (2021).

Teachers' self-efficacy in managing behavior registered an average weighted mean of 4.96, interpreted as Highly Efficacious. All indicators were rated within this category, with the highest weighted mean of 5.05 observed for getting learners to follow classroom rules. Other indicators including making expectations clear at 4.98, preventing disruptive behavior at 4.95, dealing with physically aggressive learners at 4.93, controlling disruptive behavior at 4.93, and calming disruptive learners at 4.93 collectively demonstrate strong confidence in classroom management. These findings indicate that teachers are well prepared to maintain positive and orderly inclusive learning environments, a critical factor in inclusive education success. This result supports the conclusions of Sarkar and Kundu (2021), Ahmed and Pierre (2024), and Wilkins et al. (2022).

The summary of teachers' self-efficacy across the three dimensions revealed an overall mean of 4.88, classified as Highly Efficacious. Efficacy in managing behavior obtained the highest mean of 4.96, followed by efficacy to use inclusive instruction at 4.86 and efficacy in collaboration at 4.83. This overall result indicates that teachers possessed strong confidence in their instructional, collaborative, and behavioral management capabilities necessary for inclusive education. These findings suggest that teachers who perceive themselves as highly efficacious are more likely to persist in inclusive practices and adapt effectively to learner diversity, consistent with Gülsün et al. (2023), Savolainen et al. (2020), and Woodcock et al. (2022).

The relationship between teachers' readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices was examined using Pearson r . The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient r of 0.43 with a p value of 0.00, indicating a statistically significant positive moderate relationship at the 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding implies that as teachers' readiness toward inclusive education practices increases, their self-efficacy likewise increases. The positive direction of the relationship suggests that improved preparedness in pedagogy, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies is associated with higher confidence in implementing inclusive practices. This result underscores the importance of strengthening teacher readiness as a means of enhancing self-efficacy, thereby supporting effective inclusion. These findings are consistent with Wahyuni et al. (2024), Shah (2023), and Omoro and Possi (2022), who reported significant associations between readiness, training, and teacher self-efficacy.

In synthesis, the findings demonstrate that teachers at Tulay National High School exhibited Proficient Readiness and Highly Efficacious self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. Instructional strategies and pedagogical knowledge emerged as strengths in readiness, while classroom environment and financial support for professional development were identified as areas for improvement. Teachers displayed high confidence in using inclusive instruction, collaborating with stakeholders, and managing behavior, reinforcing their capacity to implement inclusive education effectively. The significant positive moderate relationship between readiness and self-efficacy confirms that preparedness and confidence are interrelated and mutually reinforcing constructs. These results directly address the objectives of the study by establishing teachers' levels of readiness and self-efficacy and by demonstrating their significant association. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the central role of teacher preparation and confidence in inclusive education and provide a strong empirical basis for the development of an action plan aimed at enhancing inclusive practices, which is presented in the succeeding section of the manuscript.

CONCLUSION

This study examined teaching readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices among secondary teachers at Tulay National High School during the school year 2025–2026 and determined the relationship between these two constructs as a basis for developing an action plan. Using a descriptive correlational research design and survey questionnaire, the study assessed teachers' perceived readiness in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, as well as their self-efficacy in using inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing behavior. The findings demonstrated that teachers exhibited a proficient level of readiness across all four dimensions, indicating that they possessed adequate preparation, skills, and awareness to implement inclusive education practices in their classrooms. Among these dimensions, instructional strategies and pedagogical knowledge emerged as notable strengths, reflecting teachers' capacity to employ differentiated approaches and learner focused instructional practices, while classroom environment and resource related aspects indicated areas that would benefit from further enhancement.

In terms of self-efficacy, the results revealed that teachers rated themselves as highly efficacious across all three dimensions, namely efficacy to use inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior. This high level of self-efficacy indicates that teachers were confident in their ability to design and implement inclusive lessons, work collaboratively with colleagues, parents, and other professionals, and manage learner behavior effectively in inclusive classroom settings. Such confidence is a critical factor in sustaining inclusive practices, as teachers who believe in their capabilities are more likely to adapt instruction, persist through challenges, and create supportive learning environments for learners with diverse needs. The consistently high self-efficacy ratings across instructional, collaborative, and behavioral domains suggest that teachers at Tulay National High School are well positioned to translate inclusive education principles into daily classroom practice.

A key conclusion of the study is the presence of a significant positive moderate relationship between teachers' readiness and self-efficacy toward inclusive education practices. This finding confirms that as teachers' readiness increases, their self-efficacy likewise increases, particularly in inclusive education contexts. The result underscores the interdependent nature of preparedness and confidence, emphasizing that professional knowledge, skills, and supportive conditions contribute to stronger beliefs in one's ability to implement inclusive practices effectively. This relationship highlights the importance of strengthening readiness through continuous professional development, supportive school environments, and access to appropriate resources as a means of enhancing teachers' self-efficacy and overall effectiveness in inclusive education.

Drawing from these findings, the study concludes that while teachers at Tulay National High School demonstrate commendable readiness and strong self-efficacy, sustained efforts are necessary to further strengthen inclusive education implementation. The results support the adoption of a school-based action plan that prioritizes continuous professional development, structured collaboration, and adequate resource allocation. Enhancing access to specialized training, mentoring, and professional learning communities can deepen teachers' pedagogical competence and instructional confidence, while improved administrative and policy support can address resource gaps and environmental constraints. By integrating these strategies into school practice, inclusive education can be more consistently and effectively implemented, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all learners. Overall, the study affirms that strengthening teachers' readiness and self-efficacy is central to the successful and sustainable implementation of inclusive education practices and provides a clear foundation for the action plan presented in the succeeding chapter.

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