

Teacher readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the levels of teacher readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices, as well as the relationship between these variables at Liloan 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 teachers' readiness and self-efficacy. The study revealed that teachers' readiness was rated proficient in the dimensions of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, and instructional strategies, while developing in the dimension of classroom environment. 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 teachers' 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.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of education systems worldwide has been to ensure that all learners, regardless of disabilities, learning challenges, language barriers, socioeconomic status, or other differences, have equal access to education. This has led to the development of the concept of "inclusive education" (Cumming, 2024). Achieving an inclusive learning environment relies

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not only on policies and resources but also on teachers' preparedness and belief in their ability to effectively teach diverse students. International education conventions emphasize that every child has the right to quality education in inclusive settings. Global research highlights that teachers' preparedness and confidence are key factors in the successful implementation of inclusive practices and achieving positive outcomes for students. However, studies also suggest that the development of teachers' readiness and self-efficacy may not always progress simultaneously, indicating the need for further investigation (Woodcock et al., 2022).

The Philippines has demonstrated strong policy commitment to inclusive education through legislative frameworks, with the Department of Education (DepEd) spearheading efforts to integrate learners with special needs into regular classroom environments. However, the implementation of inclusive education remains inconsistent across different regions and schools. Jardinez and Natividad (2024) found that many teachers, despite teaching in diverse classrooms, face challenges such as inadequate pre-service preparation, limited in-service training, insufficient resources, and large class sizes, which undermine their ability to provide quality instruction. These gaps in readiness directly impact teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive practices, thereby affecting the quality of education received by learners with special needs. As such, understanding how teacher readiness influences self-efficacy is crucial for guiding policymakers and curriculum developers in making informed decisions regarding resource allocation and curriculum improvements to enhance the effectiveness of inclusion nationwide.

In the local context, particularly in Cebu public secondary schools, teachers frequently face challenges related to resource shortages and overcrowded classrooms, as highlighted in the School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustments (SMEA). While some teachers are eager to adopt inclusive practices, they often rely on improvised methods due to inadequate training, a lack of support staff, and insufficient teaching materials. Furthermore, the SMEA report reveals that secondary school educators are keen to implement inclusive practices effectively but feel unprepared to consistently meet the diverse needs of their students.

Like other public schools, Liloan National High School is required to implement inclusive practices. However, the concept of inclusive education is not well understood by teachers, as its specifics have not been sufficiently emphasized in in-service training sessions and seminars. As a result, teachers' readiness to apply inclusive practices remains a concern. Additionally, the relationship between inclusive education and teaching self-efficacy has not yet been explored in research, particularly within the school setting. Local research is crucial for district offices, school administrators, and policymakers to design targeted interventions that address the challenges faced by teachers, especially as inclusive education is formally introduced into academic institutions.

Thus, this study sought to investigate the relationship between teacher readiness and teacher self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices among public secondary school teachers at Liloan National High School. The findings of this study aimed at addressing readiness and self-efficacy gap of teachers towards inclusive practices through designing an action plan that will enhance the readiness and self-efficacy of inclusive teachers to increase school performance and positive learning outcomes.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to examine the association between teacher readiness and their self-efficacy in implementing inclusive education practices among public secondary school teachers at Liloan National High School. It intended to identify existing gaps in both readiness and self-efficacy related to inclusive teaching. Based on the results, the study proposed an action plan designed to strengthen teachers' preparedness and confidence in inclusive practices,

ultimately contributing to improved school performance and more positive student learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed the descriptive-correlational design to describe the teachers' readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices, and the relationship between these variables. The descriptive component of the study allowed to explore the teachers' level of readiness towards inclusive education practices in terms of pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, and self-efficacy towards inclusive education in terms of using inclusive instructions, collaboration, and managing behavior (Shinija, 2024), while the correlation aspect of the study enabled to investigate the influence of teacher readiness on teacher self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices (Putri et al., 2025). The descriptive-correlational design was appropriate since it described the levels of teachers' readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices and tested the correlation between these variables. The study was conducted at Liloan National High School, located in Poblacion, Liloan, Cebu, northern part of Cebu, Philippines. This public secondary school implements basic curriculum and inclusive education policies as what the Department of Education mandates. The school being considered as child-friendly caters to diverse learners, the junior and senior high school learners of varied socio-economic characteristics and learning needs, including those who are determined as learners with special educational needs. The school has been an advocate of differentiation, which is a component of inclusive education practices. Carrying out the study in this environment offered significant insights into the current situation of inclusive education practices and the aspects influencing teachers' readiness and confidence to address the diverse educational needs of learners.

The secondary teachers at Liloan, National High School during the school year 2025-2026 served as the respondents of the study. These teachers were selected due to their accommodation of diverse learners in their learning environment. The teachers are supported not just by school administrators but also non-teaching personnel and other stakeholders who are considered to have a vital role in the implementation of inclusive education practices.

Moreover, ethical concerns were considered in the study such as no forcing of teachers to become respondents of the study. Respondents willingly offered their time and effort to give their responses to the given survey questionnaire. The convenience sampling method also known as the availability sampling was used. This sampling technique makes use of the participants who are chosen depending on their immediate availability (Golzar et al., 2022). It is considered to be extremely quick, simple, and cost-effective. The sampling method was used where the available subjects willingly responded to the survey questionnaire.

The instrument used in the study is a survey questionnaire which contained three (3) parts. The first part asks the respondents' profile, the second part lets the respondents assess their readiness level towards inclusive education practices, and the third part enabled respondents to assess their self-efficacy level towards inclusive education practices. The first part of the instrument asked for the profile of the respondents such as name, age, sex, school, and number of years of teaching. This was needed for profiling purposes. The second part of the instrument let the respondents assess their readiness towards inclusive education practices through a survey questionnaire using 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, and 4-Strongly Agree adopted from the study of Cola et al. (2025) titled, "Teachers' Level of Preparedness and Acceptance towards the Inclusion of Learners with Special Educational Needs." The respondents rated themselves as to their readiness towards

inclusive education in terms of pedagogical knowledge (10 indicators), professional development (10 indicators), classroom environment (10 indicators), and instructional strategies (20 indicators). The third part of the instrument let the respondents assess their teacher self-efficacy level towards inclusive education practices through a questionnaire using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Agree, and 6-Strongly Agree adopted 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 said instrument was highly reliable and valid generating an alpha score of 0.90 when testing its validity and reliability. The respondents rated their self-efficacy towards inclusive education in terms of the different dimensions: efficacy to use inclusive instructions (6 indicators), efficacy in collaboration (6 indicators), and efficacy in managing behavior (6 indicators).

Careful and ethical procedures were followed during the conduct of this research. The initial phase in gathering data was to write a letter with a first endorsement by the School head, second endorsement by the Public Schools District Supervisor and finally, third endorsement by the Schools Division Superintendent, requesting permission to conduct the study. After obtaining the Schools Division Superintendent’s approval, another transmittal letter was sent to the secondary teachers, requesting their full cooperation in the study. Teachers were not forced to participate in the study. In turn, teachers gave their consent. The teachers, then were asked to answer the survey questionnaire examining their readiness and self-efficacy towards inclusive education practices. The survey questionnaire was adopted from other published studies. All data were collected, collated and tabulated for analysis and interpretation. After the analysis, and interpretation of data, the findings of the study became the basis for the formulation of the conclusion and recommendations, and eventually crafting the action plan.

Selection of statistical methods was carefully done in order to arrive valid results and interpretations. The frequency percentage, weighted mean, mean, and Pearson r were the statistical methods utilized to treat the data as the basis for the study's analysis and interpretation. The frequency percentage was utilized to give summary of the profile of the respondents. The weighted mean and mean were used to describe the teachers’ perceived readiness and self-efficacy levels towards inclusive education practices. The Pearson r was utilized to test the relationship between teachers’ readiness and teachers’ self-efficacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of a study conducted among teachers at Liloan National High School using a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were collected through a structured survey measuring teaching readiness and self-efficacy in inclusive education practices. The survey assessed four dimensions of readiness: pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, as well as three dimensions of self-efficacy: inclusive instruction, collaboration, and behavior management. Descriptive statistics (means and weighted averages) and Pearson r correlation were used to analyze the data. The discussion is based on the collected data, with all statistical values explained in relation to the study’s objectives.

Teacher readiness

The study’s first objective was to assess teachers' readiness for implementing inclusive education practices as to pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies. In terms of pedagogical knowledge, teachers had a Proficient Readiness level with an average weighted mean of 2.71, indicating sufficient

readiness to accommodate diverse learners' needs. All pedagogical knowledge indicators were rated as Proficient Readiness, with the highest rating for teachers' preparation to understand learners' specific needs in regular classrooms (WM = 3.13), followed by their preparation to support learners with special needs (WM = 3.08) and those with cognitive delays (WM = 2.80). Indicators related to emotional or social challenges and behavioral difficulties received lower ratings (WM = 2.70–2.68), while the lowest rating was for preparing to teach learners with hearing impairments (WM = 2.45), suggesting a gap in training for managing hearing-impaired students. The results indicate that while teachers at Liloan National High School are generally prepared, ongoing professional development, specialized training, and mentoring are needed to further enhance their readiness. These findings align with Alido et al. (2023), who found that teachers show average to high preparedness in pedagogical awareness and attitude but lack readiness for addressing specific disabilities. Similarly, Campado et al. (2023) noted that while teachers are confident in including LSENs, they often lack specialized training and the use of assistive technology.

Teachers rated their professional development readiness at 2.68, indicating sufficient preparation through seminars, training, and collaboration to support diverse learners. The highest-rated indicator was colleagues' willingness to offer advice on teaching LSENs (WM = 2.90), followed by the school district's in-service training (WM = 2.83). Other indicators, like colleagues' assistance during LSEN seminars and managing students with behavioral challenges, had a mean of 2.78. Despite this, financial aid for training (WM = 2.53) and district-level training opportunities (WM = 2.50) were lower, suggesting financial barriers and a need for better support. Mabanag et al. (2024) and Kilag et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of workshops, mentoring, and administrative support in improving teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

The classroom environment had an average weighted mean of 2.38, indicating Developing Readiness, meaning teachers are progressing in creating inclusive settings but with inconsistencies. Three indicators were rated Proficient: fostering a respectful classroom atmosphere (WM = 2.95), preparing to include LSENs in activities (WM = 2.88), and grade-level colleagues' willingness to assist with LSEN-related issues (WM = 2.63). However, other indicators, such as preparing specialized assessments (WM = 2.20), classroom setups (WM = 2.05), and provision of materials (WM = 2.00), had lower ratings, highlighting gaps in resources and financial support for inclusive practices. Aftab et al. (2024) emphasized that infrastructure and learning materials are essential for successful inclusion, and Campado et al. (2023) noted that assistive technologies and adequate resources improve LSENs' engagement and learning outcomes.

Teachers rated themselves as Proficiently Ready in instructional strategies, with an average weighted mean of 2.77, indicating confidence and preparedness to teach learners with special needs. The highest-rated indicator was special education teachers should teach LSENs with an IEP (WM = 3.50), followed by LSENs with a mental age 2 or more years below their grade level should be in a special education classroom (WM = 3.15). However, several indicators, such as mainstreaming aggressive LSENs and placing all LSENs in one classroom, received lower ratings, suggesting hesitancy in behavior management and uneven distribution of LSENs. Teachers also showed uncertainty about their responsibilities in inclusive settings (WM = 2.40). Mabanag et al. (2024) and Paires et al. (2023) both highlighted that teacher readiness for inclusive practices is greatly influenced by confidence in differentiated instruction, collaboration with special education teachers, and behavior control strategies, which enhance the effectiveness of inclusive practices and LSENs' academic performance.

Teachers' readiness for inclusive education, with an overall mean of 2.64, was rated Proficient, indicating adequate skills but room for improvement. Instructional strategies had

the highest mean (2.77), showing competence in inclusive teaching methods. Professional development (2.68) and pedagogical knowledge (2.71) also indicated readiness, though more training in individualized assessments is needed. Classroom environment (2.38) was rated Developing, highlighting gaps in resources and classroom systems. Improvements in resource availability, training, and environmental adjustments are needed. Woodcock et al. (2022) and Soeharto et al. (2024) emphasized the need for ongoing development, leadership support, and resources.

Teacher self-efficacy

The study's second objective was to examine teachers' self-efficacy in terms of using inclusive instructions, collaboration, and managing behavior. Regarding using inclusive instructions, teachers rated themselves as Highly Efficacious with an average weighted mean of 4.75 signifying their level of confidence in using instructional strategies that accommodated the diverse needs of learners, including those with disabilities. All indicators were rated Highly Efficacious, with the highest being confidence in getting learners to work in pairs or small groups (WM = 5.00), showing teachers' competence in encouraging collaboration. Other high ratings included providing alternate explanations for confused learners (WM = 4.98) and offering challenges for capable learners (WM = 4.95), indicating teachers' ability to adjust strategies for diverse learners. The indicator on designing tasks for learners with disabilities had a lower mean of 4.35, still in the Highly Efficacious range, suggesting that teachers could benefit from additional support or workshops on differentiated instruction and curriculum adaptation. Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023) highlighted that teacher efficacy is key to inclusive education success, as confident teachers use adaptive methods. Masongsong et al. (2023) found that ongoing training boosts teachers' self-efficacy, especially in adjusting assessments and providing support.

In terms of collaboration, teachers perceived themselves as Highly Efficacious with an average weighted mean of 4.73 noting that they are confident and skilled in collaborating with stakeholders to support learners with disabilities, managing inclusive classrooms, and fostering holistic development. The highest-rated indicator was making parents feel comfortable coming to school (WM = 5.10), showing teachers' strong skills in building positive relationships with parents of learners with disabilities. This reflects teachers' sincerity and interpersonal skills, essential for fostering parental engagement. Assisting families in helping their children succeed in school (WM = 4.78) also highlighted teachers' support beyond the classroom, emphasizing the importance of home-school partnerships in promoting inclusion and learning outcomes. Other indicators, such as collaborating with professionals in designing educational plans (WM = 4.75) and working with staff to teach learners with disabilities (WM = 4.70), further emphasized the value teachers place on teamwork with specialists. However, informing others about laws and policies regarding inclusion" (WM = 4.45) had a lower rating, suggesting teachers may need more training and resources on policy dissemination. Garcia-Melgar et al. (2022) highlighted that collaboration among teachers, parents, and experts enhances inclusive practices, leading to better learning and social outcomes for learners with disabilities. Lakkala et al. (2021) noted that collaboration is essential for effective inclusion, as it addresses learners' complex needs.

Regarding managing behavior, teachers rated themselves as Highly Efficacious with an average weighted mean of 4.78 indicating that they are highly confident and capable of managing behavior in inclusive learning environments, maintaining a positive atmosphere that promotes respect, discipline, and collaboration among all learners, including those with emotional and behavioral challenges. All indicators were rated Highly Efficacious, with making expectations clear about learner behavior receiving the highest mean of 5.05, reflecting

teachers' strong ability to set clear behavioral expectations. This shows teachers' recognition of the importance of establishing rules to create an organized and safe learning environment. Getting children to follow classroom rules (WM = 5.03) further demonstrated teachers' competence in consistently and positively enforcing rules, reducing behavioral concerns and promoting responsibility. Teachers were also proactive in managing disruptive behavior, as seen in calming a disruptive learner" (WM = 4.73) and preventing disruptive behavior" (WM = 4.65). Dealing with physically aggressive learners (WM = 4.55) highlighted teachers' ability to manage difficult situations calmly. Sarkar and Kundu (2021) found that highly efficacious teachers, especially in behavior management, are more proficient in implementing inclusive practices by maintaining a positive learning environment and reducing disruptions. Ahmed and Pierre (2024) emphasized that strong classroom management efficacy boosts teachers' confidence in managing diverse learners, fostering greater inclusivity and engagement.

All dimensions under Self-Efficacy show Highly Efficacious ratings with an overall mean of 4.75 signifying that teachers are highly confident in maintaining classroom order, setting behavioral expectations, and managing disruptions, reflecting their improved management skills, which play a key role in creating a supportive and organized classroom. Teachers were highly confident in managing behavior (WM = 4.78), using inclusive instructions (WM = 4.75), and collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders (WM = 4.73). These high ratings indicate teachers' strong ability to maintain classroom order, adapt teaching to diverse needs, and work effectively with others to support inclusive practices. Gülsün et al. (2023) noted that highly efficacious teachers use assistive instructional plans and manage diverse learning environments effectively. Similarly, Savolainen et al. (2020) found that high self-efficacy predicts a positive attitude towards inclusion and improved classroom practices.

Significant relationship between teacher readiness and self-efficacy

The third objective explored the relationship between teaching readiness and self-efficacy through Pearson's r correlation. The statistical analysis yielded a significant positive moderate relationship between teachers' readiness and self-efficacy in inclusive education, with a correlation coefficient of 0.48 and a p -value less than 0.05. This suggests that as teachers' readiness increases, so does their self-efficacy in managing diverse learners. School leaders should prioritize ongoing professional development in inclusive teaching, differentiation, and classroom management to enhance both readiness and self-efficacy. This includes incorporating inclusive education materials in training and providing real-world experiences, as well as establishing support networks like mentoring and collaboration with experts. Wahyuni et al. (2024) noted that teacher readiness, supported by professional growth and experience, determines self-efficacy in inclusive classrooms.

In aggregate, the study found that teachers showed Proficient Readiness with an overall mean of 2.64 and Highly Efficacious self-beliefs with an overall mean of 4.75. The statistically significant moderate positive correlation, $r = 0.48$ with a p -value of 0.00, confirms that readiness and self-efficacy are interconnected within inclusive education practices. These findings address the research objectives by quantifying and empirically demonstrating the relationship between the two constructs. The results contribute to existing literature, highlighting that enhancing teacher preparation and contextual support boosts confidence in implementing inclusive practices. The evidence also emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development, resource allocation, and collaborative systems to help teachers move from Proficient Readiness to exemplary practice while maintaining high self-efficacy. These conclusions set the stage for the next chapter, which will discuss the implications, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings.

CONCLUSION

The study explored teacher readiness and self-efficacy in inclusive education practices at Liloan National High School during the 2025-2026 school year. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected through a survey to assess teachers' perceived readiness in pedagogical knowledge, professional development, classroom environment, and instructional strategies, as well as their self-efficacy in using inclusive instructions, collaboration, and behavior management. The study found that teachers were proficient in pedagogical knowledge, professional development, and instructional strategies, but developing in classroom environment. Teachers rated themselves highly efficacious in using inclusive instructions, collaborating, and managing behavior. A significant moderate positive relationship was found between readiness and self-efficacy. These findings led to the creation of an action plan for improving inclusive education practices, confirming that as teacher readiness increases, so does their self-efficacy, especially in inclusive contexts.

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