

The influence of teacher self-efficacy and attitude in differentiated instruction practices within inclusive education in Zapatera National High School

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education and their differentiated instruction (DI) practices of the 43 in-service teachers of Zapatera National High School for the school year 2025– 2026. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed. Survey questionnaires were administered to the participants, including the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale adopted from Park et al. (2016) to measure perceived self-efficacy, the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale and Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classrooms Scale (AIS-ITICS) adopted from Pivarc (2024) to measure attitudes toward inclusion, and the Differentiated Instruction Questionnaire (DI-Quest) adopted from Coubergs et al. (2017) to measure DI practices. Descriptive statistics showed that participants had high levels of perceived self-efficacy ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 0.57$), high levels of attitudes toward inclusive education ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 0.86$), and high levels of DI practices ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.38$). Pearson r correlation revealed statistically significant positive relationships between perceived self-efficacy ($r = 0.401$, $p < .05$) and attitudes ($r = 0.641$, $p < .05$) with DI practices. The study concludes that higher perceived self-efficacy and more favorable attitudes toward inclusion are associated with greater implementation of differentiated instruction. A professional development plan was developed as an output of this research to enhance teachers' inclusive competencies and support equitable learning in Philippine public classrooms.

Keywords: Special education, perceived self-efficacy, attitude towards inclusive education, perceived differentiated instruction practices, Cebu, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education (IE) has evolved from a specialized intervention focused exclusively on learners with disabilities into a foundational principle of equitable and responsive education systems (Kimhi & Bar Nir, 2025). Rooted in the landmark Salamanca Statement of 1994, inclusive education is now widely recognized as a fundamental approach for ensuring equitable, high-quality education for all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds, learning needs, or abilities (Ainscow, 2020; UNESCO, 1994). It extends beyond physical or curricular access by fostering social cohesion, promoting mutual respect and

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acceptance, and preparing learners for active and equitable participation in diverse societies (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). At the global policy level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) established inclusive education as a legal obligation, while the Incheon Declaration and Education 2030 Framework for Action reinforced inclusion and equity as core to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2015; United Nations, 2006). Together, these frameworks reflect an international consensus that inclusive education is indispensable to equitable and responsive education systems.

In the Philippine context, the legal foundation for inclusive education is articulated through Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, and Republic Act No. 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, both of which institutionalize and mandate inclusive educational practices. The Department of Education (DepEd) has established significant policies and standards aligned with these national frameworks. DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 requires a learner-centered, inclusive, and developmentally relevant curriculum not just for those with disabilities but for all Filipino learners (DepEd, 2019), while DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 and DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2022 promote inclusive education for all and aim to equip stakeholders, particularly teachers, with the tools necessary to meet the diverse needs of learners (Espeño et al., 2024). The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) likewise highlights the core responsibilities of teachers in inclusive education, particularly in Domain 3: Diversity of Learners (DepEd, 2017). These interconnected legal and policy instruments collectively affirm that teachers are central to the effectiveness of inclusive education. Research confirms that the sustainability of inclusive education hinges on teachers' preparedness, beliefs, and competencies as change agents within classrooms and schools (Pozas et al., 2020), and that inclusive classroom teachers are responsible not only for delivering curriculum content but also for ensuring that the needs of diverse learners are meaningfully supported (Alnahdi et al., 2022).

Among the instructional approaches recognized for addressing learner diversity in inclusive classrooms, Differentiated Instruction (DI) occupies a prominent place in both policy and practice. In DI, teachers purposefully and proactively tailor content, processes, and assessments based on students' varied readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles (Gheysens et al., 2022). This approach is especially important in inclusive classrooms in mainstream education, as it provides a structured yet flexible framework to ensure learner engagement and support while reducing barriers to participation (Aurora, 2025; Lawrence-Brown, 2020). Studies across varied contexts consistently affirm DI's positive impact on both academic and socio-emotional outcomes of learners (Pozas et al., 2020; Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023; Woodcock et al., 2022). In the Philippine setting, classroom-based investigations similarly validate DI's effectiveness. Antonio (2024) reported that varied instructional strategies, including visual aids and collaborative activities, promoted active engagement and inclusivity in secondary schools, while Ferrer and Naanep (2025) found significant improvements in elementary pupils' learning outcomes through DI practices.

Despite its theoretical robustness and empirical support, the classroom implementation of DI continues to face persistent barriers, including time constraints, limited resources, inadequate assessment strategies, challenges in classroom management, and insufficient training and professional development opportunities (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). Literature further underscores that teachers' DI practices are shaped not only by structural conditions but also by psychosocial factors, particularly their behavioral intentions (Kupers et al., 2024), self-efficacy in inclusive settings, and attitudes toward inclusion (Romano et al., 2024; Schwab et al., 2022). Self-efficacy in inclusive education refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to organize and execute actions necessary for effective inclusive teaching (Sharma et al., 2012), and high levels of efficacy are consistently linked to greater motivation, persistence, and innovative instructional decisions (Cañoso, 2024; Woodcock et al., 2022). Complementing this

construct, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion reflect cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions toward embracing diversity and equity (Romano et al., 2024). These two psychosocial factors are intertwined, jointly influencing teachers' intentions and practices in inclusive education (Ismailos et al., 2019; Miesera et al., 2018), and their interaction provides critical insights into the factors enabling or hindering teachers' readiness and capacity to enact inclusive education, particularly in their differentiated instruction practice.

Although prior studies affirm the role of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes in adopting inclusive instructional strategies such as DI, findings remain inconsistent across cultural and institutional contexts, indicating the influence of local norms, policies, and school conditions (Romano et al., 2024; Charitaki et al., 2022). Moreover, limited research has examined how these psychosocial constructs relate specifically to teachers' perceived DI practices, particularly within the Philippine context (Pozas et al., 2025; Mudhar et al., 2024). While local studies recognize DI's potential to enhance student engagement and learning, persistent gaps in teacher preparedness and resources remain (Antonio, 2024). These limitations highlight the need for context-specific research investigating how teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes shape their readiness to implement DI within the framework of Philippine education laws and DepEd mandates. It is in this context that this study sought to investigate the interrelations among DepEd in-service teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes toward inclusive education, and DI practice, with the aim of deepening understanding of what supports or hinders effective inclusive teaching within the public school system. A deeper understanding of how variations in teachers' psychosocial constructs influence their implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction can clarify why some teachers effectively address diverse student needs while others continue to struggle. By examining these relationships in the Philippine context, this study aimed to generate empirical evidence that can guide the development of a contextually grounded professional development plan aimed at strengthening teachers' inclusive competencies and ensuring that DepEd's vision of equitable and learner-centered education is translated into meaningful classroom realities.

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical and policy frameworks: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and relevant DepEd policies and mandates. Collectively, these frameworks explain how teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education influence their differentiated instruction practices in inclusive classroom settings and provide the foundation for developing an action plan based on empirical findings. Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1986), fundamentally asserts that the multidirectional interactions and dynamic interplay among personal factors, behaviors, and environmental contexts influence human learning and behavior (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015). This interactive process, referred to by An and Meaney (2015) as triadic reciprocity, is highly applicable to the inclusive education context, where teachers' intentions, actions, persistence, and instructional decisions are shaped not only by social and organizational context but also by their personal beliefs and attitudes (Sabinorio et al., 2025). Personal factors such as self-efficacy in inclusive education and attitudes toward inclusion interact continuously with environmental factors such as legal mandates, professional standards, and school culture, and with teachers' own behaviors, particularly their actual use of differentiated instruction, thereby creating a feedback loop that supports skill acquisition and strengthens positive attitudes. Enhancing teachers' self-efficacy is associated with the development of positive attitudes toward inclusion (Savolainen et al., 2020) and greater willingness to implement inclusive practices (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2025), while teachers retain the freedom and flexibility to interpret and respond to environmental conditions within the bounds of policy and professional standards (An & Meaney, 2015).

Within the SCT framework, self-efficacy occupies a central role as a key determinant of behavior (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015) and practice in inclusive education (Cañoso, 2024). Defined as individuals' belief in their ability to execute behaviors and specific actions necessary to produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2015), self-efficacy, when applied to teachers, refers to their confidence in their instructional decisions and classroom management to facilitate positive learning outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to persist in implementing inclusive strategies, experiment with differentiated instruction, and respond positively to learner diversity. Extant literature affirms these dynamics. Krainer et al. (2024) reported that teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy and positive attitudes toward inclusion exhibited greater confidence in implementing DI and were more likely to adopt inclusive practices even under resource constraints. Similarly, Mudhar et al. (2024) identified distinct teacher profiles showing that high self-efficacy and positive attitudes co-occur and reinforce each other, leading to more consistent and innovative inclusive practices. In the Philippine setting, Cañoso (2025) found that teachers with higher self-efficacy demonstrated greater instructional adaptability and confidence in managing diverse learners, while Dalan and Matsuka (2017) found that Filipino teachers' sense of efficacy in inclusion classes was influenced by their professional preparation and emotional support, aligning with SCT's emphasis on environmental and social influences. Sabinorio et al. (2024) further supported these results through the application of SCT to understand the behavior of special education teachers in the Philippines, collectively highlighting how self-efficacy beliefs shaped by both personal experiences and institutional support influence teachers' willingness to innovate and persist in inclusive settings.

SCT also supports the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes, which reflect cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions toward embracing diversity, valuing equity, and committing to inclusive ideals (Romano et al., 2024). These two constructs are intertwined factors of teachers' intention and practice in inclusive education (Ismailos et al., 2019; Miesera et al., 2018). Teachers who hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education are more likely to report higher self-efficacy, and those with strong efficacy beliefs tend to develop and sustain more inclusive attitudes (Balias & Fouka, 2023), with this cyclical interaction reinforcing inclusive practices and contributing to the sustained implementation of DI. Complementing SCT, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Azjen (1985) provides a further theoretical anchor for understanding how teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion influence their practice in inclusive education and differentiated instruction. TPB posits that behavior can be rationally explained as stemming from behavioral intentions, which are in turn influenced by three factors: a person's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes can be distinguished into cognitive and affective dimensions, including feelings of competence and beliefs, while subjective norms describe an individual's perception of how others view the behavior, and perceived behavioral control, which closely aligns with the construct of self-efficacy, refers to the extent to which an individual believes they possess the capability and resources necessary to perform the behavior effectively (Kupers et al., 2024). In the context of this study, teachers' behavioral intentions to implement differentiated instruction are the immediate antecedents of their inclusive practices, with attitudes toward inclusion playing a critical role in shaping their willingness to implement DI strategies (Sharma et al., 2012), subjective norms such as institutional policies and peer influences contributing to shaping these intentions (Dignath et al., 2022), and perceived behavioral control determining the extent to which teachers feel capable of executing inclusive practices effectively (Pozas et al., 2025; Woodcock et al., 2022). Literature supporting SCT also supports the predictive power of TPB in educational settings, particularly when examining

the interplay between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs and their intentions and actual implementation of differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms.

The theoretical insights offered by SCT and TPB are institutionally grounded in key DepEd policy instruments that guide curriculum implementation and teacher professional standards. DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, titled Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, affirms the government's commitment to providing equitable, learner-centered education that responds to the diverse realities of Filipino learners, schools, and communities. It emphasizes the need for flexible and responsive teaching strategies, including differentiated instruction, to meet individual learning needs, and its Annex 5 outlines the Inclusive Education Policy Framework, which recognizes learner diversity in terms of ability, socioeconomic background, culture, and language, and calls for teacher capacity-building to implement inclusive pedagogies effectively. DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, which governs the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), further embeds inclusive education and differentiated instruction across multiple domains and indicators. Domain 3, covering Diversity of Learners, requires teachers to demonstrate understanding of learners' varied characteristics and to apply differentiated, developmentally appropriate learning experiences, with Indicator 3.1.2 explicitly mandating the use of differentiated instruction to address learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences. Domain 4, covering Curriculum and Planning, promotes the design of responsive and inclusive lesson plans. Together, these policies establish a coherent framework that not only promotes inclusive education but also operationalizes it through curriculum design and teacher accountability, thereby reinforcing the theoretical importance of teacher attitudes and self-efficacy in implementing differentiated instruction within the Philippine public school system.

Taken together, Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and the DepEd policy framework provide a unified and mutually reinforcing theoretical foundation for this study. SCT explains how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes influence their use of differentiated instruction in inclusive education through triadic reciprocity, with higher self-efficacy linked to greater instructional adaptability, positive attitudes toward inclusion, and confidence in managing diverse learners, all of which are further shaped by institutional support and environmental conditions. TPB complements this by underscoring how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived self-efficacy determine teachers' intentions to adopt inclusive practices and translate those intentions into actual behavior. Philippine education policies reinforce these theoretical insights by mandating differentiated instruction and inclusive education within professional standards and curriculum guidelines, thereby emphasizing the critical role of teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in delivering equitable, learner-centered inclusive education. It is within this integrated theoretical and policy context that this study investigated the interrelations among DepEd in-service teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes toward inclusive education, and differentiated instruction practice, ultimately aiming to generate empirical evidence that can inform the development of a contextually grounded professional development plan capable of strengthening teachers' inclusive competencies and advancing the realization of equitable education for all Filipino learners.

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the in-service teachers perceived self-efficacy and attitudes in inclusive education and investigated the relationship of these factors with their differentiated

instruction practices at San Fernando North Central School in the school year 2025-2026 as basis for a professional development plan.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age range, highest educational attainment, years of service, and number of hours of relevant trainings and seminars attended?
2. What is the in-service teachers' level of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education?
3. What is the in-service teachers' level of perceived attitude towards inclusion?
4. What is the in-service teachers' level of perceived differentiated instruction practices?
5. Is there a significant relationship between perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education and perceived differentiated instruction practices of in-service teachers?
6. Is there a significant relationship between perceived attitude towards inclusion and perceived differentiated instruction practices of in-service teachers?
7. Based on the findings, what professional development plan can be developed?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to describe and examine the relationships between teachers perceived self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusion as independent variables and their perceived level of differentiated instruction practices as the dependent variable. This design facilitated the observation and analysis of naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulation, allowing for an examination of how these constructs are related within the context of inclusive education. It was considered appropriate because it supported the systematic description of existing conditions while also assessing the strength and direction of associations among variables. By focusing on authentic classroom settings, the design enabled the investigation of naturally occurring interactions among teachers' psychological constructs, attitudes, and instructional practices in inclusive education, thereby providing meaningful insights into patterns that may inform professional development efforts and policy initiatives.

This research utilized the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model in assessing the in-service teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and differentiated instruction (DI) practices and their relationships. This framework presented the logical flow of the study by structuring it into three essential phases: input, process, and output, ensuring that the study is coherent, systematic, and closely aligned with its objectives. The input phase included the demographic profiles of the respondents, namely age and gender, highest educational attainment, years in service, and number of hours of relevant trainings and seminars of the in-service teachers in the past five years. In addition, their level of perceived self-efficacy and attitude in the context of inclusive education were measured as independent variables, while their level of perceived differentiated instruction practices was assessed as the dependent variable, under the assumption that inclusive education was applied through certain differentiated instruction practices. Significant correlations were also measured between the independent and dependent variables. In the process phase, upon obtaining the required approvals from the university and relevant academic units, questionnaires were distributed to in-service teachers either in printed form or through an online survey platform based on accessibility. The gathered responses were systematically organized, reviewed, and encoded for statistical analysis, using descriptive and inferential statistical measures to summarize the respondents' demographic profiles, assess the perceived levels of self-efficacy in inclusive education, attitude towards inclusion, and differentiated instruction practices, and examine significant relationships between these constructs. Based on the findings of the study, the output phase produced a contextually grounded professional

development plan in the form of a School-based Learning Action Cell (SLAC) plan with Activity Design, aimed at strengthening teachers' inclusive competencies.

This study was conducted at Zapatera National High School (ZNHS), a public secondary school under the supervision of the Department of Education (DepEd) Cebu City Division, occupying a strategic location within Metro Cebu, the largest metropolitan area in the Central Visayas region. At the time of this writing, the school had 1 school principal, 1 assistant principal, 1 head teacher, 55 licensed teachers, and 12 non-teaching personnel. Geographically, the school is positioned in Barangay Zapatera, one of the oldest barangays in Cebu City, known for its proximity to key civic and cultural landmarks, with the campus located along Sikatuna Street, a thoroughfare that connects to major city arteries, facilitating accessibility for students and staff from various parts of the city. As a research setting, ZNHS provided a relevant context for examining differentiated instruction within inclusive education, as the diversity of learners and the resource conditions typical of public secondary schools present both challenges and opportunities for teachers in implementing differentiated instructional strategies. The selection of Zapatera National High School as the research locale was purposeful, as it represents the realities of inclusive education in the Philippine public school system and offers a meaningful setting for exploring teachers' practices and experiences in addressing learner diversity, with findings expected to contribute to the strengthening of inclusive classroom practices and instructional support.

The respondents of this study were secondary public school in-service teachers of Zapatera National High School during school year 2025 to 2026. The population of the study, represented as N , consisted of all 55 teachers in the institution. The appropriate target sample, represented as n , was calculated from the population using Slovin's formula with the acceptable margin of error, e , set at 5%, resulting in a target sample of 48, which were chosen through random sampling. This was done to ensure representation of educators with diverse teaching experiences and backgrounds relevant to inclusive education. Teachers' participation was voluntary and consistent with the procedures of the school and DepEd. In terms of distribution, the single institution of Zapatera National High School contributed a population of 55 and a sample of 48, representing 87.27% of the total population.

Data were gathered through a five-part questionnaire composed of adopted instruments from existing published scales measuring teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy in inclusive education, attitude towards inclusion, and differentiated instruction practices. The first part of the instrument gathered essential information on the demographics of the respondents, particularly their gender, age range, length of service as a teacher, and number of hours of relevant trainings and seminars attended in the past five years, providing descriptive information on the nature and quality of the respondents of the research.

The second part of the instrument was the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP), adopted from Park et al. (2016), which assessed the teachers' perceived self-efficacy in implementing inclusive education practices. The TEIP is a validated instrument widely applied in diverse educational contexts to measure teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive practices. It contains 18 items distributed across three dimensions: Efficacy to Use Inclusive Instruction covering items 1 to 6, Efficacy in Collaboration covering items 7 to 12, and Efficacy in Managing Behavior covering items 13 to 18. This instrument demonstrated a relatively high overall internal consistency reliability score with a Cronbach α of 0.977 and acceptable validity fit with $X^2 = 260.58$, $df = 132$, $CFI = 0.994$, $TLI = 0.993$, $WRMR = 0.886$, and $RMSEA = 0.085$ at a 90% confidence interval for RMSEA.

The third part of the instrument was the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale and the Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classroom Scale (AIS-ITICS), adopted from Pivarc (2024), which

measured the attitudes and intentions of the respondents towards inclusive education. The AIS consisted of eight items distributed across two dimensions, namely Beliefs about Inclusion covering items 1 to 4, and Feelings about Inclusion covering items 5 to 8. The ITICS contained seven items with no dimensions, covering items 9 to 15. The instrument demonstrated adequate validity fit as indicated by scalar invariance model results. For the AIS, the fit indices were $\chi^2 = 154.28$, $df = 46$, $CFI = 0.983$, $RMSEA = 0.041$, and $SRMR = 0.023$, while for the ITICS, the indices were $\chi^2 = 148.728$, $df = 38$, $CFI = 0.944$, $RMSEA = 0.045$, and $SRMR = 0.040$. This instrument did not employ reverse-scoring of items.

The fourth part of the instrument was the Differentiated Instruction Questionnaire (DI-Quest), adopted from Coubergs et al. (2017), which measured the perceived DI practices of teachers on whether or not they had applied differentiated instruction in their classes as their way to implement inclusive education. The DI-Quest contains 31 items divided into five dimensions: Teacher's Mindset covering items 1 to 5, Ethical Compass covering items 6 to 11, Flexible Grouping covering items 12 to 19, Output equals Input reflecting assessment for learning and feedback practices covering items 20 to 23, and Differentiated Instruction reflecting teachers' adaptation to students' learning differences covering items 24 to 31. It also demonstrated adequate goodness of fit measures of validity with $\chi^2 = 11023.574$, $df = 465$, $CFI = 0.909$, $TLI = 0.899$, and $RMSEA = 0.043$ at a 90% $RMSEA$ confidence interval.

Parts II to IV of the instruments were administered using a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 corresponding to strongly disagree, 2 to disagree, 3 to somewhat disagree, 4 to somewhat agree, 5 to agree, and 6 to strongly agree. This format was adopted to reduce the likelihood of participant bias through resort to neutrality, which may be interpreted as ambivalence (Park et al., 2016). The strength or extent of agreement was converted to corresponding levels depending on the construct being described, serving as the basis for verbal interpretation in subsequent discussions.

For the level of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education as measured by Part II, the scoring interpretation was as follows. A range of 5.18 to 6.00 corresponding to a scale of 6 and a description of Strongly Agree was interpreted as Very High Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent possesses mastery-level confidence and feels highly empowered in practicing inclusive education. A range of 4.34 to 5.17 corresponding to a scale of 5 and Agree was interpreted as High Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent feels confident, capable, and prepared to handle the demands of an inclusive classroom. A range of 3.51 to 4.33 corresponding to a scale of 4 and Somewhat Agree was interpreted as Moderately High Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent leans toward feeling confident and capable of handling inclusive education settings with minor hesitations. A range of 2.68 to 3.50 corresponding to a scale of 3 and Somewhat Disagree was interpreted as Moderately Low Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent leans toward a lack of confidence and feels hesitant about their inclusive education capabilities. A range of 1.84 to 2.67 corresponding to a scale of 2 and Disagree was interpreted as Low Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent feels generally unconfident and struggles with the demands of inclusive education. A range of 1.00 to 1.83 corresponding to a scale of 1 and Strongly Disagree was interpreted as Very Low Self-Efficacy, indicating that the respondent feels entirely unequipped and lacks confidence in implementing inclusive education.

For the attitude towards inclusion as measured by Part III, the scoring interpretation was as follows. A range of 5.18 to 6.00 corresponding to Strongly Agree was interpreted as Highly Positive Attitude, indicating that the respondent is exceptionally supportive of inclusive education practices and strongly advocates for inclusive classrooms. A range of 4.34 to 5.17 corresponding to Agree was interpreted as Positive Attitude, indicating that the respondent holds a favorable view of inclusive education and generally supports its principles and implementation. A range of 3.51 to 4.33 corresponding to Somewhat Agree was interpreted as

Moderately Positive Attitude, indicating that the respondent leans toward supporting inclusive education but may hold minor reservations or conditions regarding its practice. A range of 2.68 to 3.50 corresponding to Somewhat Disagree was interpreted as Moderately Negative Attitude, indicating that the respondent leans toward skepticism, showing hesitation or mild resistance to the widespread adoption of inclusive education. A range of 1.84 to 2.67 corresponding to Disagree was interpreted as Negative Attitude, indicating that the respondent holds unfavorable views regarding inclusive education and doubts its effectiveness or feasibility. A range of 1.00 to 1.83 corresponding to Strongly Disagree was interpreted as Highly Negative Attitude, indicating that the respondent is completely opposed to inclusive education practices and strongly favors traditional, segregated, or alternative educational settings.

For the level of perceived differentiated instruction practices as measured by Part IV, the scoring interpretation was as follows. A range of 5.18 to 6.00 corresponding to Strongly Agree was interpreted as Very High Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent consistently, extensively, and deeply integrates differentiated instruction practices into their daily teaching routines to meet diverse learner needs. A range of 4.34 to 5.17 corresponding to Agree was interpreted as High Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent regularly implements differentiated instruction practices and successfully adapts content, processes, or products for students. A range of 3.51 to 4.33 corresponding to Somewhat Agree was interpreted as Moderately High Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent uses differentiated instruction practices on a fairly frequent basis, though implementation may be selective or occasional. A range of 2.68 to 3.50 corresponding to Somewhat Disagree was interpreted as Moderately Low Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent infrequently utilizes differentiated instruction strategies and leans toward standard or uniform teaching methods. A range of 1.84 to 2.67 corresponding to Disagree was interpreted as Low Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent rarely applies differentiated instruction in the classroom, demonstrating minimal adaptation for student differences. A range of 1.00 to 1.83 corresponding to Strongly Disagree was interpreted as Very Low Level of Practice, indicating that the respondent does not practice differentiated instruction at all and relies entirely on a single, one-size-fits-all teaching approach.

The data gathering procedure was carried out in three stages. During the preliminary stage, the researcher began the process after receiving approval for the research proposal. A permission letter for data collection, including an informed consent form, survey, and interview guide, was sent to the college dean and research adviser. Ethical approvals and permissions from the School Heads for private schools and the Schools Division Superintendent for identified public schools were also obtained. Participants were then invited to complete the survey questionnaire, with consents provided and obtained prior to data collection, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. Instructions were also provided in the instrument as to how it was to be answered. During the data gathering stage, the questionnaire was administered either in paper form or electronically, depending on participants' accessibility and preference. Data collection was conducted over a period of three to four weeks, allowing sufficient time for participants to respond comprehensively. Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and consistency before data entry and analysis, and the researcher secured all necessary documents such as permission letters and data processing undertakings while ensuring ethical compliance, including confidentiality and data privacy. During the post-data gathering stage, the gathered responses were systematically organized, checked, and prepared for analysis. Data cleaning was conducted by screening the questionnaires for completeness, accuracy, and consistency, with invalid or incomplete responses excluded to ensure the reliability of the dataset. The validated data were subsequently

encoded and tabulated using SPSS version 20 statistical software, facilitating the transformation of raw responses into analyzable formats and allowing for the computation of appropriate statistical techniques in preparation for analysis. The results were then interpreted in light of the research objectives and theoretical framework, with patterns and relationships emerging from the data critically analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions, which served as the basis for the subsequent discussion, implications, and recommendations. The answered hard copies of the survey questionnaires were later shredded while online responses were deleted.

This study prioritized ethical research standards by embedding fairness, transparency, and integrity into every phase of its design and execution. Participants' rights, dignity, and welfare were safeguarded with utmost care, and respondent selection adhered to established ethical guidelines incorporating safeguards against coercion, misrepresentation, data falsification, or any harm. The research complied with institutional ethics policies and national regulations, including the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), and the protocol underwent review by the institution's Ethics Review Committee prior to data collection to confirm alignment with ethical norms. Participation was fully voluntary, with informed consent required prior to questionnaire completion, and the consent form detailed the study's goals, methods, possible risks and benefits, and participants' right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. The researcher disclosed no conflicts of interest, and the study received no financial incentives or external funding that could bias results or interpretations. Participants' privacy was protected throughout, with no identifiable personal data gathered, responses anonymized, and all data securely stored for academic use only. Participants received clear verbal and written information on the study's purpose, scope, and voluntary status, with opportunities to ask questions and sufficient time to decide. The respondents were in-service elementary and secondary public-school teachers and not a vulnerable population, with involvement being voluntary and carrying no risks to their academic or personal status. Clustered random sampling was conducted initially to determine the locale of the study, after which simple random sampling was conducted to determine the participants, with recruitment being equitable and inclusive and avoiding any pressure or unfair exclusion. Risks were assessed as minimal to none, as the self-report questionnaire evaluated perceived readiness for differentiated instruction and posed no physical, psychological, or legal threats. Participants could withdraw at any time without academic, personal, or professional consequences, and their input advanced knowledge of teacher readiness in inclusive education, potentially enhancing future programs.

The validated data were subjected to the following statistical techniques to address the objectives of the study. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to analyze the demographics of the participants in terms of gender, age, highest educational attainment, years of service, and number of relevant trainings, with frequency referring to the number of respondents who completely answered the questionnaire in each category and percentage showing their proportion relative to the total sample size. Weighted means and standard deviations were computed to describe the central tendency and dispersion of participants' responses on perceived self-efficacy, attitude towards inclusion, and perceived differentiated instruction practices, serving as the basis for determining the levels possessed by the respondents in relation to the constructs studied. Pearson r correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables of perceived self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusion and the dependent variable of perceived differentiated instruction practices by computing its coefficient, with statistical significance set at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the investigation into in-service teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy in inclusive education, attitude towards inclusion, and differentiated instruction practices, as well as the significant relationships among these constructs. The study was conducted at Zapatera National High School, a public secondary school under the DepEd Cebu City Division, using a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Survey questionnaires were distributed to a target sample of 48 respondents selected through simple random sampling from a population of 55 in-service teachers. Upon completion, 43 survey questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in a return rate of 90%, which constituted a statistically adequate basis for inference. Data were collected using three validated instruments: the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale adopted from Park et al. (2016), the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale and Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classroom Scale (AIS-ITICS) adopted from Pivarc (2024), and the Differentiated Instruction Questionnaire (DI-Quest) adopted from Coubergs et al. (2017), all administered using a 6-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics including weighted means and standard deviations were computed to determine the levels of each construct, while Pearson *r* correlation was used to examine the strength and direction of relationships among variables at a 0.05 level of significance. The results are interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study and are discussed in the context of relevant literature, theoretical frameworks, and the Philippine inclusive education policy landscape.

In examining the demographic profile of the 43 respondents, the data revealed a female-dominated sample, with 34 in-service teachers (70.83%) identified as female and the remaining nine (20.93%) identified as male. This distribution reflected the broader trend in the Philippine education system, where teaching remains a female-dominated profession, particularly in basic education and public-school settings. Studies in the Philippine setting confirmed that teachers' self-efficacy and competence in inclusive classrooms vary across demographic factors, but gender remained a salient dimension in shaping confidence and instructional practices (Cañoso, 2024). Similarly, Sabanal et al. (2025) emphasized that readiness for inclusive education in Philippine secondary schools was strongly influenced by teachers' attitudes and practices, with female teachers often reporting higher levels of preparedness. International literature also supported this interpretation, noting that teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion were critical predictors of differentiated instruction practices, and that female teachers frequently demonstrate stronger nurturing dispositions aligned with inclusive pedagogy (Woodcock & Hardy, 2025; Porta, 2025). Gender disparities in the teaching practice presented limitations in interpreting the findings, as the perspectives of male teachers were underrepresented, thereby restricting the generalizability of results and obscuring potential gender-based differences in self-efficacy, attitudes toward inclusion, and differentiated instruction (Sharma & Nuttal, 2016). This imbalance may reinforce assumptions of teaching as a female-oriented profession while overlooking the contributions and challenges of male educators (Pikić Jugović et al., 2022). A professional development plan that ensures balanced participation, fosters collaborative learning, and builds teacher confidence can address these limitations, enrich instructional diversity, and strengthen the translation of inclusive education policies into classroom practice (Woodcock & Hardy, 2025; Pozas et al., 2025).

In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents fell within the 31 to 35 age group at 27.91%, followed by those aged 46 years and above at 23.26% and those aged 26 to 30 years at 20.93%. Five teachers (11.63%) were aged 36 to 40, and seven teachers (16.28%) were aged 41 to 45. Notably, no respondents were within the youngest category of 21 to 25 years old. The

data revealed a teaching workforce composed primarily of mid-career and senior educators, suggesting that inclusive education practices at Zapatera National High School were largely shaped by experienced teachers who may have demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy due to prolonged exposure to diverse classroom contexts (Pozas et al., 2025; Sharma & Nuttal, 2016). However, the absence of younger teachers highlights a gap in generational perspectives, potentially limiting the infusion of innovative approaches and updated training in differentiated instruction that newer graduates often bring (Krainer et al., 2024). While older teachers may rely on established strategies and display confidence in managing inclusion, their attitudes toward adopting newer pedagogical models may vary, thereby influencing the overall school culture toward inclusion (Cañoso, 2025). This imbalance underscored the need for a professional development plan that bridges generational differences by updating DI practices among senior teachers while sustaining positive attitudes and confidence among younger cohorts, ensuring that teachers across age groups are equally empowered to translate inclusive policies into classroom realities (Woodcock & Hardy, 2025; Sabanal et al., 2025).

Regarding educational attainment, the majority of the 43 respondents (58.14%) held a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification, while a substantial portion (30.23%) had earned a Master's Degree. Only three respondents (6.98%) earned a Diploma in Professional Education, and the remaining two respondents (4.65%) possessed a doctoral degree. In the context of inclusive education, higher educational attainment has been associated with stronger self-efficacy and more positive attitudes toward inclusion, as advanced training often exposes teachers to contemporary pedagogical frameworks and inclusive strategies (Cañoso, 2025). International reviews further emphasized that teachers with graduate-level preparation are more likely to adopt differentiated instruction practices and demonstrate openness to inclusive reforms compared to those with only undergraduate training (Charitaki et al., 2025). Philippine studies echoed these findings, noting that teachers with advanced qualifications exhibit greater readiness and competence in implementing inclusive education, while bachelor's degree holders often require additional support to strengthen their confidence and practices (Krainer et al., 2024; Lauron et al., 2025). The predominance of bachelor's degree holders in this sample therefore highlighted potential gaps in exposure to specialized inclusive education training, underscoring the need for a professional development plan that supplements formal academic preparation through continuous, school-based training aligned with DepEd's policies and mandates.

The distribution of respondents according to length of service revealed that 26 (60.47%) out of 43 respondents fell within the first 10 years of service, indicating a relatively novice-to-mid-level workforce. Eleven respondents (25.58%) fell within 11 to 20 years of service, and the remaining six (13.95%) had served for more than 20 years. Research indicated that teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education were not determined solely by tenure but are strongly influenced by contextual supports, training quality, and collaborative structures (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Positive attitudes toward inclusion are reinforced when teachers perceive adequate resources and collegial support, which in turn enhances their differentiated instruction practices. Moreover, differentiated instruction is most effectively sustained when schools establish enabling conditions such as peer coaching, lesson study, and co-teaching models (Laine & Tirri, 2023). While the predominance of early-career teachers highlighted the need for foundational training in inclusive strategies, mid- and late-career teachers can serve as mentors to anchor continuity and model advanced practices, underscoring the importance of role-sensitive professional development that systematically builds self-efficacy, nurtures positive attitudes, and embeds differentiated instruction into daily classroom routines.

With respect to training hours, none of the 43 respondents reported having no training in inclusive education. Sixteen teachers (37.21%) reported receiving more than 200 hours of

training, followed by 12 teachers (27.91%) who received 161 to 200 hours. Six respondents (13.95%) reported 81 to 120 hours, five respondents (11.63%) reported 1 to 40 hours, three respondents (6.98%) reported 41 to 80 hours, and only one teacher (2.33%) reported 121 to 160 hours. The predominance of teachers with extensive training hours is significant in the context of inclusive education, as prior research consistently showed that increased and sustained professional development enhanced teachers' perceived self-efficacy and fostered more positive attitudes toward inclusion. Meta-analytic evidence indicated that teacher training is positively associated with self-efficacy, which in turn predicts teachers' willingness and capacity to implement inclusive and differentiated instructional practices (Zhou et al., 2023). Similarly, studies demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education, emphasizing that confident teachers are more likely to embrace learner diversity and instructional adaptation (Yada et al., 2022). Research showed that professional development programs should be sustained, collaborative, and reflective to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy and instructional adaptability, which are essential for responding to students with varied abilities, backgrounds, and learning needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Regarding the level of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education as measured by the TEIP, the dimension of Efficacy to Use Inclusive Instruction yielded an overall mean of 5.08 (SD = 0.52), interpreted as High. The highest mean ratings were observed in teachers' ability to provide alternative explanations or examples when students are confused ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 0.64$) and to use a variety of assessment strategies such as portfolio, modified, and performance-based assessments ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 0.60$), both interpreted as Very High. Teachers also reported Very High efficacy in providing appropriate challenges for capable students ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 0.68$), suggesting awareness of the need to differentiate not only for struggling learners but also for advanced students. These findings indicated strong instructional flexibility and responsiveness to learner needs, which are central to inclusive education and differentiated instruction. Validation studies of the TEIP scale confirmed that higher efficacy levels were associated with stronger implementation of inclusive practices (Park et al., 2016), and Philippine-based research similarly underscored the role of structured and continuous training in improving teachers' readiness for inclusion and the effective use of differentiated instruction (Tagyamon et al., 2025).

The Efficacy in Collaboration dimension yielded an overall mean of 5.03 (SD = 0.63), interpreted as High. Teachers reported Very High efficacy in making parents feel comfortable coming to school ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.69$), while high efficacy was also evident in working jointly with other professionals in classroom teaching ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 0.72$), assisting families in supporting children's learning ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 0.83$), and involving parents in school activities ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 0.79$). Slightly lower, though still High, scores were observed in collaborating with specialists to design educational plans ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 0.85$) and in informing others about inclusion laws and policies ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.80$), suggesting that teachers felt less confident in technical or policy-related aspects of collaboration. Teacher efficacy in collaboration has been shown to influence the effective implementation of inclusive practices and differentiated instruction, as confident teachers are more likely to engage stakeholders and leverage resources to meet diverse learner needs (Park et al., 2016; Woodcock et al., 2022). The Efficacy in Managing Behavior dimension yielded an overall mean of 5.00 (SD = 0.69), interpreted as High, with teachers reporting Very High efficacy in getting children to follow classroom rules ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 0.68$). High ratings were observed across all other items, though slightly lower efficacy scores in handling physically aggressive students suggested potential challenges in more extreme behavior situations. Teacher self-efficacy in managing

behavior has been shown to directly influence classroom outcomes, including student engagement, adherence to rules, and the successful implementation of inclusive and differentiated instruction (Pozas et al., 2025).

The global TEIP mean score of 5.02 (SD = 0.57) confirmed a high level of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education among in-service teachers, with Efficacy to Use Inclusive Instruction yielding the highest mean (M = 5.08, SD = 0.52), followed by Collaboration (M = 5.03, SD = 0.63) and Managing Behavior (M = 5.00, SD = 0.69), all interpreted as High. Research on inclusive education underscored that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are meaningfully related to their implementation of inclusive practices, with high self-efficacy associated with more responsive teaching behaviors that address diverse learner needs and challenges in inclusive classrooms, whereas lower efficacy can limit the translation of inclusive intentions into practice (Woodcock et al., 2022; Schwab et al., 2022). Havik (2025) further highlighted that teacher self-efficacy not only influences implementation of inclusive strategies but also interacts with contextual factors such as professional learning, training, and school support, suggesting that efficacy must be nurtured through ongoing development and institutional backing.

Regarding the level of perceived attitude towards inclusion as measured by the AIS-ITICS, the Attitude to Inclusion dimension yielded an overall mean of 4.94 (SD = 0.86), interpreted as High. The strongest indicator of positive attitude was Item 8 (I am happy to have students who need assistance with their daily activities included in my classrooms), which obtained the highest mean (M = 5.19, SD = 0.60), interpreted as Very High, signifying strong affective acceptance of learners with higher support needs. Similarly high mean scores were observed in items emphasizing instructional adaptability and professional growth, particularly Item 4 (M = 5.07, SD = 1.07) and Items 5 to 7, all yielding means of 5.00 with standard deviations ranging from 0.86 to 1.01. Despite the overall positive trend, comparatively lower mean scores were noted in Item 1 (All students regardless of ability should be taught in regular classrooms; M = 4.51, SD = 1.37) and Item 3 (Inclusion benefits all students academically; M = 4.72, SD = 1.13), although both remained within the High range. The higher standard deviations in these items suggested variability in teachers' beliefs, particularly regarding academic outcomes and full placement in regular classrooms, pointing to a latent concern among some teachers about whether inclusion can consistently meet academic demands in the Philippine public secondary school context. Empirical research consistently showed that positive teacher attitudes toward inclusion were a significant predictor of effective differentiated instruction, with teachers who viewed inclusion as beneficial being more willing to modify instruction and persist in implementing learner-responsive strategies (Woodcock et al., 2022).

The Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classrooms dimension yielded a Very High overall mean (M = 5.26, SD = 0.51), reflecting a strong and consistent resolve among respondents to engage in inclusive actions such as curriculum modification, collaboration, and learner-responsive assessment. The highest-rated items highlighted teachers' strong inclination toward collaboration and proactive learner support, with Item 10 (Consult with the parents of a student who is struggling) yielding the highest mean (M = 5.56, SD = 0.54), followed closely by Item 11 (Consult with your colleagues to identify possible ways you can assist a struggling student in your class; M = 5.51, SD = 0.54). Item 12 (Undertake a professional development program, so you can teach students with diverse learning needs well) also yielded a Very High mean (M = 5.42, SD = 0.62), reflecting teachers' openness to continuous learning. High scores in Item 15 (M = 5.30, SD = 0.76) further demonstrated teachers' willingness to adapt assessment practices. Comparatively lower means were observed in Item 9 (M = 5.00, SD = 1.06) and Item 14 (M = 4.74, SD = 1.06), with Item 14 pertaining to including students with severe disabilities

in a range of social activities, suggesting uneven confidence possibly influenced by concerns related to supervision demands, classroom management, or limited support personnel.

The global AIS-ITICS mean of 5.11 (SD = 0.64) corresponded to a high level of perceived attitude towards inclusion. At the dimensional level, the Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classrooms dimension recorded a Very High mean (M = 5.26, SD = 0.51), while the Attitude to Inclusion dimension registered a comparatively lower mean (M = 4.94) and higher variability (SD = 0.86). Although both dimensions were interpreted as High, this discrepancy suggested that some teachers may retain reservations at the belief level, particularly concerning the academic and logistical feasibility of implementing inclusive practices. Research indicated that while behavioral intention is a strong predictor of practice, it is most effective when supported by positive and stable attitudes (Ajzen, 1991; Dierendonck et al., 2024), and that in developing education systems, inclusive intentions must be reinforced through ongoing professional development to prevent implementation fatigue (Woodcock & Hardy, 2025).

Regarding the level of perceived differentiated instruction practices as measured by the DI-Quest, the Teacher's Mindset dimension yielded an overall mean of 4.54 (SD = 0.56), interpreted as High. The highest mean score was reported in Item 3 (Classroom experiences of success can influence the intellectual capacities of students; M = 5.26, SD = 0.69), interpreted as Very High. Other high-rated items included Item 2 (The way a teacher teaches is of influence on the intellectual capacities of his students; M = 5.14, SD = 0.82) and Item 4 (A teacher's belief in the competences of a student can influence their intellectual capacities; M = 5.05, SD = 0.83). Comparatively lower scores were noted for Item 1 (M = 3.60, SD = 1.42) and Item 5 (M = 3.67, SD = 1.38), both reverse-coded, suggesting that a subset of teachers may retain some fixed-mindset beliefs that could limit the full implementation of differentiated instruction. Research showed that teachers' beliefs about the malleability of student intelligence strongly influence their differentiation practices, with a growth-oriented mindset correlated with greater willingness to adapt instruction and provide scaffolding (Robinson & Bond, 2025; Laine & Tirri, 2023).

The Ethical Compass dimension, with all item scores reversed according to the scoring guidelines, yielded a Moderately Low overall mean of 3.26 (SD = 0.94). The lowest-rated item was Item 7 (The curriculum is overloaded on content and goals; M = 2.56, SD = 1.13), indicating a strong perception that curricular demands constrained teachers' capacity for equitable instruction. Other items including Item 6 (M = 3.37, SD = 1.31), Item 8 (M = 3.21, SD = 1.34), and Item 9 (M = 3.12, SD = 1.45) consistently reflected similar systemic constraints. The highest-rated items were Item 10 (M = 3.53, SD = 1.40) and Item 11 (M = 3.77, SD = 1.36), both corresponding to a Moderately High level, yet the overall dimension remained Moderately Low, indicating that structural and systemic barriers continue to limit full ethical and equitable practice in differentiated instruction. Evidence from research highlighted that structural constraints such as rigid curricula, high-stakes inspections, and large class sizes can limit teachers' ability to provide equitable learning opportunities even when they hold strong growth-oriented beliefs (Tomlinson et al., 2018).

The Flexible Grouping dimension yielded a Very High overall mean of 5.16 (SD = 0.41). The two highest-rated items were Item 13 (I teach my students to help each other; M = 5.51, SD = 0.59) and Item 14 (I explicitly make sure I have a good relationship with all of my students; M = 5.49, SD = 0.54). The two lowest-rated items were Item 12 (I regularly change between working with homogeneous and heterogeneous groups; M = 4.28, SD = 1.11) and Item 19 (I differentiate by switching between working with heterogeneous and homogeneous groups; M = 4.93, SD = 0.73). The remaining items (Items 15 to 18) generally fell within the Very High range (M = 5.23 to 5.30). Literature affirmed that flexible grouping supports

differentiated learning by enhancing peer interaction, increasing student engagement, and allowing teachers to tailor instruction according to readiness and interests (Tomlinson et al., 2018). Research on differentiated mathematics instruction among Philippine teachers similarly revealed that practitioners used pre-assessments, varied activity levels, and personalized instruction to respond to learner diversity, aligning with the underlying goals of flexible grouping (Rosario et al., 2024).

The Output equals Input dimension yielded a Very High overall mean of 5.28 (SD = 0.48), with uniform Very High mean scores observed across all items, indicating that teachers not only monitored student learning but actively used the insights gained to adapt their teaching to meet diverse learner needs. Feedback-informed teaching has been shown to improve learning outcomes, enhance student engagement, and promote self-regulated learning (Patlunag & Chavez, 2025), with Philippine-based studies similarly highlighting that Filipino teachers who implemented feedback-driven instruction in inclusive classrooms helped students better understand their learning process and improve performance (De Ocampo, 2025). The Differentiated Instruction dimension yielded an overall mean of 4.68 (SD = 0.71), interpreted as High. The two highest-rated items were Item 29 (M = 5.23, SD = 0.74) and Item 25 (M = 5.14, SD = 0.90). The two lowest-rated items were Item 30 (M = 4.02, SD = 1.34) and Item 28 (M = 4.00, SD = 1.40), both relating to student choice and shared decision-making in instructional tasks, signaling a potential area for professional growth. DI practices that align instruction with student readiness and learning profiles have been shown to improve engagement and achievement, particularly in diverse classrooms (Pozas et al., 2020; Pozas et al., 2023; Woodcock et al., 2022).

The global DI-Quest mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.38) corresponded to a high level of perceived differentiated instruction practices. Among the five dimensions, output equals Input (M = 5.28, SD = 0.48) and Flexible Grouping (M = 5.16, SD = 0.41) received the highest mean ratings, followed by Differentiated Instruction (M = 4.68, SD = 0.71) and Teacher's Mindset (M = 4.54, SD = 0.56), all interpreted as High. The Ethical Compass dimension received the lowest mean (M = 3.26, SD = 0.94), interpreted as Moderately Low, identifying a critical area for development. Philippine literature similarly demonstrated that public school teachers who implemented assessment-based differentiation and dynamic grouping improved student performance and fostered inclusivity (Rosario et al., 2024), while limitations in ethical compass underscored the need for professional development that addressed structural and policy-related constraints, enabling teachers to exercise moral judgment in supporting all learners equitably.

Regarding the significant relationships among the constructs, the Pearson r correlation analysis indicated a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between in-service teachers perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education and their perceived differentiated instruction practices ($r = 0.401$, $p < .05$). This finding led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that as teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive education increased, so did their tendency to apply differentiated instructional strategies in their classrooms. Empirical support consistently showed that teacher self-efficacy is a strong predictor of the use of inclusive and adaptive instructional strategies (Bandura, 1997; Sharma et al., 2012; Woodcock et al., 2022). In the Philippine context, research also highlighted that teachers with higher self-efficacy in inclusive education are more proactive in differentiating instruction to accommodate learner diversity in public high schools (Cañoso, 2024; Rosario et al., 2024). These findings underscored the importance of professional development programs that strengthen teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive education, as doing so may directly enhance the implementation of differentiated instruction practices.

The Pearson r correlation analysis further revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between in-service teachers' perceived attitude towards inclusion and their perceived differentiated instruction practices ($r = 0.641$, $p < .05$). This finding likewise

led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that teachers who demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward inclusive education tended to engage more actively in differentiated instructional strategies. The strength of this relationship, which exceeded that observed between self-efficacy and DI practices, suggested that teachers' attitudinal orientation toward inclusion may be a particularly influential driver of their instructional adaptations. This finding further supported the view that teacher attitudes are an important driver of inclusive practice (Soeharto et al., 2024), with educators who valued inclusion being more likely to implement strategies that accommodated learner diversity, thereby leading to improved student engagement and learning outcomes (Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2025). In the local context, studies showed that teachers with strong pro-inclusion attitudes implemented differentiated instruction more consistently and effectively (Cañoso, 2024; Romano et al., 2024; Rosario et al., 2024).

Taken together, the results of this study provided a coherent and empirically grounded portrait of in-service teachers' inclusive education-related competencies at Zapatera National High School. The findings confirmed that teachers demonstrated High levels of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education (global TEIP mean: $M = 5.02$, $SD = 0.57$) and High levels of perceived attitude towards inclusion (global AIS-ITICS mean: $M = 5.11$, $SD = 0.64$), alongside High levels of perceived differentiated instruction practices (global DI-Quest mean: $M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.38$). Critically, both perceived self-efficacy ($r = 0.401$, $p < .05$) and perceived attitude towards inclusion ($r = 0.641$, $p < .05$) were found to be significantly and positively related to differentiated instruction practices, with attitudes demonstrating a stronger association. These findings collectively affirmed the theoretical propositions of Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, confirming that teachers' internal psychological orientations, including their confidence and attitudinal commitments, meaningfully shaped their instructional behaviors in inclusive classrooms. Areas of relative weakness, particularly in Ethical Compass ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.94$) and in student-centered decision-making within differentiated instruction (Item 28: $M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.40$; Item 30: $M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.34$), highlighted the influence of systemic and structural constraints on inclusive practice and pointed to the need for targeted intervention. These findings serve as a strong empirical foundation for the development of a contextually grounded professional development plan, specifically a School-based Learning Action Cell (SLAC) plan with Activity Design, aimed at strengthening teachers' inclusive competencies, reinforcing positive attitudes, enhancing self-efficacy, and promoting the consistent and equitable implementation of differentiated instruction in alignment with DepEd's inclusive education policies and mandates.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the perceived self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education of in-service teachers at Zapatera National High School during the 2025 to 2026 school year, and investigated the relationship of these factors with their differentiated instruction practices as a basis for a professional development plan. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and relevant Department of Education policies and issuances, the research explored how teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence their implementation of inclusive and learner-centered differentiated instruction. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design guided by the Input-Process-Output model, data were gathered from 43 in-service teachers through a validated five-part questionnaire measuring demographics, self-efficacy using the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale, attitudes using the Attitudes toward Inclusion Scale, and differentiated instruction practices using the DI-Quest. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics including frequency

distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as Pearson's r correlation to examine relationships among the key variables.

The demographic profile of the 43 respondents revealed a predominantly female, middle-aged teaching workforce holding bachelor's degrees and with fewer than ten years of service. All respondents reported participation in professional development related to inclusive education, with substantial training hours accumulated. These demographic characteristics provide an important contextual basis for interpreting the study's findings, as teacher experience, educational attainment, and professional development exposure are known to influence self-efficacy, attitudes, and differentiated instruction practices. The predominance of female respondents also points to the need for future research that explores potential gender-based differences in inclusive teaching, so as to enrich the existing literature and inform more representative and diverse professional development approaches.

Teachers reported high levels of perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education across all three dimensions measured, namely efficacy to use inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behavior. The findings indicate strong abilities in adapting lessons, providing alternative explanations, and engaging colleagues and parents in support of inclusive practices. Nevertheless, slightly lower scores were observed in more specialized technical areas, including adapting standardized assessments, informing others about inclusion laws, and managing physically aggressive behaviors. These areas represent important targets for focused professional support. The global mean for the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices instrument confirmed an overall high level of perceived self-efficacy, affirming that teachers at Zapatera National High School possess a strong foundational sense of competence in addressing diverse learner needs. To further consolidate and deepen this competence, professional development programs should prioritize strengthening teachers' skills in inclusive assessment, formative feedback, and differentiated task design aligned with the Department of Education's inclusive education framework, employing practice-oriented modalities such as lesson study, demonstration teaching, and coaching to support the translation of confidence into consistently effective differentiated instruction.

Teachers similarly reported high perceived attitudes toward inclusion. The attitude to inclusion dimension reflected positive beliefs and emotional acceptance of inclusive education, particularly for learners requiring additional support, while the intention to teach in inclusive classrooms dimension was very high, indicating strong behavioral commitment to inclusive practices. Although slightly lower scores were observed regarding the academic benefits of full inclusion, the overall behavior-leaning profile of the data suggests genuine readiness among teachers to implement inclusive strategies even amid some cognitive reservations. This finding underscores the significance of building upon teachers' existing pro-inclusion orientations by linking inclusive values directly to practical instructional strategies through collaborative workshops, reflective dialogues, and peer mentoring programs that connect positive attitudes to differentiated lesson planning, assessment adaptation, and classroom management.

Regarding differentiated instruction, teachers perceived their practices as generally high, particularly in the dimensions of output and flexible groupings, which demonstrate strong ability to use assessment data to inform instruction and organize collaborative learning groups. Teacher mindset and overall differentiated instruction practices were also rated high, reflecting consistent adaptation of teaching strategies and a belief in student potential. In contrast, the ethical compass dimension registered the lowest mean score among all differentiated instruction dimensions, indicating that systemic constraints such as rigid curricula, inspection mandates, and institutional policies limit teachers' perceived professional autonomy and flexibility in delivering fully equitable instruction. This finding carries significant implications for professional development design. It is recommended that training initiatives be developed to strengthen teachers' ethical agency by emphasizing student-centered decision-making,

equipping teachers to balance curriculum mandates with responsiveness to individual learner needs, use student data as the primary basis for instructional and assessment decisions, and navigate policy constraints without compromising principles of equity and inclusion. Clarifying the intent and application of ethical decision-making in inclusive classrooms may also reduce interpretive variability and elevate this dimension to a higher level of practice.

Correlation analysis revealed that both perceived self-efficacy in inclusive education and perceived attitude toward inclusion were positively and significantly associated with differentiated instruction practices. Teachers' self-efficacy showed a moderate positive correlation with differentiated instruction practices, indicating that greater confidence in teaching diverse learners is linked to more frequent adaptation of content, teaching methods, and assessments. Perceived attitude toward inclusion demonstrated a strong positive correlation with differentiated instruction practices, suggesting that teachers who hold more favorable views of inclusive education are more likely to implement flexible, assessment-informed, and learner-centered strategies. Notably, attitudes demonstrated a stronger relationship with differentiated instruction than self-efficacy, affirming that teachers' confidence and positive orientations together meaningfully predict their differentiated instruction implementation in inclusive settings, with attitudinal factors serving as the more powerful driver.

Taken together, the findings lead to the conclusion that in-service teachers at Zapatera National High School are generally well-prepared to implement differentiated instruction practices in inclusive classrooms, with high levels of perceived self-efficacy, strong positive attitudes toward inclusion, and well-established differentiated instruction practices forming a solid foundation for equitable teaching. The significant and positive relationships identified among self-efficacy, attitudes, and differentiated instruction practices affirm that these constructs are meaningful predictors of inclusive instructional behavior and must be simultaneously addressed through purposeful and sustained professional development. To this end, it is recommended that professional development initiatives be structured to strengthen teachers' technical inclusive skills, particularly in assessment adaptation and behavior management; enhance professional autonomy in navigating ethical and policy-related dimensions of inclusive practice; and reinforce positive attitudes through collaborative learning structures that translate pro-inclusion beliefs into consistent classroom action. Given the importance of collaborative efficacy, professional development should further include structured opportunities for co-planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, peer coaching, and family engagement, while also strengthening policy literacy to ensure accurate understanding and implementation of inclusion-related Department of Education issuances. Mentoring structures that bridge generational and experiential differences within the teaching workforce are likewise recommended, leveraging the expertise of senior and graduate-trained teachers while enabling less experienced colleagues to contribute innovative approaches. Finally, future research should employ longitudinal and experimental designs to examine causal relationships among these constructs, investigate the impact of targeted professional development on actual classroom practices and student outcomes, and extend sampling across multiple school contexts to strengthen the generalizability and breadth of findings in the growing literature on inclusive education in Philippine public secondary schools.

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