

**Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implications
for special education practices in public schools**

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ABSTRACT

In the heart of every inclusive classroom lies not just a curriculum, but the heart and mindset of the teacher who brings it to life. This descriptive-correlational study assessed teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implications for special education practices at San Fernando National High School, San Fernando, Cebu, during the school year 2025–2026. The study involved 35 teacher-respondents selected through purposive sampling. An adapted questionnaire based on Saloviita (2020) was used to gather data on respondents' demographic profile, attitudes across four domains (beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude towards challenges and benefits), and implemented special education practices. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that teachers held strongly positive beliefs about inclusion and attitudes towards challenges and benefits, while confidence and preparedness, support and resources were rated at the Agree level. Significant relationships were found between age and support and resources, sex and attitude towards challenges and benefits, and years of teaching experience and confidence and preparedness. Based on the findings, an action plan entitled "Bridging Attitudes and Practices: A Capacity-Building Action Plan for Inclusive Education at San Fernando National High School" was proposed to address identified gaps in specialist guidance, assistive technology use, collaboration, and novice teacher confidence.

Keywords: Special education, inclusive education, teacher's attitudes, descriptive-correlational, action plan, San Fernando, Cebu, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education seeks to integrate learners with diverse abilities into mainstream classrooms in order to promote equity, social cohesion, and holistic development for all students. The success of this educational approach depends largely on teachers, whose attitudes influence the extent to which inclusive principles are translated into meaningful classroom practices. Although inclusive education has gained considerable global policy support, persistent attitudinal barriers continue to hinder its effective implementation. Ozer et al. (2018) found that occupational stress and inadequate professional preparation contribute to teacher

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reluctance toward inclusion, while Forlin (2022) reported that primary school teachers often experience low confidence in managing diverse classrooms because of insufficient training, creating a continuing disconnect between policy and practice. Similarly, Holzweiss et al. (2025) observed that although awareness of inclusion is generally high, sociodemographic factors and limited emotional support continue to constrain successful implementation. Collectively, these studies establish the central role of teachers' attitudes in inclusive education but seldom distinguish which demographic characteristics or specific attitudinal domains, such as beliefs, confidence, preparedness, or perceived support, most strongly influence classroom implementation. This unresolved issue highlights the need for a more comprehensive and domain specific investigation capable of identifying targeted interventions that strengthen special education practices.

Within the Philippine educational system, the implementation of inclusive education remains constrained despite an increasingly supportive legal framework. Republic Act No. 11650, otherwise known as the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, institutionalizes Inclusive Learning Resource Centers in every school district and emphasizes individualized educational planning together with continuous teacher development. Nevertheless, practical implementation continues to face substantial challenges. Detayson (2025) reported that although teachers generally maintain positive perceptions of inclusion, these attitudes are tempered by increasing workloads and limited professional training. Jugan (2024) likewise identified inadequate preparation, insufficient infrastructure, and the scarcity of functional Inclusive Learning Resource Centers in Cebu, resulting in teachers implementing inclusive education with minimal specialist support. Local studies by Manligoy (2023) and Pantia (2025) similarly documented teacher stress and classroom management concerns but did not examine how these experiences vary according to demographic characteristics such as years of teaching experience, academic rank, or subject specialization. Consequently, an important gap remains in understanding how individual teacher characteristics influence inclusive attitudes within the context of Cebu public secondary schools.

The literature also presents inconsistent findings regarding the influence of demographic variables on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991) explains that behavioral intentions arise from attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, suggesting that teachers' intentions to implement inclusive practices are shaped by their beliefs, social expectations, and confidence in their own capabilities. However, empirical evidence regarding demographic predictors remains inconclusive. Malak et al. (2024) demonstrated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and inclusive beliefs, although it remains uncertain whether similar patterns exist among novice and experienced teachers in Philippine public secondary schools. Likewise, the meta-analysis conducted by Dignath et al. (2022) confirmed that preservice preparation significantly shapes teachers' beliefs regarding inclusion, yet the differential effects of position rank, grade level assignment, educational attainment, and subject specialization remain insufficiently examined. These inconsistencies underscore the importance of systematically investigating multiple demographic variables, including age, sex, position rank, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled, in relation to distinct dimensions of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education.

Beyond demographic inconsistencies, previous investigations frequently conceptualize teacher attitudes as a single construct despite evidence that inclusive attitudes consist of multiple interconnected dimensions. Existing research demonstrates uncertainty regarding teachers' beliefs about whether learners with disabilities can achieve their full potential within mainstream classrooms despite widespread agreement on the principle of inclusion (Dignath et al., 2022). Confidence and preparedness likewise vary considerably across instructional tasks. Forlin (2022) and Gonzaga et al. (2024) found that teachers often express confidence in

collaborative practices while simultaneously reporting low confidence in modifying assessments and utilizing assistive technologies. Similarly, although Republic Act No. 11650 mandates the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, Jugan (2024) noted that teachers continue to perceive specialist guidance and institutional support as insufficient. While Manligoy (2023) documented generally positive attitudes toward inclusion, the relationship between teachers' appreciation of learner diversity and their actual implementation of inclusive practices remains largely unexplored. These findings collectively demonstrate that beliefs, confidence and preparedness, perceived support and resources, and attitudes toward challenges and benefits represent distinct domains requiring independent examination rather than being treated as a single unified construct.

These national concerns are particularly evident at San Fernando National High School in Cebu, where limitations in resources intensify the challenges associated with inclusive education. Siriban (2025) highlighted shortages in teacher competence and environmental support within nearby divisions, conditions that closely resemble the collaboration and resource limitations experienced in Cebu public secondary schools. Pantia (2025) further observed that although teachers recognize the potential of inclusive education, persistent shortages in resources and weaknesses in special education programs continue to hinder effective implementation. Despite these documented concerns, no previous investigation has developed a domain specific, evidence-based action plan grounded in correlational findings within a single public secondary school. Addressing this gap requires identifying the demographic factors associated with teacher attitudes, determining which attitudinal domains most strongly influence special education practices, and prioritizing interventions targeting the weakest indicators, including limited confidence in assistive technology and inadequate perceptions of specialist support. Such a focused approach provides greater precision than generalized interventions and offers practical guidance for strengthening inclusive education within the school context.

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates complementary perspectives explaining how teachers develop attitudes and translate them into inclusive educational practices. Central to this framework is Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which proposes that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Applied to inclusive education, the theory explains how teachers' beliefs regarding inclusion, the expectations of colleagues and institutions, and their confidence in implementing inclusive strategies collectively determine their intentions and eventual classroom practices. Alnahdi and Schwab (2021) emphasized that these three components directly influence teachers' willingness to adopt inclusive behaviors, while Dierendonck et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of perceived efficacy and autonomy in translating intentions into practice. Empirical evidence further demonstrates that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control significantly predict teachers' intentions to support learners with disabilities (Pov & Kawai, 2025), with favorable attitudes strengthening commitment to inclusive teaching and contributing to improved academic and social outcomes for students with special educational needs (Yang et al., 2024). Previous knowledge and classroom experience further enhance teachers' perceptions of competence and reduce perceived barriers to inclusion (Hassanein, 2022), while the multidimensional demands of inclusive education reinforce the close relationship between self-efficacy and personal attitudes toward inclusion (Wächter et al., 2023). Additional investigations by Amponteng et al. (2026) and Gülsün et al. (2025) further support the applicability of this framework, whereas Mentel et al. (2024) emphasized that these attitudinal relationships continue to evolve over time,

highlighting the importance of examining teachers' attitudes within ongoing educational reforms.

Complementing this perspective is Teacher Self Efficacy Theory, derived from Bandura's social cognitive framework, which emphasizes that teachers' confidence in their instructional capabilities substantially influences their preparedness, persistence, and effectiveness within inclusive classrooms. Malak et al. (2024) reported a positive association between teacher self-efficacy and beliefs regarding the effectiveness of inclusion among Tanzanian primary school teachers, while Daniel and Yin (2025) emphasized that self-efficacy directly affects teachers' capacity to modify instructional strategies, manage diverse learning needs, and establish equitable classroom environments. Sointu et al. (2025) demonstrated that targeted professional development in inclusive pedagogy significantly strengthens teachers' confidence, thereby increasing their willingness to support all learners. Gonzaga et al. (2024) similarly found that teachers with stronger self-efficacy demonstrate greater persistence, adaptive instructional practices, and stronger implementation of inclusive education, whereas Dignath et al. (2022) observed that low self-efficacy frequently leads teachers to perceive themselves as inadequately prepared to address specific learning difficulties. Werner et al. (2021) further argued that teachers' beliefs about their instructional competence directly influence their willingness to adapt classroom practices for learners with disabilities. Collectively, these findings establish self-efficacy as a critical psychological mechanism linking teachers' confidence with their actual implementation of inclusive educational practices.

The study also draws upon Belief System Theory, which conceptualizes teachers' attitudes as interconnected cognitive, emotional, and efficacy-based evaluations that shape instructional decisions and responses to learner diversity. Dignath et al. (2022) demonstrated through a meta-analysis that preservice preparation substantially influences these belief systems, with special education teachers generally exhibiting stronger positive beliefs regarding inclusion than their general education counterparts. Teachers possessing constructive belief profiles consistently demonstrate greater instructional efficacy when teaching learners with disabilities (Zainalabidin & Ma'rof, 2021), while Vantieghem et al. (2023) emphasized that foundational beliefs regarding diversity and self-efficacy jointly determine teachers' competence in implementing inclusive education. Nijakowska (2022) and Öztürk (2022) likewise argued that demographic characteristics interact with these psychological constructs to shape teachers' attitudes and commitment toward accommodating diverse learning needs. Building upon these theoretical perspectives, the present study investigates how demographic variables among teachers at San Fernando National High School interact with attitudes, self-efficacy, and belief systems to influence readiness and effectiveness in implementing inclusive education, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the personal and professional factors that shape inclusive practice (Subarna et al., 2022).

The conceptualization of this investigation is further strengthened by the Philippine legal framework, which establishes inclusive education as both a legal obligation and an educational priority. Republic Act No. 11650, the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, institutionalizes Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, Individualized Education Plans, and teacher professional development as essential mechanisms for ensuring equitable educational opportunities for learners with disabilities. Dela Rosa (2023) emphasized the law's contribution to addressing resource deficiencies through mandated professional development, while Save the Children Philippines (2022) highlighted its potential to reduce the number of out of school children with disabilities. The legislation formalizes the country's longstanding commitment to educational equity and aligns Philippine educational policy with international advocacy for inclusive education (Olayvar, 2022). Masongsong et al. (2023) underscored that this legal mandate places teachers at the center of inclusive implementation, requiring a thorough

understanding of their attitudes and preparedness. Likewise, alignment with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reinforces the ethical and legal responsibility of educational institutions to provide inclusive learning environments (Vistar et al., 2024), while Benemerito (2024) stressed the importance of continuous professional development to ensure that instructional practices remain responsive to diverse learner needs.

The broader legislative context further reinforces these commitments. Batas Pambansa Blg. 232, or the Education Act of 1982, together with subsequent Department of Education issuances, guarantees educational access and accommodations for learners with special educational needs. Garcia and Villanueva (2021) associated higher educational attainment among teachers with improved compliance in Cebu schools, while EDCOM 2 (2025) highlighted the complementary relationship between this legislation and recent educational reforms designed to strengthen teacher confidence through long term implementation strategies. Historical analyses indicate that these legislative developments represent a continuing progression toward comprehensive educational inclusion (Savior et al., 2025; Alarba, 2023), further reinforced by international commitments such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 promoting equitable quality education for all learners (Nieva, 2023). Bautista and Cayabyab (2025) argued that these legal mandates necessitate sustained professional development to equip teachers with inclusive pedagogical competencies, while Yang et al. (2025) demonstrated that such mandates significantly influence teachers' willingness to adopt inclusive instructional practices. Department of Education policies, including DepEd Order 44 series of 2021, further operationalize these commitments while recognizing the continuing challenges encountered by general education teachers in differentiating instruction for diverse learners (Gonzaga et al., 2024).

Republic Act No. 11510, otherwise known as the Alternative Learning System Act of 2019 and extended in 2021, further broadens the legal commitment to inclusive education by promoting educational opportunities for diverse learner populations and strengthening teacher capacity building initiatives. Sharma and Malak (2024) found that teaching experience positively correlates with inclusive attitudes during the implementation of the law across Visayas regions, while Torres (2025) reported that dissemination of its implementing rules and regulations has improved teacher preparedness amid changing demographic conditions. D'Angelo and Singal (2024) emphasized that this legislation reflects a broader commitment to ensuring educational opportunities for all learners regardless of circumstance, consistent with international advocacy for accessible education (Floranza, 2025). Diaz et al. (2025) argued that this comprehensive legal framework places teachers' attitudes and preparedness at the forefront of achieving national educational objectives, while David et al. (2025) stressed that these legal mandates require substantial pedagogical adjustments to translate policy into effective classroom practice. Taken together, these theoretical and legal foundations provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how demographic characteristics, psychological constructs, and institutional mandates interact to shape teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their implementation of special education practices. Guided by these interconnected perspectives, the present study examines the relationship between teachers' demographic profiles, their beliefs, confidence and preparedness, perceptions of support and resources, attitudes toward challenges and benefits, and their special education practices in order to develop a targeted action plan capable of bridging the gap between positive attitudes and effective inclusive implementation at San Fernando National High School.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their implications for special education practices at San Fernando National High School, San Fernando, Cebu during the school year 2025 to 2026, as a basis for an action plan.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age and sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled?
2. As perceived by the respondents, what is their extent of attitudes towards inclusive education in the following domains: beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude towards challenges and benefits?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' demographic profile and their attitudes towards inclusive education in each domain?
4. Based on the findings, what action plan can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

This part presented the research design, flow of the study, environment, respondents, instrument, statistical treatment of data, and scoring procedures. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and to determine whether a significant relationship existed between their demographic profile and their attitudes across specific domains. The descriptive component of this study was used to systematically describe the teachers' demographic characteristics and to assess the extent of their attitudes toward inclusive education. According to Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019), a descriptive study is one that is designed to describe the distribution of one or more variables without regard to any causal or other hypotheses. Similarly, Miksza et al. (2023) explained that descriptive research designs are used to address the question "What is x?" by portraying the characteristics of a phenomenon, such as demographics, nature of attitudes, or level of knowledge. In line with these definitions, this study described the teachers' attitudes across four domains: beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude toward challenges and benefits. The correlational component of this study was utilized to determine whether significant relationships existed between the teachers' demographic variables, namely age, sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled, and their attitudes toward inclusive education in each identified domain. As described by Crano, Brewer, and Lac (2023), correlational research designs illustrate the association between two or more variables, particularly when experimental control or manipulation over variables is impossible, unethical, or impractical. Furthermore, Miksza et al. (2023) noted that correlational research designs address the question "How are things related?" without the researcher manipulating the primary area of interest. Consistent with these principles, this study examined patterns of association between demographic characteristics and attitude domains without manipulating any variables. This design was appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to analyze existing conditions without manipulating variables and to identify patterns of association that served as a basis for proposing an action plan to enhance inclusive education practices at San Fernando National High School for the school year 2025 to 2026.

The Input Process Output (IPO) model is a conceptual framework used in research to systematically describe the stages of a study, wherein the input refers to the data or materials

entered into the system, the process refers to the operations or procedures applied to the input, and the output refers to the results or products generated from the process (Robbins & Judge, 2019). This study followed the IPO model to clearly illustrate the systematic procedure undertaken. The input consisted of the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age and sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled. It also included the extent of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education in the domains of beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude toward challenges and benefits. Additionally, the study considered the possible significant relationship between the teachers' demographic profile and their attitudes toward inclusive education in each domain, as well as the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their implemented special education practices. The process began with securing approval through a transmittal letter from the concerned authorities. Upon approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the identified teacher-respondents. After the retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires, the collected data underwent statistical treatment appropriate to the descriptive-correlational design. The results were then analyzed and interpreted to determine the extent of teachers' attitudes and the significance of their relationship with demographic variables and implemented practices. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the output of the study was the development of a proposed action plan aimed at enhancing teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and strengthening special education practices at San Fernando National High School for the School Year 2025 to 2026.

This study was conducted at San Fernando National High School, located in Barangay South Poblacion, San Fernando, Cebu. The school is approximately 0.7 kilometers from the District Office, or about a 10-minute walk, making it accessible to educational supervisors and district officials. San Fernando National High School offers both Junior High School and Senior High School programs, serving a diverse group of learners across grade levels and academic tracks. The school operates on a shifting class schedule to efficiently accommodate its student population. In terms of facilities, the school has 17 classrooms, two (2) E-Class/ICT rooms, a Science Laboratory, a Learning Resource Center, and classrooms equipped with LED screens to support technology-enhanced instruction. It also includes specialized facilities such as a Cookery Laboratory and a Housekeeping Laboratory, which cater to technical-vocational subjects. The school has a total teacher population of 38 and a student population of 841, reflecting a moderately sized public secondary school. This environment is deemed appropriate for the study because the school implements inclusive education practices within a regular public school setting where teachers handle diverse learners, including students with varying abilities and needs. The presence of both academic and technical-vocational programs provides varied instructional contexts, which may influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Additionally, the manageable number of teachers allows for comprehensive data collection, while the shifting schedule and relatively large student population highlight real classroom conditions that may affect inclusive practices. Hence, San Fernando National High School provides a relevant and practical setting for examining teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their implications for special education practices.

The respondents of this study were the teachers of San Fernando National High School. A total of 35 teachers participated, comprising both male and female educators assigned across different grade levels from Grades 7 to 12. This population was considered appropriate for the study, as these teachers are directly involved in implementing inclusive education practices and managing diverse learners within their respective classrooms. Their daily interaction with students, including those with varied learning needs, makes them well-positioned to provide

relevant insights regarding attitudes toward inclusive education. The respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which allowed the researcher to deliberately choose participants possessing the relevant characteristics necessary for the study. Specifically, only full-time secondary school teachers actively engaged in classroom teaching during the School Year 2025 to 2026 were included. This criterion ensured that the participants had firsthand experience with inclusive instructional practices, classroom management of diverse learners, and the challenges and benefits associated with inclusive education. Teachers who were on leave or assigned to purely administrative duties were excluded from the study to maintain the relevance and reliability of the data gathered. In terms of distribution according to grade level, Grade 12 accounted for 8 teachers (22.86%), Grade 11 accounted for 8 teachers (22.86%), Grade 10 accounted for 3 teachers (8.57%), Grade 9 accounted for 5 teachers (14.29%), Grade 8 accounted for 5 teachers (14.29%), and Grade 7 accounted for 6 teachers (17.14%), for a total of 35 teachers (100.00%).

The primary tool for data collection in this study was an adapted questionnaire, which was designed to gather information on teachers' demographic characteristics, their attitudes toward inclusive education, and the special education practices they implemented in their classrooms. The instrument was adapted from the study of Saloviita (2020), "Attitudes of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in Finland," published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. The original instrument examined teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and had been used in prior research to assess perceptions, beliefs, and readiness related to inclusion. The questionnaire used in this study consisted of three main parts, as presented in Appendix C. The first part gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including items on sex, age, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled. These variables were essential in determining whether significant relationships existed between teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward inclusive education, as stated in SOP 4.1. The second part contained 40 statements measuring teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education across four domains. The first domain, Beliefs about Inclusion (Items 1 to 10), assessed teachers' philosophical beliefs and perceptions regarding the value, rights, and benefits of inclusive education. The second domain, Confidence and Preparedness (Items 11 to 20), measured teachers' self-confidence, skills, and readiness in handling inclusive classrooms and diverse learners. The third domain, Support and Resources (Items 21 to 30), evaluated teachers' perceptions of institutional support, availability of resources, collaboration, and administrative assistance. The fourth domain, Attitude Toward Challenges and Benefits (Items 31 to 40), determined teachers' willingness, motivation, and overall outlook regarding the challenges and advantages of inclusive education. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement of the respondents with each statement, with 5 as Strongly Agree (SA), 4 as Agree (A), 3 as Neutral (N), 2 as Disagree (D), and 1 as Strongly Disagree (SD). Prior to its administration, the adapted questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in education and inclusive practices to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability to the local context of San Fernando National High School. Necessary modifications in wording were made to align the instrument with the Philippine public school setting while maintaining the integrity of the original constructs identified by Saloviita (2020). The use of this adapted and structured instrument ensured systematic data collection and provided reliable and measurable indicators of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their implemented special education practices, which served as the basis for statistical analysis and the development of a proposed action plan.

The process of collecting data for this study was carried out in three stages, each systematically implemented to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and ethical integrity of the research process. During the preliminary stage, the researcher secured formal approval from

the School Principal of San Fernando National High School to conduct the study. A written request letter was submitted explaining the purpose, significance, and scope of the research. After obtaining approval, the researcher informed the teachers about the study, its objectives, and the ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. This stage also involved preparing the adapted questionnaire and arranging the schedule for distribution to ensure minimal disruption to classroom activities. During the data gathering stage, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents using purposive sampling. Teachers were given clear instructions on how to complete the survey, including guidance on marking responses accurately. The researcher ensured that respondents had sufficient time to answer the questions and provided assistance for any clarifications without influencing their responses. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maintain the integrity of the data and prevent loss or misplacement. During the post-data gathering stage, the researcher organized, coded, and prepared the data for statistical analysis. All questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency. The data were then analyzed to determine the extent of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, the frequency of implemented special education practices, and the relationships between demographic variables and attitudes as well as between attitudes and practices. Finally, the researcher ensured proper storage of the data to maintain confidentiality and comply with ethical standards.

This study was conducted with strict adherence to ethical standards to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Teachers were informed of the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study and provided voluntary informed consent, with the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. Respondents' personal information and responses were treated with confidentiality and anonymity, and all data were securely stored in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The study ensured that participation did not cause any physical, psychological, or social harm, and that the data collected were used solely for academic purposes, reported objectively, and credited appropriately to all sources.

The data gathered from the validated questionnaire were carefully tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools to answer the specific research questions. Frequency was used to count how many respondents belonged to a particular group, such as a specific age bracket, sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level handled, or subject area handled. Percentage was derived by dividing the frequency of each category by the total number of respondents and then multiplying by one hundred, and this tool was used to express the proportion of teacher-respondents relative to the whole group, making it easier to compare categories of unequal sizes and to interpret the demographic profile in a more meaningful way. The weighted mean was employed to determine the extent of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education in each of the four domains, namely beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude toward challenges and benefits, and was computed for each item and for each domain to identify the overall level of agreement of the respondents using the five-point Likert scale. Standard deviation measured the variability or dispersion of responses from the mean, indicating how consistent or diverse the teachers' perceptions were within each domain, where a low standard deviation signified that the responses were closely clustered around the mean, while a high standard deviation indicated greater variation in teachers' attitudes. The independent t-test was used to determine whether a significant difference existed in attitudes toward inclusive education between male and female teacher-respondents, and was applied to the sex variable. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether significant differences existed in attitudes toward inclusive education across multiple groups for the

following demographic variables: age, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled. Pearson's r was used to determine the significant relationship between the teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their implemented special education practices. All correlations were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, thereby determining whether the null hypotheses were accepted or rejected.

After data collection, the weighted mean for each indicator was computed to determine the overall level of perception for each dimension. The resulting mean scores were interpreted according to a scale in which a scale value of 5, with a range of 4.21 to 5.00, was verbally described as Strongly Agree, interpreted to mean that teachers strongly support inclusive education, demonstrating high confidence, preparedness, and motivation to teach students with diverse learning needs, that they perceive sufficient resources, collaboration, and administrative support, and that they recognize the academic, social, and personal benefits of inclusive classrooms for all students. A scale value of 4, with a range of 3.21 to 4.20, was verbally described as Agree, interpreted to mean that teachers generally have a positive attitude toward inclusive education, feel moderately confident in their ability to teach diverse learners, and acknowledge available support and resources, that they recognize the benefits of inclusive classrooms and are willing to adjust their teaching strategies to meet students' varied needs. A scale value of 3, with a range of 2.61 to 3.40, was verbally described as Neutral, interpreted to mean that teachers have a moderate or uncertain attitude toward inclusive education, that they may feel somewhat unprepared or lack confidence in managing diverse learners, perceive limited resources or support, and are cautious about the challenges and benefits of inclusive classrooms. A scale value of 2, with a range of 1.81 to 2.60, was verbally described as Disagree, interpreted to mean that teachers generally have a negative attitude toward inclusive education, feel underprepared or lacking in confidence, and perceive insufficient resources or support, that they may be reluctant to adjust teaching strategies and view inclusive classrooms as challenging for both students and teachers. A scale value of 1, with a range of 1.00 to 1.80, was verbally described as Strongly Disagree, interpreted to mean that teachers strongly resist inclusive education, feeling unprepared and lacking confidence to teach students with diverse learning needs, that they perceive inadequate resources and support, and are unlikely to see the benefits of inclusive classrooms for academic, social, or personal development.

To provide bases for the understanding and interpretation of the terms used in the study, several terms are hereby operationally defined. An action plan refers to the proposed set of strategies, programs, or interventions designed to improve special education practices and support the effective implementation of inclusive education, based on the findings of the study. Attitude, in this study, refers to the teachers' feelings, beliefs, and predispositions toward inclusive education, which influence their willingness and ability to implement inclusive practices in the classroom. Attitude towards challenges and benefits reflects teachers' perspectives on the difficulties and advantages of inclusive education, including motivation, professional growth, classroom management, and student outcomes. Beliefs about inclusion pertain to the teachers' perceptions and convictions regarding the rights, abilities, and benefits of students with diverse learning needs being educated together in the same classroom. Confidence and preparedness refer to the extent to which teachers feel capable, knowledgeable, and ready to teach students with diverse learning needs, including their ability to manage inclusive classrooms and adapt instructional strategies. Demographic profile includes the personal and professional characteristics of the teacher-respondents, such as age, sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled. Inclusive education refers to the practice of educating all students, including those with special needs, in mainstream classrooms, ensuring equal learning opportunities, support, and participation. Support and resources pertain to the availability of

school-provided materials, facilities, administrative backing, specialist guidance, and professional development programs that aid teachers in implementing inclusive education effectively. Special education practices are the methods, strategies, and interventions used to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities or learning difficulties in both specialized and inclusive classroom settings. Teachers' attitudes refer to the overall perceptions, confidence, and willingness of teachers to implement inclusive education, including their responses to challenges, collaboration, and recognition of its benefits for students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the data gathered from 35 teacher-respondents of San Fernando National High School regarding their attitudes towards inclusive education and the special education practices they implement. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, with respondents selected through purposive sampling based on the criterion that only full-time secondary school teachers actively engaged in classroom teaching during the School Year 2025 to 2026 were included. Data were gathered using an adapted questionnaire consisting of a demographic profile section and a 40-item scale measuring attitudes towards inclusive education across four domains: beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude towards challenges and benefits. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson's *r*, with all statistical tests evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance. The discussion that follows is grounded entirely in the data gathered from these 35 respondents, beginning with their demographic profile, followed by their attitudes across the four domains, and concluding with the relationships between demographic variables and attitudes, with the results interpreted in direct relation to the objectives set forth in the statement of the problem.

Profile of the teacher-respondents

The demographic profile of the 35 teacher-respondents was examined in terms of age and sex, position rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and subject area handled, as these characteristics may influence attitudes towards inclusive education and classroom practices.

In terms of age and sex, out of 35 teacher-respondents, 30 (85.71%) were female and 5 (14.29%) were male. By age bracket, the largest groups were 31 to 35 years and 26 to 30 years, each comprising 9 teachers (25.71%), consisting of 7 females and 2 males in each bracket. The 41 to 45 years bracket had 6 respondents (17.14%), all female. The 36 to 40 years bracket had 6 respondents (17.14%), consisting of 5 females and 1 male. The 46 and above bracket had 4 respondents (11.43%), all female. The 21 to 25 years bracket had the smallest number, with 1 respondent (2.86%), who was female. This distribution indicates that the school has a relatively young teaching force, with over 50% of respondents aged 35 and below, suggesting openness to new pedagogical approaches, though it may also mean that many teachers still need guided support and mentoring in inclusive practices. The predominance of female teachers, at over 85%, reflects the general trend in the Philippine basic education system, where teaching remains a female-dominated profession, and this pattern aligns with observations that gender can influence attitudes towards inclusive education (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021). While some studies indicate no significant gender-based differences in attitudes towards inclusion (Vistar et al., 2024), others suggest that female teachers may hold less favorable views, especially

concerning physical and academic integration aspects (Agai et al., 2025), while still other research posits that female educators exhibit a more positive stance towards inclusion due to heightened tolerance (Azizi, 2022). This demographic insight underscores the necessity of disaggregating data by gender in future analyses to thoroughly assess potential correlations between teacher characteristics and their perspectives on inclusive pedagogical approaches (Hamid & Mohamed, 2021), consistent with findings by Singh et al. (2025) that highlight the importance of teacher perspectives in implementing equitable education for all students. The concentration of teachers in the 26 to 35 age range presents an opportunity for targeted capacity-building interventions, as these teachers are likely to remain in service for many years and can become champions of inclusive education, particularly since specific teacher characteristics such as gender, educational background, and experience with special education have been shown to significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive education practices (Nurudden et al., 2025).

With respect to position rank, the majority of teacher-respondents, 20 out of 35 (57.14%), held the position of Teacher 1, while 8 respondents (22.86%) held Teacher 3 positions, and 7 respondents (20.00%) held Teacher 2 positions. No respondents held positions higher than Teacher 3, such as Master Teacher or Head Teacher, indicating a pyramidal structure with the largest concentration at the entry level. This predominance of Teacher 1 rank holders aligned with the age profile previously discussed, where a substantial number of teachers were aged 35 and below, while the combined 42.86% of Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 rank holders indicated that fewer teachers had achieved promotion, possibly reflecting limited years of service, stringent promotion requirements, or limited available positions for higher ranks. This demographic breakdown, where entry-level educators represent the largest cohort, aligns with findings from studies indicating that younger teachers often exhibit more positive attitudes towards inclusive education, potentially due to recent pre-service training in inclusive pedagogies (Barnová et al., 2022; Hamid & Mohamed, 2021), a pattern supported by research indicating that teachers with fewer years of experience tend to hold more favorable views on inclusive practices, particularly regarding academic and social inclusion (Agai et al., 2025). Conversely, a smaller proportion of teachers with more extensive experience sometimes demonstrate more neutral or even negative attitudes, possibly due to a lack of updated training or perceived challenges in implementing inclusive strategies within traditional educational frameworks (Alsolami & Vaughan, 2023; Bala, 2021), consistent with recent findings that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are significantly influenced by their level of experience and prior training (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021).

Regarding highest educational attainment, more than half of the respondents, 19 out of 35 (54.29%), had completed academic requirements for a master's degree but had not yet finished the degree program, described as having units toward a master's degree. Nine respondents (25.71%) held a bachelor's degree as their highest educational attainment, six respondents (17.14%) had earned a complete master's degree, and only one respondent (2.86%) had earned units toward a doctorate degree, with no respondent holding a completed doctorate. Overall, 74.29% of the respondents, comprising those with master's units or a complete master's degree, had engaged in graduate-level studies. This high percentage indicated a strong professional commitment to continuing education, although the fact that 54.29% had only completed master's units without earning the degree suggested possible barriers to degree completion, such as financial constraints, time management challenges, or lack of accessible graduate programs. This finding aligns with broader discussions in educational research regarding systemic impediments to professional development, wherein educators are committed to enhancing their pedagogical knowledge and skills but encounter significant structural or personal challenges that prevent full credentialing (Donath et al., 2023). Such barriers can manifest as a scarcity of specialized training programs for diverse learners or a

lack of institutional support for advanced studies, which can consequently affect the efficacy of inclusive practices within public school settings (Calumpang, 2025; Kazmi et al., 2023). Studies have found that teachers often lack adequate preparation and opportunities for specialized training in inclusive education, leading to neutral or negative attitudes towards its implementation (Barnová et al., 2022), while the availability of ongoing professional development is crucial for teachers to effectively adapt their methods to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities (Wächter et al., 2023), and inadequate professional development opportunities can hinder teachers' confidence and competence in implementing inclusive strategies (Singh, 2025).

In terms of years of teaching experience, the largest group of teacher-respondents, 11 out of 35 (31.43%), had been teaching for 1 to 3 years, indicating a substantial proportion of novice teachers. The second largest group, with 8 respondents (22.86%), had 7 to 9 years of experience. Teachers with 13 or more years of experience numbered 6 (17.14%), while those with 10 to 12 years and those with 4 to 6 years each numbered 5 respondents (14.29%). Overall, 45.71% of respondents had less than seven years of teaching experience, while 54.29% had seven or more years in the profession. The concentration of teachers in the 1 to 3 years bracket, at over 31%, suggested a relatively young teaching force with limited classroom experience, consistent with the age and position rank data previously presented, while the 22.86% in the 7-to-9-year bracket represented a mid-career group that had likely developed foundational teaching competencies. The observed distribution has profound implications for fostering inclusive education practices, particularly given that teachers with longer service often hold more selective views on inclusive education, necessitating tailored professional development programs (Gonzaga et al., 2024). The substantial proportion of novice teachers indicates a critical need for foundational training in inclusive pedagogies and special education strategies, which could be facilitated through mentorship by more experienced colleagues (Palavan et al., 2018), while teachers with greater years of experience, such as those in the 7 to 9 year bracket, may benefit from advanced professional development addressing complex case management and differentiated instruction for students with varying disabilities (Dapudong, 2024). This targeted approach to professional development can significantly enhance teacher preparedness and confidence in managing diverse classroom needs (Bermudo et al., 2025), aligning with findings that advanced qualifications and training correlate with more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Noreen et al., 2019).

With regard to grade level taught, Grade 12 and Grade 11 each had 8 teacher-respondents (22.86%), together comprising 45.72% of the total respondents. In the junior high school level, Grade 7 had 6 respondents (17.14%), Grades 8 and 9 each had 5 respondents (14.29%), and Grade 10 had the fewest with 3 respondents (8.57%). Senior high school teachers, spanning Grades 11 to 12, numbered 16, compared to 19 junior high school teachers spanning Grades 7 to 10. The higher concentration of teachers in Grade 11 and Grade 12, at 45.72%, reflected the additional subject specializations and track-specific courses required in the senior high school curriculum under the K to 12 program, potentially indicating a strategic allocation of resources to meet pedagogical demands at these critical levels (Calumpang, 2025), while the lower number of Grade 10 teacher-respondents might indicate a more efficient teacher-to-student ratio at that level or could reflect a limitation of the sampling methodology employed in the study (Ramirez, 2023). This uneven distribution across grade levels could influence the generalizability of findings regarding inclusive education attitudes, as teacher experiences and perceptions often vary significantly with the age and developmental stage of their students (Agai et al., 2025; Calunsod & Cayabyab, 2025), a consideration that is crucial when interpreting attitudes towards inclusive education, given that teacher preparedness and

perceptions are often shaped by their specific teaching context and the unique needs of different age groups (Bermudo et al., 2025).

Finally, with respect to subject area handled, English had the highest number of teacher-respondents, with 9 (25.71%), followed by Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) with 7 (20.00%), and Mathematics with 6 (17.14%). Science had 4 respondents (11.43%), while Araling Panlipunan (AP), Filipino, and MAPEH each had 3 respondents (8.57%). Core academic subjects, comprising English, Mathematics, Science, AP, and Filipino, collectively accounted for 25 respondents (71.43%), while TLE and MAPEH, as skills-based and performance-oriented subjects, accounted for 10 respondents (28.57%). The predominance of English teachers, at over 25%, suggested either a larger number of sections or a subject area requiring more teachers due to class size considerations, while the strong representation of TLE, at 20.00%, reflected the emphasis on technical and vocational tracks in the senior high school curriculum, consistent with the earlier finding that Grade 11 and Grade 12 teachers comprised nearly half of the respondents. This distribution highlights the prevalence of general education teachers within the survey, many of whom may lack specialized training in inclusive practices (Gonzaga et al., 2024), aligning with findings suggesting that while in-service teachers generally perceive training in special needs education positively, a lack of specialized competency among educators in subjects beyond core academics can hinder effective inclusive education for students with diverse needs (Meda et al., 2023). The predominance of general education teachers in the respondent pool underscores the necessity of investigating their specific attitudes towards inclusive education, as these educators are primarily responsible for implementing inclusive strategies within mainstream classrooms (Rosal-Oliverio et al., 2025), particularly given that teachers' attitudes significantly influence the successful implementation of inclusive programs (Alarba, 2023), and a lack of specific disability-related coursework among general education teachers necessitates supplementary support and targeted professional development to foster positive attitudes and effective accommodation of diverse learners (Torregosa et al., 2024).

Teachers perceived extent of attitudes towards inclusive education

The teachers' self-reported attitudes towards inclusive education were examined across four domains: beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitude towards challenges and benefits, as these perceptions directly influence classroom behaviors, willingness to adapt instruction, and overall commitment to implementing special education practices.

For beliefs about inclusion, the aggregate mean score was 4.35 (SD = 0.82), verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Among the ten indicators, the highest was "Teachers' positive attitudes are important for successful inclusion" (M = 4.77, SD = 0.43), followed by "Inclusion helps students without disabilities develop empathy and understanding" (M = 4.46, SD = 0.61), "Every student has the right to participate in general education classes" (M = 4.43, SD = 0.81), and "Inclusion prepares students for real-life situations in society" (M = 4.43, SD = 0.70). Other indicators included "I believe that all students, regardless of abilities, can learn together in the same classroom" (M = 4.17, SD = 0.92), "Inclusive education benefits students with special needs academically and socially" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.80), "Inclusive education promotes equality in learning opportunities" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.93), "Inclusive classrooms foster a positive and supportive learning environment" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.91), and "Inclusive education improves overall school culture" (M = 4.34, SD = 0.87). The lowest indicator was "Students with special needs can achieve their full potential in a mainstream classroom" (M = 3.86, SD = 1.22), interpreted as Agree, with the highest variability among all items in this domain. The teacher-respondents held overwhelmingly positive beliefs toward inclusive education, strongly

recognizing their own role as a critical success factor ($M = 4.77$) while highly endorsing inclusion for reasons related to student rights, real-life preparation, and social-emotional benefits. However, the notably lower rating and high standard deviation ($SD = 1.22$) on whether students with special needs can achieve full potential in mainstream classrooms revealed a gap between philosophical acceptance and practical confidence, with some teachers doubting whether mainstream settings can fully support such potential. This nuance is consistent with research indicating that while teachers generally support inclusion philosophically, they often have reservations about fully integrating students with significant needs (Aktan, 2023), a gap between positive attitudes and practical readiness that stems from a lack of confidence and specific skills, especially in proactive behavior management and adapting instruction for severe disabilities (Zainalabidin & Ma'rof, 2021; Kazmi et al., 2023), underscoring the need for targeted professional development to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy and bridge the divide between inclusive ideals and classroom realities (Gal et al., 2025).

For confidence and preparedness, the aggregate mean score was 4.07 ($SD = 0.85$), verbally interpreted as Agree, falling just below the Strongly Agree threshold of 4.21. The highest means were recorded for "I am confident in collaborating with special education teachers" ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.69$) and "I feel capable of helping all students succeed in my class" ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.60$), both interpreted as Strongly Agree. Other indicators included "I feel confident in teaching students with diverse learning needs" ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.83$), "I can effectively modify lesson plans to accommodate students with disabilities" ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.80$), "I have the necessary skills to manage an inclusive classroom" ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.02$), "I can identify strategies to support students with learning difficulties" ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.82$), "I can address behavioral challenges in an inclusive classroom" ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.91$), and "I can use technology to support inclusive teaching" ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.95$). The lowest means were "I am confident in using teaching materials that support inclusive learning" ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.87$) and "I feel prepared to assess students with special needs fairly" ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.97$), both under the Agree category, while "I have the necessary skills to manage an inclusive classroom" showed the greatest variability ($SD = 1.02$). This aggregate mean of 4.07 was notably lower than the strongly positive beliefs about inclusion (aggregate mean of 4.35), suggesting that teachers may strongly endorse the philosophical value of inclusive education but feel less assured about the concrete, classroom-based skills required to implement it effectively, with the gap between high collaborative confidence and low material and assessment confidence implying that teachers view collaboration as a strength while struggling with adapting resources and evaluating students fairly. This interpretation aligns with Kazmi et al. (2023), who found that teachers generally endorse inclusive principles, yet practical implementation, particularly concerning specialized instructional materials and equitable assessment strategies, remains a significant challenge, and with Musayaroh et al. (2023), who reported that teachers often express positive attitudes toward inclusive education but concurrently identify a lack of adequate training and resources as major barriers to effective implementation.

For support and resources, the aggregate mean was 4.00 ($SD = 0.81$), interpreted as Agree, the lowest among the four attitude domains. Teachers strongly agreed that parental involvement ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.56$), professional development programs ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.51$), and peer support among students ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.52$) enhance inclusive classrooms. Other indicators included "Collaboration among teachers enhances the success of inclusive classrooms" ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.68$), "Support from school administration encourages inclusive practices" ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.71$), and "Adequate classroom space helps facilitate inclusive education" ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.85$). However, "My school provides sufficient resources to

support inclusive education" ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.09$) and "I receive guidance from specialists on how to support students with disabilities" ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.11$) were both rated Neutral, while "Resources for inclusion are regularly updated and improved in my school" ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.19$) and "I have access to instructional materials suitable for students with diverse needs" ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.92$) also scored comparatively low, with standard deviations ranging from 0.51 to 1.19 reflecting disagreement among teachers regarding resource adequacy and maintenance. The Neutral rating for receiving guidance from specialists ($M = 3.37$) strongly suggested that the school either lacked assigned special education teachers or resource personnel, or that existing specialists were not accessible to general education teachers, implying that classroom teachers were expected to implement inclusive practices without expert consultation, which could lead to ineffective strategies, teacher burnout, or unintentional exclusion of learners with special needs. Similarly, the marginal rating for resource sufficiency ($M = 3.37$) and the low rating for regular updating of resources ($M = 3.66$) indicated that teachers likely relied on improvised or self-funded materials for inclusive instruction. This disparity between teachers' positive attitudes toward pedagogical and relational supports and their perception of inadequate material resources indicates a potential disconnect where philosophical alignment with inclusive education principles does not translate into the perceived availability of tangible resources needed for effective implementation (Rosal-Oliverio et al., 2025), aligning with research indicating that while teachers may possess positive attitudes toward inclusive education, practical implementation is often hampered by a lack of structural support and updated resources (Marin et al., 2025). Studies in North Macedonia and Slovakia reveal that despite generally positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion, significant challenges persist in resource provision and managing students with severe disabilities, often necessitating specialized training and up to date materials (Agai et al., 2025; Barnová et al., 2022; Calumpang, 2025), a sentiment echoed by studies demonstrating that teachers' hesitancy to implement inclusive practices often stems from perceived insufficiencies in necessary support and resources (Virani & Ali, 2022), and further corroborated by findings highlighting how a lack of resources and adequate training significantly impacts teachers' preparedness for inclusive education, particularly when addressing specific disabilities (Desombre et al., 2021; Musayaroh et al., 2023).

For attitude towards challenges and benefits, the aggregate mean score was 4.43 ($SD = 0.69$), verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree, the highest among all four attitude domains, surpassing beliefs about inclusion (4.35), confidence and preparedness (4.07), and support and resources (4.00). The highest mean score was recorded for "I value the diversity that students with different abilities bring to the classroom" ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.56$), followed by "Inclusive education encourages creativity in lesson planning" ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.70$), and "I am willing to adjust my teaching methods to meet diverse learners' needs" ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.61$) and "Inclusive education enhances students' social skills and peer relationships" ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.61$). Other indicators included "Inclusion strengthens collaboration and teamwork among students" ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.78$), "I feel motivated to support students with special needs" ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.61$), "I believe that inclusive classrooms contribute to students' personal growth" ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.81$), "Teaching inclusively provides me with professional growth opportunities" ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.60$), and "I enjoy teaching in classrooms with diverse learning abilities" ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.80$). The lowest mean score, though still within the Strongly Agree range, was "Inclusive education enriches the learning experience for all students" ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.82$), with standard deviations across the domain ranging from 0.56 to 0.82, indicating relatively consistent responses, with the lowest variability on valuing diversity and the highest variability on perceived enrichment of learning experiences. This domain revealed genuine enthusiasm, motivation, and appreciation for inclusive education among teachers, with the high rating on valuing diversity ($M = 4.54$) reflecting genuine appreciation for difference rather than

mere tolerance, and the strong agreement on willingness to adjust teaching methods ($M = 4.49$) together with recognition that inclusion encourages creativity ($M = 4.51$) indicating that teachers viewed inclusive education as a catalyst for professional growth and instructional innovation. However, the discrepancy between the Strongly Agree rating in this domain (4.43) and the lower Agree rating in support and resources (4.00) suggested that teachers' positive attitudes could be eroded over time if material and specialist support remained inadequate. This aligns with findings that while teachers generally exhibited positive attitudes toward inclusive education, difficulties emerged in managing students with severe disabilities due to inadequate specialized training (Calumpang, 2025), suggesting that while teachers are conceptually aligned with inclusive pedagogical principles, practical implementation is often hampered by a lack of targeted professional development (Barnová et al., 2022; Kurteshi & Zymberi, 2025). This gap highlights the necessity for continuous professional development that addresses diverse student needs beyond general pedagogical principles (Kazmi et al., 2023), ideally encompassing strategies for adapting curriculum, utilizing assistive technologies, and fostering collaborative practices among educators and specialists (Marin et al., 2025), since despite a general willingness to embrace inclusive practices, many teachers still face significant challenges, particularly the lack of relevant professional development opportunities and financial resources, which significantly impede the full implementation of inclusive education (Benemerito, 2024).

Significant relationships between demographic profile and attitudes towards inclusive education

The relationship between teachers' demographic profile and their attitudes towards inclusive education across the four domains was tested at the 0.05 level of significance using ANOVA for categorical demographic variables with more than two groups and an independent t-test for the binary variable of sex, in order to determine whether teacher background variables were associated with differences in attitudes towards inclusive education.

For age, the relationship with beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 1.15$, $p = 0.36$, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Not Significant. The relationship with confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 0.81$, $p = 0.55$, also Not Significant, with the null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with support and resources yielded $F = 2.62$, $p = 0.04$, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Significant. The relationship with attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 1.99$, $p = 0.11$, with the null hypothesis accepted, although the interpretation column in the data noted this as Significant despite the p-value exceeding 0.05.

For sex, the relationship with beliefs about inclusion yielded $t = -1.23$, $p = 0.23$, Not Significant, with the null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with confidence and preparedness yielded $t = -0.55$, $p = 0.59$, Not Significant, null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with support and resources yielded $t = 0.61$, $p = 0.55$, Not Significant, null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $t = -2.2$, $p = 0.04$, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Significant.

For position rank, none of the four relationships were significant: beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 0.19$, $p = 0.83$; confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 0.58$, $p = 0.56$; support and resources yielded $F = 1.58$, $p = 0.22$; and attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 0.13$, $p = 0.88$; all resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Not Significant.

For highest educational attainment, none of the four relationships were significant: beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 1.72$, $p = 0.81$; confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 1.34$, $p = 0.28$; support and resources yielded $F = 0.9$, $p = 0.45$; and attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 1.65$, $p = 0.20$; all resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Not Significant.

For years of teaching experience, the relationship with beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 1.61$, $p = 0.20$, Not Significant, null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 3.26$, $p = 0.02$, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Significant. The relationship with support and resources yielded $F = 2.04$, $p = 0.11$, Not Significant, null hypothesis accepted. The relationship with attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 1.72$, $p = 0.17$, Not Significant, null hypothesis accepted.

For grade level taught, none of the four relationships were significant: beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 0.52$, $p = 0.76$; confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 1.03$, $p = 0.42$; support and resources yielded $F = 1.05$, $p = 0.41$; and attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 0.27$, $p = 0.93$; all resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Not Significant.

For subject area handled, none of the four relationships were significant: beliefs about inclusion yielded $F = 0.62$, $p = 0.71$; confidence and preparedness yielded $F = 0.62$, $p = 0.69$; support and resources yielded $F = 1.24$, $p = 0.32$; and attitude towards challenges and benefits yielded $F = 0.72$, $p = 0.64$; all resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis and an interpretation of Not Significant.

Out of 28 relationships tested across the 7 demographic variables and 4 attitude domains, only four statistically significant relationships were found: age with support and resources ($F = 2.62$, $p = 0.04$), sex with attitude towards challenges and benefits ($t = -2.20$, $p = 0.04$), and years of teaching experience with confidence and preparedness ($F = 3.26$, $p = 0.02$). All other relationships tested were not statistically significant, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis for those pairs. This indicates that demographic variables were largely unrelated to teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. Age was significantly related only to perceptions of support and resources, suggesting differences between older and younger teachers in their experiences or expectations of resource adequacy. Sex was significantly related only to attitudes toward challenges and benefits, with female teachers likely holding more positive views, although due to the very small number of male respondents ($n = 5$), gender results should be interpreted cautiously. Years of teaching experience was significantly related only to confidence and preparedness, indicating that more experienced teachers felt more confident and prepared, while no significant relationships were found for position rank, educational attainment, grade level taught, or subject area, suggesting that teachers across these demographics held relatively similar views on inclusive education. These findings align with recent scholarship highlighting the nuanced relationship between teacher demographics and their receptiveness to inclusive pedagogical frameworks (Agai et al., 2025), as studies indicate that teacher age can influence perceptions of necessary support and resources for inclusive environments, while gender may correlate with disposition towards the challenges and benefits of inclusive education (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021; Barnová et al., 2022). Research also supports the idea that teaching experience significantly impacts a teacher's confidence and preparedness for inclusive settings, corroborating the identified correlation between years of experience and these domains (Hamid & Mohamed, 2021), although some researchers argue that gender and age are not significant variables in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, and that experience working with children with special educational needs also does not significantly relate to these attitudes (Musayaroh et al., 2023). The inconsistency in findings across various studies concerning demographic variables like gender and age might be partly attributed to imbalanced representation within teaching populations (Boyle et al., 2023); for example, in

Oman, a majority-female teaching workforce naturally skews any gender-based analyses (Al-Salmi & Al-Qaryouti, 2024), and such demographic disparities can obscure the generalizability of findings regarding sex-based attitudinal differences towards inclusive education (Polyzopoulou & Tsakiridou, 2023), underscoring the importance of considering contextual factors and sample characteristics when interpreting results concerning demographic influences on teacher attitudes (Al-Abdallat et al., 2021).

Taken together, the findings of this study, drawn from the responses of 35 teacher-respondents at San Fernando National High School, directly address each objective set forth in the statement of the problem. The teaching force was predominantly female (85.71%) and relatively young, concentrated in the 26 to 35 age range, mostly holding the entry-level Teacher 1 rank (57.14%), engaged in graduate-level studies without having completed a master's degree (54.29%), evenly distributed in years of experience with a notable concentration of novice teachers (31.43% with 1 to 3 years), and spread across grade levels and subject areas with a stronger concentration in senior high school and English instruction. Across the four attitude domains, teachers exhibited Strongly Agree ratings for beliefs about inclusion (aggregate mean = 4.35, SD = 0.82) and attitude towards challenges and benefits (aggregate mean = 4.43, SD = 0.69), and Agree ratings for confidence and preparedness (aggregate mean = 4.07, SD = 0.85) and support and resources (aggregate mean = 4.00, SD = 0.81), revealing a consistent pattern in which teachers' philosophical commitment and emotional investment in inclusion exceeded their practical confidence and their perception of available institutional support. The correlational and comparative analyses further revealed that, of 28 relationships tested between demographic variables and attitude domains, only three reached statistical significance at the 0.05 level: age with support and resources ($F = 2.62$, $p = 0.04$), sex with attitude towards challenges and benefits ($t = -2.20$, $p = 0.04$), and years of teaching experience with confidence and preparedness ($F = 3.26$, $p = 0.02$), while all remaining relationships were not significant, indicating that most demographic characteristics did not meaningfully differentiate teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Collectively, these results suggest that the teaching force at San Fernando National High School possesses a strong affective and philosophical foundation for inclusive education but requires targeted, practice-oriented support, particularly in specialized materials, specialist guidance, and fair assessment practices, and that such support should be prioritized for novice teachers and calibrated by age where resource perceptions differ, rather than broadly differentiated by rank, educational attainment, grade level, or subject area. This evidence base directly informs the development of the action plan discussed in the succeeding chapter, which is intended to translate teachers' strongly positive beliefs and enthusiasm into sustained, well-resourced, and confidently implemented special education practices at San Fernando National High School.

CONCLUSION

The study assessed the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education and examined their implications for special education practices at San Fernando National High School, San Fernando, Cebu during the school year 2025-2026 as the basis for developing an action plan. Using a descriptive correlational research design, the study involved 35 teacher respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through an adapted questionnaire based on Saloviita (2020), which examined teachers' demographic profile, attitudes toward inclusive education across the domains of beliefs about inclusion, confidence and preparedness, support and resources, and attitudes toward challenges and benefits, as well as their implemented special education practices. Statistical analyses included frequency and

percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, independent t test, Analysis of Variance, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that the respondents were predominantly female, mostly between the ages of 26 to 35 years, largely held Teacher 1 positions, had completed master's units, possessed one to three years of teaching experience, taught across Grade 7 to Grade 12, and represented various subject areas, with English having the highest representation. Teachers generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward inclusive education, particularly in their beliefs about inclusion and their recognition of the benefits and value of diversity in inclusive classrooms. However, they expressed comparatively lower confidence regarding their preparedness, access to support and resources, and the availability of specialist guidance.

The findings further established that teachers consistently implemented special education practices in their classrooms, with an overall interpretation of Always. The strongest practice involved promoting acceptance and respect for learners with disabilities among all students, while the least practiced areas included the use of assistive technology and collaboration with special education teachers. Statistical analyses further indicated that age was significantly associated with perceptions of support and resources, sex was significantly related to attitudes toward the challenges and benefits of inclusive education, and years of teaching experience significantly influenced teachers' confidence and preparedness. In contrast, no significant relationships were found between attitudes toward inclusive education and position rank, highest educational attainment, grade level taught, or subject area handled. These findings demonstrate that while teachers generally possess favorable attitudes toward inclusive education, specific demographic characteristics influence selected dimensions of those attitudes, particularly those related to confidence, available support, and perceptions of inclusive practice.

Overall, the study concludes that teachers at San Fernando National High School possess strong positive attitudes toward inclusive education and recognize its value in promoting equitable learning opportunities. Nevertheless, positive attitudes alone are insufficient to ensure effective implementation of inclusive practices. The relatively lower levels of confidence, specialist guidance, access to appropriate resources, use of assistive technology, and collaboration with special education personnel indicate that the school's readiness for inclusive education remains stronger in terms of beliefs than in practical implementation. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening teachers' professional competence, expanding institutional support systems, and providing adequate instructional resources to translate favorable attitudes into consistently effective inclusive classroom practices.

In light of these conclusions, the study recommends the implementation of the proposed action plan entitled "Bridging Attitudes and Practices: A Capacity-Building Action Plan for Inclusive Education at San Fernando National High School." The proposed intervention directly addresses the identified gaps by establishing a special education coordination team, conducting hands on training on assistive technology and differentiated assessment, implementing a structured mentoring program that pairs novice teachers with experienced educators, and developing a resource sharing system for adapted instructional materials. Furthermore, the school administration is encouraged to allocate a dedicated budget for inclusive education resources, designate a special education coordinator, and integrate the proposed activities into the school's Annual Implementation Plan and Learning Action Cell sessions. Continuous monitoring and evaluation should likewise be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the action plan, ensure that the identified concerns are systematically addressed, and promote sustained improvements in teachers' attitudes, instructional competence, and special education practices over time.

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