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Inclusive Education in Philippine Secondary Schools: Teachers' Readiness and Competencies Study

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the relationship between the demographic profile of secondary school teachers and their readiness to implement inclusive education, focusing on knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices. The objectives were to assess how variables such as age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, length of service, and professional development opportunities correlated with teachers' readiness for inclusive education. The research questions centered on identifying significant relationships between these demographic factors and various dimensions of readiness. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving a sample of 30 randomly selected teacher-respondents from a public secondary school in the Philippines. Data were collected using a survey questionnaire that measured teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices related to inclusive education. The study found that educational attainment and relevant training had significant positive correlations with teachers' knowledge and skills in inclusive education. Conversely, age, gender, and length of service showed weak or no significant correlations. These findings implied that enhancing teachers' qualifications and providing professional development are crucial for improving inclusive education practices. The study's findings strongly recommended prioritizing advanced training programs, aligning evaluations with inclusive education competencies, and conducting further research on intrinsic motivational factors.*

Key words*: Inclusive education, Philippine secondary schools, Professional development, Special needs education, Teacher readiness, Teaching competencies.*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, inclusive education has emerged as a cornerstone for fostering equitable, quality, and learner-centered schooling. It emphasizes the removal of barriers that prevent students regardless of their abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender, ethnicity, or learning differences from participating fully and effectively in education (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive education goes beyond integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms; it champions a holistic transformation of educational policies, pedagogies, and school cultures to support diverse learners in a dynamic and ever-changing global context (Florian & Spratt, 2021; Slee, 2019).

Grounded in the principles of equity, social justice, and human rights, inclusive education asserts that every learner has the right to meaningful learning experiences in environments where they are valued, respected, and supported (Ainscow, 2020). International declarations such as the Salamanca Statement

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(UNESCO, 1994), the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UN, 2015), and the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015) have reinforced the global commitment to inclusive and equitable education. In the Philippines, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act 10533) and the Inclusive Education Act of 2022 (Republic Act 11650) underscore national efforts to create more responsive and inclusive school systems that accommodate learners with diverse needs (DepEd, 2022; Senate of the Philippines, 2022).

However, while inclusive education is a priority in policy, its implementation at the school level particularly in Philippine secondary schools presents significant challenges. One critical aspect that determines the success of inclusive education is the readiness and competencies of teachers. Teachers serve as frontline implementers of inclusion, and their beliefs, attitudes, and preparedness significantly influence how inclusion is enacted in classrooms (Loreman, 2021; Sharma et al., 2022). Effective inclusive education requires teachers to possess not only awareness of inclusive philosophies but also the pedagogical skills, classroom management strategies, and adaptive expertise needed to address a broad spectrum of learner needs (Forlin et al., 2019).

This student explores the readiness and competencies of secondary school teachers in the Department of Education – Cebu City Division in implementing inclusive education. While much of the global literature has underscored the importance of teacher preparedness in inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2020; Pantic & Florian, 2019), there remains a paucity of context-specific research in the Philippines, particularly at the secondary level. Most local studies have focused on primary education or special education settings, leaving a gap in understanding how regular high school teachers perceive and respond to the call for inclusive practices (Guinto, 2020; Almazan & Reyes, 2021). Recognizing this gap, the present study aims to provide empirical insights into the current level of teacher readiness and inclusive teaching competencies among high school educators. It investigates dimensions such as teachers' knowledge of inclusive policies, attitudes towards learners with diverse needs, familiarity with differentiated instruction, and experiences with inclusive pedagogical strategies. By focusing on the Cebu City Division, this research seeks to reflect the unique challenges and opportunities of implementing inclusive education in urban public secondary schools in the Philippine context (Tadeo, 2022; Moreno & Medallon, 2023).

Beyond its academic contribution, the findings of this study bear practical implications for educational policy, teacher training, and school improvement planning. As the Philippines continues to pursue educational reforms aligned with global inclusive frameworks, understanding teachers' readiness becomes vital in shaping effective capacity-building programs, curriculum design, and support mechanisms (Palacio & Cruz, 2020). The study offers evidence-based recommendations to guide DepEd and other stakeholders in developing targeted interventions to support secondary school teachers in fostering inclusive learning environments (Reyes et al., 2022). Ultimately, the research contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education as a transformative approach to building resilient, equitable, and just educational systems. By equipping teachers with the necessary competencies and understanding their readiness levels, educational institutions can make meaningful strides toward the realization of inclusive, learner-centered classrooms where no student is left behind (Cabansag et al., 2023; Ballesteros & Manlapaz, 2024).

2. Literature Review

Inclusive education has garnered global recognition as a transformative approach to fostering equity and participation in education systems. The foundation of inclusive education lies in recognizing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by minimizing barriers to learning and maximizing the engagement of every student (Ainscow, 2020; Florian & Spratt, 2021). Central to its successful implementation is the role of teachers, who are considered the frontline agents of inclusion (Sharma et al., 2022). Teacher readiness defined as the combination of knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogical skills has consistently been cited as a critical determinant in shaping inclusive classrooms (Forlin, 2020; Loreman, 2021). However, despite international advancements, countries like the Philippines continue to experience challenges in translating inclusive education policy into classroom practices, particularly in secondary school settings (Almazan & Reyes, 2021). Studies have highlighted that while teachers may support inclusive education in principle, many feel inadequately trained or lack the necessary resources and confidence to implement inclusive strategies effectively (Avramidis & Norwich, 2020; Ballesteros & Manlapaz, 2024).

In the Philippine context, research indicates that inclusive education policies such as the Department of Education's Inclusive Education Framework and the enactment of Republic Act 11650 have laid the

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groundwork for systemic inclusion (DepEd, 2022). However, gaps remain in teacher training, support structures, and the availability of inclusive instructional materials, especially at the secondary level where classroom diversity becomes more pronounced (Guinto, 2020; Palacio & Cruz, 2020). Teachers often report insufficient pre-service and in-service training on inclusive pedagogies, which affects their capacity to address the varied academic, emotional, and social needs of learners with disabilities and those from marginalized backgrounds (Reyes et al., 2022). Furthermore, school environments and leadership support have been found to play a critical role in enhancing teacher competencies and attitudes toward inclusive practices (Tadeo, 2022). Thus, there is a pressing need to deepen our understanding of how teachers in Philippine high schools perceive their readiness and what competencies they currently possess, in order to inform targeted professional development and policy support that will sustain the vision of truly inclusive education.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to assess the readiness and competencies of secondary public-school teachers in implementing inclusive education. The chosen design enabled the researcher to describe the current state of teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices regarding inclusive education, and to analyze the relationship between these variables and selected demographic factors without manipulating any conditions (Siedlecki, 2020). The research was conducted at Tisa National High School (Day and Night), a significant public secondary institution under the Department of Education – Cebu City Division. The respondents were teachers from both shifts, selected to provide a representative overview of the teaching population in the school. The primary data-gathering tool was a survey questionnaire adapted from Moosa et al. (2020), designed to measure teacher readiness across four key domains: knowledge, skills, attitude, and practices. The first section of the instrument gathered demographic information including age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, teaching experience, and training related to inclusive education. The second section consisted of Likert-type items evaluating the respondents' readiness across the specified domains, with ten indicators each for knowledge, skills, and attitude, and fifteen indicators for practices. The instrument's high reliability was supported by Moosa et al.'s findings, which reported Cronbach's alpha values of 0.918 for attitude and 0.940 for knowledge and skills. For data analysis, descriptive statistics were used to determine mean scores and levels of readiness, while Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was employed to examine the relationships between teacher readiness domains and demographic characteristics. Two scoring scales were used: one for knowledge, skills, and attitude, and another for practices, with clearly defined scoring ranges and verbal descriptors (e.g., "Very Competent," "Practiced") to interpret the data meaningfully. The results derived from this methodological approach provided a robust foundation for analyzing the readiness of teachers to implement inclusive education and for offering targeted recommendations to enhance inclusive teaching practices in Philippine secondary schools.

Table 1. Age of the Respondents.

Age (in years)	*f*	%
25 – 29	4	13.33
30 – 34	8	26.67
35 – 39	4	13.33
40 – 44	7	23.33
45 – 49	4	13.33
50 – 54	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

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4. Results and Discussions

The age distribution of the respondents in this study, as shown in Table 2, revealed a balanced representation across different age groups, with participants ranging from 25 to 54 years old. The largest cohort was aged 30-34 years, accounting for 26.67% of the sample, followed by those aged 40-44 years at 23.33%. This distribution suggested that the sample includes a mix of relatively young educators and those with considerable experience, which is essential for examining the impact of age on educational practices and attitudes toward inclusive education. The diverse age range provided a comprehensive view of how age may

influence readiness and adaptability in implementing inclusive education. The implications of these data for educational policy and practice were significant. Schools and educational institutions might consider tailoring professional development programs to address the specific needs of different age groups. The findings on the impact of age on educational practices and attitudes toward inclusive education were supported by several related studies. For instance, research had shown that teachers' attitudes and practices in inclusive settings vary with their experience and age, with more experienced teachers potentially requiring different support mechanisms to implement inclusive teaching practices effectively (Nilholm, 2020). Additionally, the transition from segregated to inclusive classroom settings had been a challenge for many educators, regardless of their age, as they struggle with fundamental pedagogy in these new environments (Somma & Bennett, 2020).

Table 2. Gender of the Respondents.

Gender	***f***	**%**
Female	26	86.67
Male	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

The gender distribution of the respondents in this study revealed an imbalance, with a predominance of female teachers, comprising 86.67% of the sample, compared to only 13.33% male teachers. This gender imbalance was reflective of a broader trend observed in the education sector, where female teachers often outnumber male teachers, especially in early childhood and elementary education settings. This predominance of female educators could influence various aspects of teaching and learning environments, including pedagogical approaches, classroom management, and student-teacher interactions. Understanding this gender distribution was crucial for interpreting the findings related to teacher readiness for inclusive education, as it may shaped the perspectives and attitudes towards inclusivity in the classroom. The predominance of female teachers in the sample suggested that gender dynamics could play a role in shaping educational practices and the implementation of inclusive education. This observation aligned with research indicating the feminization of the teaching profession, particularly in the Philippines, where teaching was often regarded as "women's work." Bongco and Ancho (2020) explored this dynamic and noted that, despite positive discrimination favoring male teachers in certain contexts, the profession remained largely feminized, with men often facing challenges such as limited opportunities and devaluation. These findings underscored the potential influence of gender on educational practices and the need to consider how female predominance may shaped the implementation of inclusive education.

Table 3. Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents.

Highest Educational Attainment	***f***	**%**
Bachelor's Degree	5	16.67
With Master's Degree Units	21	70.00
Master's Degree	3	10.00
With Doctorate Degree Units	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

The analysis of the respondents' educational attainment revealed that the majority of the teachers in the study have pursued advanced studies beyond their bachelor's degrees, with 70% having completed master's degree units and an additional 13.33% holding a master's degree or higher. This indicated a high level of academic qualification among the respondents, suggesting a commitment to professional development and a potential positive impact on their readiness to implement inclusive education practices. The prevalence of advanced educational attainment reflected a greater exposure to contemporary teaching methods and inclusive education principles during their studies, which could had enhanced their ability to address diverse learning needs in the classroom. This aligned with previous research by Geletu (2022) who found that teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies, developed through continuous professional learning, significantly enhance their ability to implement innovative teaching methods like cooperative learning. This approach led

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to higher student engagement and improved academic outcomes, particularly by accommodating diverse student backgrounds and promoting collaborative learning.

Table 4. Field of Specialization of the Respondents.

Field of Specialization	***f***	**%**
Core Academic Subjects	22	73.33
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	3	10.00
Arts and Physical Education	3	10.00
Professional Degree/Special Education	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

The distribution of the respondents' fields of specialization revealed that a significant majority of teachers (73.33%) are focused on core academic subjects, which included areas such as mathematics, science, and language arts. This dominance suggested that most of the respondents were primarily engaged in subjects that form the foundation of academic curricula. In contrast, only a small fraction of the respondents was specialized in Career and Technical Education (CTE), Arts and Physical Education, and Professional Degree/Special Education. This concentration in core academic subjects could had influenced the overall approach to inclusive education, as these teachers may had brought a more traditional academic perspective to their practices. The findings on the respondents' fields of specialization aligned with previous studies on teacher preparedness for inclusive education, which suggest that teachers specializing in core academic subjects may require additional support in adapting to the diverse needs of students. For instance, research by Geletu (2022) highlighted the importance of professional and pedagogical competencies in successfully implementing inclusive and cooperative learning strategies.

Table 5. Length of Service of the Respondents.

Length of Service (in years)	***f***	**%**
1 – 5	5	16.67
6 – 10	12	40.00
11 – 15	6	20.00
16 – above	7	23.33
Total	30	100.00

The distribution of respondents by length of service provided an overview in the understanding of the impact of experience on readiness for inclusive education. The majority of respondents fell into the 6-10 years of service category (40%), indicating a significant portion of educators were relatively experienced yet not among the longest-serving. This mid-range experience level suggested a balanced perspective between new and veteran teachers, potentially reflecting a blend of fresh ideas and established practices. The substantial proportion with 1-5 years (16.67%) indicated the presence of early-career educators who may bring innovative approaches but might lack extensive experience in managing inclusive practices. The implications of these findings were important for professional development and support strategies. Educators with varying lengths of service might require personalized professional development programs that address their specific needs and experiences. For instance, early-career teachers may benefit from mentorship and practical training on inclusive strategies, while more experienced educators might need advanced workshops focusing on evolving inclusive practices and leadership roles in education. Studies had shown that teachers' attitudes and preparedness for inclusive education are significantly influenced by their length of service and professional development. For instance, research indicates that teachers with more in-depth understanding of inclusive education, often gained through experience and training, report more positive attitudes and feel better prepared to implement inclusive practices (Krischler et al., 2019).

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Table 6. Number of Relevant Trainings Attended of the Respondents.

Number of Relevant Trainings Attended	*f*	%
0	11	36.67
1	8	26.67
2	3	10.00
3	3	10.00
4	3	10.00
5 or more	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

The analysis of the number of relevant trainings attended by the respondents revealed significant variations in their engagement with professional development opportunities related to inclusive education. According to the data, a substantial portion of the respondents, 36.67%, reported attending no relevant trainings, while 26.67% had attended only one. These numbers indicated that a number of educators may not be participating in or accessing ongoing professional development related to inclusive education. In contrast, fewer respondents attended multiple trainings, with only 6.67% having attended five or more. This distribution only suggested a potential gap in the engagement with and availability of professional development opportunities focused on inclusive practices. Studies had consistently shown that professional development is essential for enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs regarding inclusive education. For instance, a meta-analysis revealed that professional development opportunities have positive effects on teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs about inclusive education, as well as on students' behavior and academic outcomes (Donath et al., 2023). Moreover, collaborative professional development, in particular, had been found to be highly effective in enhancing teachers' skills and attitudes towards inclusive education. Research indicated that participation in collaborative professional development results in more positive attitudes towards inclusion and improved instructional practices (Holmqvist & Lelinge, 2020).

The data on respondents' readiness in knowledge for implementing inclusive education revealed a generally competent understanding among the participants, with an overall weighted mean of 2.60. This suggested that while respondents were reasonably knowledgeable about inclusive education, there were areas requiring further development. Specific competencies related to identifying students with special needs and creating an inclusive environment received higher ratings, indicating a solid foundation in these areas. However, competencies such as knowledge of assistive technologies, evidence-based instructional strategies, and legislative guidelines were rated as "somewhat competent," highlighting areas where additional support and training may be necessary.

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Table 7. Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education of the Respondents in terms of Knowledge Competency.

Indicators		$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Verbal Description
1	I understand the processes involved for an inclusive education	3.17	0.65	Competent
2	I have knowledge of identifying students with special educational needs	2.90	0.55	Competent
3	I have knowledge to create an inclusive learning environment	2.73	0.69	Competent
4	I have knowledge to sustain an inclusive learning environment	2.63	0.76	Competent
5	I have knowledge of assessing students with special educational needs	2.40	0.81	Somewhat Competent
6	I have knowledge how to teach students with special needs	2.37	0.89	Somewhat Competent
7	I understand the type of disabilities that students with special needs have (slow learner, autism, dyslexic, ADHD etc.)	2.63	0.89	Competent
8	I possess knowledge of relevant legislation, policies, and guidelines pertaining to inclusive education, allowing me to ensure compliance and advocate for the rights of students with special needs.	2.47	0.86	Somewhat Competent
9	I am knowledgeable about assistive technologies and accommodations available to support students with disabilities in accessing the curriculum and participating fully in classroom activities.	2.33	0.84	Somewhat Competent
10	I am familiar with evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions designed to support students with diverse learning needs, enabling me to provide effective instruction that addresses individual student requirements.	2.40	0.86	Somewhat Competent
Overall Weighted Mean		2.60		Competent
Overall Standard Deviation			0.82	

Implications of these findings pointed to the necessity of personalized professional development programs that focus on enhancing teachers' competencies in areas identified as needing improvement. Addressing the specific needs related to assistive technologies, legislative knowledge, and evidence-based strategies could help ensure that teachers were better equipped to support diverse learners. This targeted approach could lead to more effective implementation of inclusive education practices, ultimately benefiting students with special needs. The need for targeted professional development to enhance teachers' competencies in inclusive education is well-supported by recent studies. For instance, research by Nimante and Kokare (2020) emphasized the importance of competencies such as screening and assessment, differentiation of instruction, classroom and behavior management, and collaboration for effective inclusive education. These findings aligned with the identified areas of improvement in the current study, particularly the need for better knowledge of assistive technologies, legislative guidelines, and evidence-based instructional strategies.

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Table 8. Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education of the Respondents in terms of Skills Competency.

	Indicators	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Verbal Description
11	I am able to teach students with special needs.	2.40	0.97	Somewhat Competent
12	I am able to discuss with parents regarding the emotional need of their children with special needs	2.57	0.86	Competent
13	I am able to provide information on inclusive education for parents of students with special needs	2.43	0.86	Somewhat Competent
14	I am able to provide educational support for students with special needs	2.33	0.88	Somewhat Competent
15	I am able to manage students with special needs	2.43	0.86	Somewhat Competent
16	I am able to foster positive relationships between mainstream students and students with special needs to accommodate inclusive education	2.70	0.84	Competent
17	I have developed effective communication and collaboration skills, allowing me to work collaboratively with other educators, support staff, and specialists to meet the needs of students with disabilities.	2.50	0.86	Competent
18	I am adept at individualizing instruction and adapting curriculum materials to meet the specific needs and abilities of students with diverse leaming profiles.	2.47	0.82	Somewhat Competent
19	I possess strong organizational and time management skills, enabling me to effectively plan and implement differentiated instruction and support strategies to meet the needs of students with special needs.	2.37	0.76	Somewhat Competent
20	I am proficient in using various teaching modalities and instructional approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences among students with special needs.	2.37	0.81	Somewhat Competent
Overall Weighted Mean		*2.46*		Somewhat Competent
Overall Standard Deviation			*0.85*	

The assessment of respondents' skills related to inclusive education, as outlined in the table, revealed a mixed level of readiness. Respondents generally rated themselves as "Somewhat Competent" in several critical areas, such as teaching students with special needs, providing educational support, and managing diverse classrooms. However, they rated themselves as "Competent" in areas like discussing emotional needs with parents and fostering positive relationships between mainstream and special needs students. The overall weighted mean of 2.46, indicating "Somewhat Competent," suggested that while respondents possess some necessary skills for inclusive education, there were notable areas requiring further development. The findings indicated that while respondents had foundational skills in inclusive education, there were significant gaps in their ability to fully address the diverse needs of students with special needs. For instance, lower competency ratings in managing students with special needs and adapting instructional strategies highlighted potential weaknesses in practical application. This disparity might impact their effectiveness in creating inclusive learning environments, as effective management and tailored instruction were critical for supporting diverse learners. The findings aligned with recent studies that valued the importance of comprehensive training and support for teachers to effectively implement inclusive education. For instance, research by Pershina and others (2018) (as cited in Mandabon et al., 2023) emphasized that teachers' readiness for inclusive education involves both professional and psychological readiness, including knowledge of special pedagogy, correctional psychology, and the ability to adapt instructional strategies. The study revealed that while teachers may have a high level of readiness in certain aspects, such as evaluating and monitoring learners' progress, there were still significant gaps in other areas, such as curriculum adaptation and managing students with special needs. These findings suggested that teachers possessed some necessary skills for inclusive education. However, there was a clear need for additional training and support to address gaps in their practical abilities, particularly in managing and adapting instruction for students with diverse learning needs.

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Table 9. Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education of the Respondents in terms of Attitude Competency.

	Indicators	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Verbal Description
21	I understand the meaning of inclusive education	3.30	0.70	Very Competent
22	I care for the well-being of students with special needs	3.40	0.50	Very Competent
23	I understand the purpose for an inclusive education	3.37	0.61	Very Competent
24	I care for the progressive learning of students with special needs	3.43	0.50	Very Competent
25	I care for the achievements of students with special needs	3.50	0.51	Very Competent
26	I believe students with special needs can achieve their best with support	3.53	0.51	Very Competent
27	Teaching students with special needs requires more teaching aids	3.63	0.49	Very Competent
28	I need to work together with special education teachers if I have students with special needs in my class	3.53	0.51	Very Competent
29	Despite of the disabilities faced by students with special needs, they also have their own abilities	3.63	0.49	Very Competent
30	I need extra effort to teach students with special needs	3.73	0.45	Very Competent
Overall Weighted Mean		*3.51*		Very Competent
Overall Standard Deviation			*0.54*	

The respondents' attitudes towards inclusive education reflected a high level of competence, as evidenced by their strong agreement with statements about understanding and valuing inclusive practices. The overall mean of 3.51, categorized as "Very Competent," suggested that respondents possessed a robust positive attitude towards inclusive education. They showed clear understanding and empathy, as reflected in their high ratings for statements like "I care for the well-being of students with special needs" and "I believe students with special needs can achieve their best with support." This positive disposition indicated a foundational readiness in the implementation of inclusive practices effectively in their classroom. The interpretation of these findings pointed that the respondents were genuinely supportive and willing to invest the extra effort required in implementing inclusive education. Their strong belief in the potential of students with special needs and their recognition of the necessity for additional teaching aids and collaboration with special education teachers accentuated a commitment to creating a supportive learning environment. This aligned with recent studies that emphasized the crucial role of teacher attitudes and efficacy in the successful implementation of inclusive education. For instance, a study by Arboiz and Aoanan (2024) found that both teacher efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusive education significantly influence teachers' readiness to implement inclusive practices. The study revealed that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy and more experience working with students with disabilities had greater readiness for inclusive education (Arboiz & Aoanan, 2024).

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Table 10. Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education of the Respondents in terms of Practices.

Indicators		$\bar{x}$	sd	Verbal Description
31	I have received adequate training and professional development related to inclusive education practices.	2.35	0.47	Fairly Practiced
32	I have a good understanding of various special needs, including physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral, and how to address them in the classroom.	2.40	0.50	Fairly Practiced
33	The necessary resources, such as assistive technology, adaptive materials, and specialized learning tools, are readily available and accessible to support inclusive practices.	2.15	0.52	Fairly Practiced
34	I regularly collaborate with special education professionals, administrators, and other stakeholders to develop inclusive lesson plans and instructional strategies.	2.10	0.63	Fairly Practiced
35	I use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities or other special needs.	2.82	0.45	Practiced
36	I am familiar with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and incorporate them into my lesson planning and classroom instruction.	2.12	0.49	Fairly Practiced
37	I effectively adapt curriculum materials and teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and needs.	3.05	0.71	Practiced
38	My classroom environment is inclusive, with physical accessibility, appropriate seating arrangements, and a promotion of diversity and acceptance among students.	2.20	0.61	Fairly Practiced
39	I use positive reinforcement, proactive interventions, and de-escalation techniques to manage behavior in my inclusive classroom.	2.60	0.50	Practiced
40	I understand Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and can implement the accommodations and modifications outlined in students' plans.	2.10	0.61	Fairly Practiced
41	I maintain active involvement and communication with parents and the broader community to support inclusive education practices and student success.	2.85	0.50	Practiced
42	I am culturally competent and able to create a classroom environment that respects and values students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.	2.95	0.49	Practiced
43	I use alternative assessment methods and accommodations to evaluate student progress in my inclusive classroom.	3.10	0.49	Practiced
44	I feel confident in my ability to effectively teach and support students with diverse learning needs in inclusive settings.	2.88	0.51	Practiced
45	I regularly engage in reflective practice, continuously evaluating and adapting my instructional strategies and classroom management techniques to meet the needs of all students.	2.90	0.55	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean		*2.57*		Practiced
Overall Standard Deviation			*0.54*	

The evaluation of respondents' readiness regarding the practical implementation of inclusive education practices revealed a mixed level of competence. The overall mean score of 2.57 indicated that the respondents' practices were generally categorized as "Practiced," yet several areas still reflected a status of "Fairly Practiced." Notably, aspects such as the availability of resources, collaboration with special education professionals, and understanding of various special needs scored lower, suggesting that while educators were implementing some inclusive practices, there was still room for improvement in their application and effectiveness. The relatively higher scores in differentiated instruction and the use of alternative assessment

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methods implied that educators were somewhat adept at adapting their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning needs. This finding showed a discrepancy between educators' theoretical understanding and their practical application of inclusive education principles. While respondents demonstrated a strong grasp of inclusive education's goals and principles, as evidenced by their high scores in attitude-related competencies, their actual practice in the classroom was less consistent. This gap may be attributed to a lack of adequate training, limited resources, and insufficient collaboration with specialists, all of which were crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive practices. This discrepancy was supported by recent studies that revealed similar challenges. For instance, a study in South Africa presented that educators lack adequate knowledge to implement inclusive education successfully, and teaching an inclusive class was demanding due to insufficient planning, organization, and curriculum delivery (Legodi-Rakgalakane & Mokhampanyane, 2022). These findings collectively emphasized the importance of continuous professional development and the need for improved resource availability. Based on the findings, stronger collaboration with specialists is also crucial to bridge the gap between the theoretical understanding and practical application of inclusive education principles.

The findings highlighted those other demographic factors, such as age, gender, field of specialization, and length of service, have very weak or no significant correlation with knowledge competency. This meant that these variables did not substantially impact educators' knowledge about inclusive education, which may imply that factors beyond demographic characteristics played a more critical role in shaping knowledge competency. For instance, professional development and ongoing training appeared to be more influential in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and understanding to effectively implement inclusive education practices. Educational attainment and relevant training showed a moderate positive correlation with readiness in inclusive education knowledge competency, highlighting the importance of professional development and ongoing training.

Table 11. Test of Significant Relationship between the Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency According to Demographic Profile.

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Age Profile	0.155	Very Weak Positive	0.415	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Gender Profile	0.046	Very Weak Positive	0.809	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	0.476	Moderate Positive	0.008*	Reject Ho	Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.146	Very Weak Positive	0.443	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Length of Service Profile	0.120	Very Weak Positive	0.527	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.539	Moderate Positive	0.002*	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$(two – tailed).

This was supported by recent studies that emphasized the need for continuous training and professional support. For instance, Moon (2023) recommended incorporating recent evidence-based training methods to improve teacher readiness and student academic outcomes in inclusive education settings (Moon, 2023). Similarly, studies by other researchers revealed the significance of in-service training and additional special education support in enhancing teachers' readiness for inclusive special education (Mandabon, 2023; Gonzaga et al., 2023). The readiness of teachers to implement inclusive education was more strongly influenced by

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factors such as educational attainment and relevant training rather than demographic characteristics like age, gender, and length of service. This meant the need for professional development and systemic support to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to handle the diverse needs of students in inclusive education settings. with teachers' skills competency, whereas other demographic factors such as age, gender, field of specialization, and length of service exhibited minimal or no significant impact. Specifically, the moderate positive correlations with educational attainment and relevant training indicated that teachers with higher educational qualifications and more specialized training are better equipped with the skills necessary for implementing inclusive education practices. These findings gave emphasis on the importance of continuing professional development and advanced education in enhancing teachers' practical skills in inclusive settings. The interpretation of these results suggested that while educational background and specific training played crucial roles in shaping teachers' skills for inclusive education, other demographic factors like age and gender did not significantly influence competency levels.

Table 12. Test of Significant Relationship between the Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education in Skills Competency According to Demographic Profile.

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Age Profile	0.130	Very Weak Positive	0.492	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Gender Profile	-0.043	Very Weak Negative	0.821	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	0.475	Moderate Positive	0.008*	Reject Ho	Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.168	Very Weak Positive	0.376	Do Not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Length of Service Profile	0.173	Very Weak Positive	0.362	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.492	Moderate Positive	0.006*	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$(two – tailed).

According to results, educational attainment and relevant training showed significant correlations The lack of significant correlations in these areas implied that improvements in skills competency were more strongly associated with formal qualifications and relevant trainings rather than personal characteristics or tenure. This signified the effectiveness of structured professional development programs and advanced academic qualifications in equipping educators with the necessary skills to support diverse learners. The effectiveness of structured professional development programs and advanced academic qualifications in enhancing teachers' competency levels is well-supported by recent studies. For instance, a study on the automated monitoring system for teachers' professional development in the Republic of Bashkortostan highlighted that the evaluation of professional competencies of 3,375 teachers showed significant improvements associated with the support interventions based on the automated system, underscoring the importance of structured development programs (Mustaev et al., 2023). In Malaysia, research on the cascade training model for continuous professional development (CPD) among secondary school English teachers revealed mixed but generally positive experiences, emphasizing the role of high-quality training programs, trainer expertise, and follow-up support in enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills (Leong & Rethinasamy, 2023). Additionally, a study in Nepal found that non-financial motivational tools and training programs had a significant impact on classroom delivery, classroom management, and the overall professionalism of teachers, further reinforcing the effectiveness of structured professional development initiatives (Lamichhane et al.,

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2024). These findings collectively indicated that formal qualifications and structured professional development programs were crucial in equipping educators.

Table 13. Test of Significant Relationship between the Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency According to Demographic Profile.

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Age Profile	-0.056	Very Weak Negative	0.769	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Gender Profile	-0.358	Weak Negative	0.052	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	0.106	Very Weak Positive	0.577	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.205	Weak Positive	0.277	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Length of Service Profile	-0.161	Very Weak Negative	0.395	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.314	Weak Positive	0.091	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$(two – tailed).

The lack of significant relationships between attitude competency and demographic factors suggested that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education were relatively stable regardless of these variables. This finding implied that factors such as age, gender, and educational background might not significantly alter teachers' inherent attitudes towards inclusive education. Despite the weak or non-significant correlations, the presence of a weak positive correlation with relevant training indicated that while not strongly significant, there was a trend suggesting that training may contribute to more positive attitudes. This finding was supported by several recent studies. For instance, a study on primary school teachers found no statistically significant differences in attitudes towards inclusive education based on gender, age, and length of service (Radojlovic et al., 2022). Another cross-national study involving teachers from five countries (Greece, the UK, the USA, Malaysia, and Turkey) also indicated that while there were differences in attitudes based on educational work level and experience with special education needs, demographic variables like age and gender did not significantly impact attitudes towards inclusive education (Charitaki et al., 2022). Additionally, a study focusing on the attitudes of French teachers towards inclusive education highlighted that while teachers' attitudes can vary depending on the type of disability, demographic factors such as age and gender were not significant predictors of these attitudes (Jury et al., 2021). The stability of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across various demographic profiles suggested that other factors, such as relevant training and experience with special education, may had played a more crucial role in shaping these attitudes.

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Table 14. Test of Significant Relationship between the Level of Readiness Towards Implementation of Inclusive Education in Practices According to Demographic Profile.

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Age Profile	0.186	Very Weak Positive	0.326	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Gender Profile	0.039	Very Weak Positive	0.836	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	0.281	Weak Positive	0.132	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.067	Very Weak Positive	0.725	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Length of Service Profile	0.151	Very Weak Negative	0.426	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Readiness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.728	Strong Positive	0.000*	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: *significant at $p < 0.05$(two – tailed).

The analysis of the relationship between demographic characteristics and inclusive education practices revealed that while most demographic factors showed weak or no significant correlations with teachers' practices, relevant training stood out with a strong positive correlation. The statistical indicated that factors such as age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, and length of service did not significantly impact the implementation of inclusive education practices in the context of this study. The only exception was the variable of relevant training, which demonstrated a strong positive relationship, suggesting that teachers with more training in inclusive education were more effective in applying these practices. The interpretation of these findings suggested that demographic factors alone may not be significant predictors of how teachers implement inclusive education. Instead, the results emphasized the critical role of relevant professional development. Teachers who received specialized training in inclusive education were better equipped to apply inclusive practices effectively, regardless of their age, gender, or other demographic characteristics. This stressed the importance of ongoing, professional development as a key factor in enhancing the practical implementation of inclusive education. The implications of these findings are clear: educational institutions should prioritize and invest in relevant training programs for teachers to improve the quality of inclusive education practices. While demographic factors may influence various aspects of teaching, the data suggested that trainings are more significant determinant of effective implementation. Institutions should focus on creating and providing continuous professional development opportunities specialized to inclusive education to ensure that teachers were well-prepared to meet diverse classroom needs. The findings that demographic factors such as age, gender, educational attainment, and length of service did not significantly impact the implementation of inclusive education practices, while relevant training did, were supported by several recent studies. For instance, a study in Indonesia found that teacher efficacy in inclusive practice is significantly influenced by training experience, with teachers who received adequate training showing higher efficacy (Wirmayani & Kurniawati, 2021). In another study, it was observed that teachers' willingness to include children with special needs was more strongly predicted by their job satisfaction and years of teaching experience, but the critical role of relevant training in inclusive education was also highlighted (Nwosu et al., 2021). Additionally, research in the Harari region of Ethiopia indicated that teachers with training on inclusive or special needs education use more specialized teaching strategies, underscoring the importance of professional development in enhancing inclusive education practices (Negassa & Dea, 2019). These studies collectively emphasized that while demographic characteristics may have some

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influence, relevant training and professional development were the key determinants of effective inclusive education implementation.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that demographic factors, such as age, gender, and field of specialization, had minimal impact on teachers' readiness for inclusive education. This finding challenged common assumptions that personal background might directly influence teaching competencies in inclusive education and instead underscored that training and educational attainment played more decisive roles. Specifically, teachers with higher educational qualifications and training in inclusive practices were better prepared to implement inclusive education. This insight reinforced the importance of robust, ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and practical strategies to meet diverse classroom needs effectively. A critical insight from the findings was the observed gap between teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusive education and their ability to translate these attitudes into practical classroom implementation. Although many educators expressed favorable views, putting these into practice proved challenging, highlighting a need for hands-on, applied training. Schools could address this gap by prioritizing practical, scenario-based training that fostered real-life problem-solving skills and adaptive strategies for inclusive education. These results suggested practical implications beyond individual schools, influencing policy at both local and national levels. The findings indicated that training programs should be designed with a focus on experiential learning, and educational policy should emphasize accessible professional development pathways for all teachers. Ultimately, the study reinforced the urgency of equipping educators with practical tools for inclusive education, ensuring that positive attitudes were matched by effective, inclusive classroom practices.

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