
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cultivating Inclusive Teaching: A Study of Philippine Secondary School Educators' Preparedness

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| ABSTRACT

This study examined the preparedness of teachers at Cebu City National Science High School for implementing inclusive education, aiming to assess their attitudes, knowledge, and skills in this area. The research sought to identify gaps in teachers' preparedness in implementing inclusive education and to explore how demographic factors influenced this preparedness. Key research questions addressed the overall level of teacher preparedness and any significant relationships between demographic variables and teachers' preparedness. Hypotheses were formulated to test these relationships. A descriptive-correlational quantitative research design was employed, involving a sample of 30 secondary public-school teachers from Cebu City National Science High School. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire that assessed teachers' profiles, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and practices related to inclusive education. Statistical methods, including frequency counts, percentage distributions, weighted means, and Pearson's *r*, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that while teachers generally displayed a positive attitude towards inclusive education, there were gaps in their knowledge, skills and practices. Significant relationships were found between teachers' preparedness and demographic factors such as age, years of service, and previous training. These relationships indicated varying levels of preparedness across different demographic groups. The results underscored the need for targeted professional development interventions to enhance teachers' preparedness for inclusive education. The study recommended implementing the Action Plan for Improving Competencies in Inclusive Education among Philippine Secondary Public-School Teachers, the output of this study, to provide structured, ongoing support and enhance teacher effectiveness in inclusive education.

| KEYWORDS

Inclusive Education, Teacher Preparedness, Professional Development, Secondary Education.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a critical paradigm in contemporary educational discourse, advocating for the right of all learners regardless of ability, background, or circumstance to access quality and equitable education. Globally, inclusive education is grounded in principles of social justice and human rights, emphasizing the need to accommodate diversity within classrooms rather than segregate learners with special needs. In the Philippines, the passage of Republic Act No. 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022 underscores the country's commitment to fostering learning environments that welcome and support every child (Reyes & Manaog, 2023). As such, teachers occupy a central role in operationalizing inclusive practices, necessitating a deeper understanding of their preparedness and capacity to meet this mandate effectively.

Several studies have pointed to the importance of teacher competencies, attitudes, and practices in ensuring the success of inclusive education. For instance, recent evidence shows that teachers' professional development, training exposure, and self-

efficacy significantly influence their readiness to adopt inclusive strategies (Sharma et al., 2019). Competency frameworks often highlight knowledge of differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and effective collaboration with families and specialists as core elements of preparedness (Florian & Spratt, 2021). However, in many contexts, including the Philippines, gaps remain in teachers' confidence and practical skills in delivering inclusive lessons, particularly in secondary school settings (Tan, 2020).

The research environment of Cebu City National Science High School presents a particularly compelling case for examining inclusive education. As a premier secondary school with a focus on science and technology, it caters to a diverse student population that includes learners with varied academic, social, and emotional needs. Previous Philippine studies have indicated that science teachers often perceive additional challenges in modifying content-heavy curricula for inclusivity (Escaño et al., 2019). Given this context, it is critical to understand the demographic profile of educators and how factors such as age, specialization, and training history shape their level of preparedness for inclusive practices.

In particular, teacher preparedness can be conceptualized along two dimensions: competencies referring to the knowledge and skills necessary for inclusive teaching and practices referring to the actual classroom strategies implemented to support diverse learners (Loreman, 2021). While research shows that professional training increases preparedness, the extent to which demographic characteristics predict competence and practice remains underexplored in the Philippine setting (Cagas et al., 2023). This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between educators' demographic variables and their preparedness for inclusive education at Cebu City National Science High School.

The significance of this thesis extended beyond academic inquiry, bearing practical implications for educational policy and practice. Inclusive education is a priority area for educational reform globally, including in the Philippines, where efforts are underway to promote inclusive practices within the public-school system. By assessing teacher preparedness towards inclusive education, this thesis had the potential to inform policy development and decision-making processes within the Department of Education – Cebu City Division. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence to inform policies and capacity-building programs that strengthen inclusive teaching in Philippine secondary schools. By mapping out the educators' profiles, competencies, and practices, as well as their interrelationships, the findings can guide administrators and policymakers in designing targeted interventions to cultivate a more inclusive school culture.

2. Review of Related Literature

Inclusive education is widely recognized as a transformative approach that promotes equity and participation among all learners, including those with disabilities, diverse cultural backgrounds, and varying abilities. In the Philippine context, the implementation of inclusive education has been shaped by both international commitments, such as the Salamanca Statement, and national legislation, such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act and Republic Act No. 11650 (Reyes & Manaog, 2023). Despite these policy frameworks, research has consistently shown that teachers' preparedness remains uneven across regions and school types. For example, Tan (2020) found that Filipino teachers generally express positive attitudes toward inclusive education but report low confidence in their ability to adapt instruction for diverse learners (Tan, 2020). This gap between policy intentions and classroom realities highlights the need for systematic professional development and capacity-building programs.

Several factors have been identified as critical in shaping teachers' readiness for inclusion, including professional training, teaching experience, and personal beliefs about disability and diversity. Sharma et al. (2019) emphasized that sustained training programs significantly improve teachers' knowledge of inclusive strategies, which in turn enhances their self-efficacy and willingness to innovate instructional practices (Sharma et al., 2019). Similarly, Cagas et al. (2023) reported that Filipino educators who have attended more inclusive education workshops demonstrate higher levels of competence and more frequent use of inclusive practices in their classrooms (Cagas et al., 2023). However, barriers such as limited resources, large class sizes, and inadequate administrative support often constrain the translation of competencies into practice (Escaño et al., 2019). These findings underscore the importance of contextualized professional development and sustained policy support to enable secondary school teachers, such as those at Cebu City National Science High School, to cultivate inclusive learning environments effectively.

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to assess the preparedness of secondary public-school teachers at Cebu City National Science High School for implementing inclusive education. A validated survey questionnaire adapted from Moosa et al. (2020), with established reliability coefficients (0.918–0.940), was used to gather data on teachers' demographic profiles including age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, length of service, and number of trainings attended and their levels of preparedness across knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices domains. Thirty teachers were randomly selected as participants, and data collection followed a three-stage procedure: obtaining formal

permissions, administering the instrument with clear instructions and assurances of confidentiality, and compiling the completed responses. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and Pearson's r to describe variables and determine the significance of relationships between demographics and preparedness levels. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Age of the Respondents

Age (in years)	f	%
25 – 29	8	26.67
30 – 34	6	20.00
35 – 39	8	26.67
40 – 44	5	16.67
45 – 49	1	3.33
50 – 54	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

The age distribution of the respondents, as detailed in Table 1, showed that the majority of the teachers fell within the younger age brackets of 25-29 and 35-39 years, each representing 26.67% of the population. This was followed by those aged 30-34 years at 20%, with a smaller representation from older age groups: 16.67% were aged 40-44, 3.33% were aged 45-49, and 6.67% were aged 50-54. The presence of a younger teacher demographic suggested a dynamic workforce potentially more open to innovative teaching methods and adaptable to new educational reforms.

Interpreting these findings, it was evident that the teacher population was relatively young, with a substantial portion under 40 years of age. This implied a potential for longer-term investment in professional development, as younger teachers had more years ahead in their careers to implement and benefit from inclusive education practices. Additionally, younger teachers were likely more technologically adept, a factor beneficial in modern inclusive education strategies that often involved digital tools and resources.

The implications of these findings were significant for planning professional development and support systems. Given the age distribution, educational leaders could focus on tailored training programs that leveraged the strengths and addressed the needs of different age groups. Younger teachers could benefit from mentorship and guidance from their more experienced colleagues, while older teachers might need more support in adapting to newer inclusive practices and technologies. This balanced approach could enhance the overall preparedness and effectiveness of implementing inclusive education.

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	20	66.67
Male	10	33.33
Total	30	100.00

The gender distribution of the respondents, as shown in Table 2, indicated that a significant majority (66.67%) were female, while the remaining 33.33% were male. This disparity in gender representation reflected broader trends in the teaching profession, where females often constituted a larger proportion of the workforce. Such a demographic composition influenced the dynamics and culture within educational settings, potentially affecting the implementation of inclusive education practices.

The interpretation of these findings suggested that female teachers were more prevalent in this sample, aligning with existing literature highlighting the predominance of women in the teaching profession, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels. This gender imbalance had implications for the types of support and professional development programs that were

required. For instance, female teachers might have brought different perspectives and approaches to inclusive education compared to their male counterparts, potentially influencing the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

The implications of this gender distribution were significant for policymakers and educational leaders. Addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by female teachers, such as balancing work and family responsibilities, professional development opportunities, and career advancement, could enhance their preparedness and effectiveness in implementing inclusive education. Additionally, encouraging greater gender diversity within the teaching workforce could have provided a more balanced and holistic approach to education, benefiting all students.

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 emphasized 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	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor’s Degree	8	26.67
With Master’s Degree Units	13	43.33
Master’s Degree	6	20.00
With Doctorate Degree Units	1	3.33
With Doctorate Degree	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

Analyzing the educational attainment of the respondents suggested a strong foundation for implementing inclusive education practices. The predominance of respondents with Master’s Degree units and higher qualifications indicated a potentially high level of expertise and a commitment to professional development. This could have positively influenced their preparedness and ability to adopt inclusive education strategies. However, the relatively small percentage of respondents with Doctorate Degrees suggested that while many educators were well-qualified, fewer had reached the highest levels of academic achievement.

The implications of these findings were significant for policy and practice. The presence of a majority with advanced degrees suggested that the respondents were likely to have had a robust theoretical understanding and practical knowledge relevant to inclusive education. However, the small proportion of educators with doctoral qualifications pointed to a need for further professional development opportunities, particularly in advanced research and practice areas. Ensuring that all educators had access to ongoing professional learning could have helped bridge any gaps and enhanced the overall effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives.

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 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	<i>f</i>	%
Core Academic Subjects	27	90.00
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	2	6.67
Arts and Physical Education	0	0.00
Professional Degree/Special Education	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

The heavy emphasis on core academic subjects among the respondents indicated a strong alignment with traditional educational domains, which may have influenced their approach to implementing inclusive education practices. Teachers

specializing in core subjects might have had distinct perspectives and challenges compared to those in more specialized fields such as career and technical education or special education. For instance, teachers in core subjects may have faced different requirements and constraints in adapting their practices to accommodate diverse learning needs compared to those in specialized areas.

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.

Another study also stated that teachers in special education and those with professional degrees in this field are more likely to have positive attitudes toward inclusive practices and are better equipped to implement adaptive instruction and cooperative teaching, which can positively impact both students with and without disabilities (Kart & Kart, 2021). The limited representation of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Arts and Physical Education in the sample meant the need for a more diverse range of specializations to ensure a comprehensive approach to inclusive education, as these areas can also contribute significantly to the social and academic development of students.

The implications of this distribution were significant for developing targeted professional development programs. The predominance of core academic subject teachers highlighted the need to address the specific challenges and opportunities related to inclusive education within these areas. However, it also pointed to a potential gap in resources and training for teachers in other specializations, which could be addressed through tailored professional development initiatives.

Table 5. Length of Service of the Respondents

Length of Service (in years)	<i>f</i>	%
1 – 5	8	26.67
6 – 10	11	36.67
11 – 15	9	30.00
16 – above	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

The analysis of the length of service among the respondents revealed a diverse range of teaching experiences, with the majority of teachers falling within the 6 to 15 years of service bracket. Specifically, 36.67% of respondents had 6 to 10 years of experience, and 30% had 11 to 15 years. This distribution indicated a well-established group of educators with substantial experience in the field, while only a small proportion had been teaching for over 16 years (6.67%) or fewer than 5 years (26.67%).

The interpretation of these findings suggested that most respondents possessed a moderate to high level of teaching experience. This could have been beneficial in implementing inclusive education practices as experienced teachers may have developed robust pedagogical skills and adaptability. However, the lower representation of teachers with over 16 years of experience might have suggested a potential gap in long-term experiential insights, which could have influenced the depth of their understanding of evolving educational practices and policies.

Implications of this distribution highlighted the need for targeted professional development. Teachers with fewer years of experience might have benefited from additional training to enhance their preparedness for inclusive education, while more experienced educators could have been engaged in mentoring roles or advanced professional development programs. This balanced approach ensured that both newer and seasoned educators were equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support inclusive practices effectively.

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 indicated 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).

Table 6. Number of Relevant Trainings Attended of the Respondents

Number of Relevant Trainings Attended	f	%
0	6	20.00
1	10	33.33
2	7	23.33
3	5	16.67
5 or more	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

Table 6 presented a breakdown of the number of relevant trainings attended by the respondents, indicating their engagement with professional development related to inclusive education. The data revealed a varied distribution among respondents, with the majority having attended between one to two trainings, while a small proportion had attended three or more. Notably, 20% of respondents reported no attendance at relevant trainings, which highlighted a significant gap in professional development.

The analysis indicated that the highest proportion of respondents (33.33%) attended only one training, while 23.33% attended two trainings. This suggested that while a substantial portion of the respondents had engaged in some level of professional development, many had limited exposure to inclusive education training. The smaller percentages of respondents attending three or more trainings (16.67% and 6.67%) further underscored that advanced or frequent training was less common among the surveyed teachers.

The limited number of trainings attended by many respondents may impact their effectiveness and confidence in implementing inclusive education practices. As training is crucial for equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge, the relatively low attendance in multiple training sessions could hinder their preparedness and ability to address diverse classroom needs effectively.

Research supports the significance of continuous professional development for enhancing teaching practices, particularly in inclusive education settings. For example, a study by Donath et al. (2023) highlighted professional development opportunities have positive effects on teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs about inclusive education, as well as on students' behavior and academic outcomes. 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). However, the findings in Table 6 suggested that there may be a need for more comprehensive and frequent professional development opportunities to ensure that all teachers were adequately prepared for inclusive education.

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

	Indicators	\bar{x}	sd	Verbal Description
1	I understand the processes involved for an inclusive education	3.03	0.49	Competent
2	I have knowledge of identifying students with special educational needs	2.73	0.58	Competent
3	I have knowledge to create an inclusive learning environment	2.73	0.64	Competent
4	I have knowledge to sustain an inclusive learning environment	2.60	0.62	Competent
5	I have knowledge of assessing students with special educational needs	2.43	0.63	Somewhat Competent
6	I have knowledge how to teach students with special needs	2.50	0.63	Competent
7	I understand the type of disabilities that students with special needs have (slow learner, autism, dyslexic, ADHD etc.)	2.67	0.71	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.	2.57	0.57	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.	2.40	0.72	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.	2.53	0.68	Competent
	<i>Overall Weighted Mean</i>	2.62		
	<i>Overall Standard Deviation</i>		0.65	Competent

The overall weighted mean of 2.62, with a standard deviation of 0.65, suggested that while respondents felt competent overall, there was variability in their confidence and knowledge across different aspects of inclusive education. This variability highlighted both strengths and gaps in their preparation for implementing inclusive practices. For instance, the lower ratings in areas like assessing students with special needs and familiarity with assistive technologies suggested that these areas might have required targeted professional development to enhance teachers' capabilities.

These findings aligned with studies that emphasize the need for ongoing training and support for educators to effectively implement inclusive education. For example, 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. Similarly, the study by Berger et al. (2018) supported the notion that teachers' self-perceived competencies often require validation through practical experience and targeted interventions.

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

	Indicators	\bar{x}	sd	Verbal Description
11	I am able to teach students with special needs.	2.50	0.68	Competent
12	I am able to discuss with parents regarding the emotional need of their children with special needs	2.43	0.73	Somewhat Competent
13	I am able to provide information on inclusive education for parents of students with special needs	2.47	0.68	Somewhat Competent
14	I am able to provide educational support for students with special needs	2.47	0.63	Somewhat Competent
15	I am able to manage students with special needs	2.40	0.72	Somewhat Competent
16	I am able to foster positive relationships between mainstream students and students with special needs to accommodate inclusive education	2.83	0.53	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.	2.67	0.71	Competent
18	I am adept at individualizing instruction and adapting curriculum materials to meet the specific needs and abilities of students with diverse learning profiles.	2.53	0.63	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.	2.57	0.73	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.	2.50	0.78	Competent
Overall Weighted Mean		2.54		
Overall Standard Deviation			0.69	Competent

The analysis of respondents' skills competency in implementing inclusive education, as detailed in Table 8, revealed a generally positive but varied level of proficiency. Respondents rated their skills in various aspects of inclusive education with an overall mean score of 2.54, indicating a "Competent" level. This reflected a strong foundation in the necessary skills, though there were notable variations in specific areas.

Respondents reported being most competent in fostering positive relationships between mainstream students and students with special needs (mean = 2.83) and in developing effective communication and collaboration skills (mean = 2.67). These areas were critical for creating an inclusive classroom environment and suggested that educators had a good grasp of essential interpersonal skills required for inclusive education. Conversely, respondents felt somewhat less competent in skills such as managing students with special needs (mean = 2.40) and providing educational support (mean = 2.47). This indicated a gap in practical skills necessary for daily classroom management and support.

The findings highlighted a need for targeted professional development programs to address specific gaps in skills. While respondents generally felt competent, the lower scores in managing and supporting students with special needs suggested areas where further training could enhance effectiveness. Professional development programs should have focused on practical strategies for managing diverse classrooms and providing tailored support for students with special needs. This would have helped educators better address the day-to-day challenges they faced in implementing inclusive education.

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 et al. (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. Similarly, a study in Ghana's Adansi North District found that regular education teachers, although ready to modify instructional practices, faced challenges in ensuring effective socialization and adapting instructional strategies for learners with special needs (Adu Gyamfi & Yeboah, 2022). Another study highlighted the cognitive component of teachers' readiness, stressing the need for

a systematic vision and the integration of knowledge from various scientific fields to create an inclusive educational environment (Karynbaeva et al., 2022).

The analysis of the respondents' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education, as presented in Table 9, revealed a generally positive outlook, with an overall weighted mean of 3.46, indicating a "Very Competent" level of attitudinal preparedness. The respondents demonstrated a strong understanding of inclusive education, with means ranging from 3.27 to 3.63 across various indicators. Notably, the highest mean scores were observed for statements reflecting the need for extra effort to teach students with special needs (3.63) and the belief that students with special needs could achieve their best with support (3.47). The self-assessed attitudes indicate a strong commitment among respondents towards students with special needs. With scores consistently above the "Competent" threshold, respondents show an understanding of the importance of collaboration with special education teachers and the necessity of teaching aids for effective instruction. The overall positive attitude towards inclusive education is critical because attitudes directly influence teaching practices, classroom dynamics, and ultimately, student outcomes.

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

	Indicators	\bar{x}	sd	Verbal Description
21	I understand the meaning of inclusive education	3.27	0.52	Very Competent
22	I care for the well-being of students with special needs	3.47	0.51	Very Competent
23	I understand the purpose for an inclusive education	3.40	0.50	Very Competent
24	I care for the progressive learning of students with special needs	3.37	0.49	Very Competent
25	I care for the achievements of students with special needs	3.43	0.50	Very Competent
26	I believe students with special needs can achieve their best with support	3.47	0.51	Very Competent
27	Teaching students with special needs requires more teaching aids	3.50	0.51	Very Competent
28	I need to work together with special education teachers if I have students with special needs in my class	3.47	0.57	Very Competent
29	Despite of the disabilities faced by students with special needs, they also have their own abilities	3.57	0.50	Very Competent
30	I need extra effort to teach students with special needs	3.63	0.49	Very Competent
	<i>Overall Weighted Mean</i>	<i>3.46</i>		
	<i>Overall Standard Deviation</i>		<i>0.51</i>	Very Competent

The implications of these findings are multifaceted. Firstly, the positive attitudes of respondents indicate a solid foundation for implementing inclusive education practices. Training and professional development opportunities that reinforce these positive attitudes and provide educators with the necessary tools and strategies for inclusion can further enhance the implementation process. Additionally, the strong belief that students with special needs can succeed with adequate support highlights the need for ongoing support systems and resources to sustain this commitment in practice. Schools and educational institutions must prioritize the provision of teaching aids, collaborative opportunities, and professional development aimed at nurturing these positive attitudes into effective teaching practices.

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). Additionally, research had shown that teachers' attitudes were influenced by various factors, including sociodemographic characteristics, occupational stress, and previous experiences with inclusive education. Teachers who reported positive attitudes towards inclusion were more likely to have had previous experiences working with students with disabilities and were less affected by occupational stress, which is a significant barrier to the implementation of inclusive education (Radojlovic et al., 2022).

Table 10. Level of Preparedness 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.	2.24	0.49	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.	2.36	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.	2.12	0.55	Fairly Practiced
34	I regularly collaborate with special education professionals, administrators, and other stakeholders to develop inclusive lesson plans and instructional strategies.	2.00	0.53	Fairly Practiced
35	I use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities or other special needs.	2.90	0.69	Practiced
36	I am familiar with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and incorporate them into my lesson planning and classroom instruction.	2.05	0.51	Fairly Practiced
37	I effectively adapt curriculum materials and teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and needs.	3.00	0.55	Practiced
38	My classroom environment is inclusive, with physical accessibility, appropriate seating arrangements, and a promotion of diversity and acceptance among students.	2.08	0.59	Fairly Practiced
39	I use positive reinforcement, proactive interventions, and de-escalation techniques to manage behavior in my inclusive classroom.	2.95	0.52	Practiced
40	I understand Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and can implement the accommodations and modifications outlined in students' plans.	2.01	0.47	Fairly Practiced
41	I maintain active involvement and communication with parents and the broader community to support inclusive education practices and student success.	2.91	0.61	Practiced
42	I am culturally competent and able to create a classroom environment that respects and values students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.	2.92	0.74	Practiced
43	I use alternative assessment methods and accommodations to evaluate student progress in my inclusive classroom.	3.05	0.51	Practiced
44	I feel confident in my ability to effectively teach and support students with diverse learning needs in inclusive settings.	2.91	0.69	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.	2.98	0.65	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean		2.57		
Overall Standard Deviation			0.57	Practiced

Improving training programs and ensuring ongoing professional development would help teachers become more proficient in inclusive education strategies. Additionally, schools needed to prioritize providing adequate resources, such as assistive technology and adaptive materials, to support teachers in this endeavor. Enhancing collaboration between general and special education professionals could also foster a more cohesive approach to inclusive education, benefiting both teachers and students.

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). In Tanzania, the implementation of inclusive education was found to be hindered by the need for better teacher training and preparation, as well as the appropriate placement of special needs learners based on their specific needs (Elisha Mbuti et al, 2024). Additionally, a review of policies and practices in Indonesia highlighted significant challenges such as insufficient teacher training, limited resources, and the absence of standardized methods for identifying special needs students (Somad et al., 2024). 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.

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

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Age Profile	-0.120	Very Weak Negative	0.528	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Gender Profile	-0.015	Very Weak Negative	0.939	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	-0.214	Weak Negative	0.256	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.152	Very Weak Positive	0.423	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Length of Service Profile	-0.302	Weak Negative	0.105	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Knowledge Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.676	Strong Positive	0.000*	Reject Ho	Significant

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

The analysis of the relationship between the demographic profile of teacher-respondents and their level of preparedness in knowledge competency towards the implementation of inclusive education revealed several important insights. The data, summarized in Table 11, indicated that most demographic variables, including age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, and length of service, had a very weak to weak correlation with knowledge competency. These correlations were not statistically significant, as reflected by p-values well above the 0.05 threshold, leading to the decision not to reject the null hypothesis for these variables. Specifically, age ($r = -0.120$, $p = 0.528$), gender ($r = -0.015$, $p = 0.939$), educational attainment ($r = -0.214$, $p = 0.256$), field of specialization ($r = 0.152$, $p = 0.423$), and length of service ($r = -0.302$, $p = 0.105$) all showed non-significant relationships with knowledge competency in inclusive education. These findings suggested that these demographic factors did not play a significant role in determining a teacher's knowledge preparedness for implementing inclusive education.

However, the analysis found a strong positive correlation between relevant trainings and knowledge competency ($r = 0.676$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that teachers who have undergone more relevant training are significantly more knowledgeable about inclusive education practices. This statistically significant relationship underscores the importance of targeted professional development and training in enhancing teachers' preparedness and effectiveness in inclusive education.

The implications of these findings were profound for educational policy and practice. The lack of significant correlation with most demographic factors suggests that preparedness in knowledge competency was not inherently tied to personal or professional background characteristics but is highly influenced by relevant training. This signified the need for continuous professional development programs focused on inclusive education practices. Schools and educational authorities should prioritize providing comprehensive training opportunities for teachers to ensure they are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge to support inclusive classrooms effectively.

Relevant training showed a strong positive correlation with preparedness in inclusive education knowledge competency, highlighting the importance of professional development and ongoing training. 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 preparedness of teachers to implement inclusive education was more strongly influenced by 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.

The analysis of the relationship between the demographic profile of teacher-respondents and their level of preparedness in skills competency for the implementation of inclusive education revealed varying degrees of correlation strength. Table 13 indicated that age, gender, educational attainment, field of specialization, and length of service showed very weak to weak correlations with skills competency, with none of these variables reaching statistical significance. Specifically, the *r*-values for these variables ranged from -0.052 to 0.158, and the *p*-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold, leading to the decision not to reject the null hypothesis (*H*₀), indicating no significant relationship.

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

Variables	<i>r</i> -value	Strength of Correlation	<i>p</i> - value	Decision	Result
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Age Profile	-0.052	Very Weak Negative	0.785	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Gender Profile	-0.113	Very Weak Negative	0.552	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	-0.132	Very Weak Negative	0.487	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.158	Very Weak Positive	0.404	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Length of Service Profile	-0.347	Weak Negative	0.060	Do not Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Skills Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.502	Moderate Positive	0.005*	Reject <i>H</i> ₀	Significant

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

Conversely, the analysis identified a statistically significant positive relationship between preparedness in skills competency and relevant training, with an *r*-value of 0.502 and a *p*-value of 0.005. This finding suggested that relevant training played a crucial

role in enhancing teachers' skills competency for inclusive education. The moderate positive correlation implied that as the number of relevant trainings increased, so did the teachers' preparedness in skills competency.

The interpretation of these findings highlighted the pivotal role of professional development and training in preparing teachers for inclusive education. While demographic factors such as age, gender, educational attainment, and length of service did not significantly impact skills competency, targeted training appeared to be a key determinant of teacher preparedness. This suggested that investing in continuous professional development specifically focused on inclusive education practices could substantially improve teachers' skills and preparedness.

The implications of these findings were profound for educational policymakers and school administrators. They underscored the necessity of designing and implementing robust training programs that equipped teachers with the skills required to effectively manage inclusive classrooms. By prioritizing professional development in inclusive education, educational institutions could foster a more inclusive learning environment that benefited all students.

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., 2024).

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

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Age Profile	-0.439	Moderate Negative	0.015	Reject Ho	Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Gender Profile	-0.040	Very Weak Negative	0.834	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Educational Attainment Profile	0.072	Very Weak Positive	0.705	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Field of Specialization Profile	0.337	Weak Positive	0.069	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Length of Service Profile	-0.383	Weak Negative	0.037	Reject Ho	Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Attitude Competency and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.261	Weak Positive	0.272	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant

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

The implications of these findings pointed to the need for tailored professional development programs that addressed the specific needs of older and more experienced teachers. Targeted training and support were necessary to help mitigate resistance and enhance the adoption of inclusive education practices among these educators. Professional development initiatives focused on demonstrating the benefits of inclusive education and providing practical strategies for integration into existing teaching methods.

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 have played a more crucial role in shaping these attitudes.

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

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Age Profile	-0.324	Weak Negative	0.081	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Gender Profile	-0.123	Very Weak Negative	0.517	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Educational Attainment Profile	0.401	Moderate Positive	0.028	Reject Ho	Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Field of Specialization Profile	0.201	Weak Positive	0.287	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Length of Service Profile	-0.392	Weak Negative	0.032	Reject Ho	Significant
Preparedness in Inclusive Education in Practices and Relevant Trainings Profile	0.368	Weak Positive	0.045	Reject Ho	Significant

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

The analysis of the relationship between the demographic profile of teachers and their preparedness to implement inclusive education practices, as presented in Table 14, revealed several noteworthy findings. The variables of educational attainment, length of service, and relevant training exhibited significant correlations with teachers' preparedness to apply inclusive education practices.

Specifically, higher educational attainment and relevant training were positively associated with better preparedness for inclusive education practices, while longer service tenure showed a negative correlation. This suggested that teachers with advanced qualifications and targeted training were more equipped to handle inclusive education, while those with longer tenure might have faced challenges adapting to new practices.

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

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that professional development, particularly relevant training, plays a pivotal role in enhancing teachers' preparedness for inclusive education. While demographic factors such as age and length of service had a limited influence on preparedness, training significantly improved teachers' knowledge and skills in managing inclusive classrooms. This highlights the importance of targeted professional development programs to equip educators with the competencies necessary for effective implementation of inclusive practices. Additionally, the study found that more experienced teachers, particularly those with longer service tenures, exhibited less favorable attitudes towards inclusive education, suggesting the need for additional strategies such as mentoring and support systems to foster a more inclusive mindset. In a nutshell, the research emphasizes the critical need for continuous professional development and support to address both skill and attitudinal challenges, enabling educators to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments.

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