

Article

Teachers' Self-Efficacy, Attitudes, and Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

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Abstract: This study explores the perceptions of efficacy and attitudes of educators towards inclusive education, focusing on their confidence in managing inclusive classrooms and their openness to including students with diverse educational needs. Through an analysis of survey responses, the research reveals a high level of self-reported efficacy among educators in key areas of classroom management, parent engagement, individualized instruction, and collaboration with specialists. Additionally, the positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with a variety of challenges, such as those facing academic delays, physical disabilities, communication barriers, and behavioral issues, are highlighted. Moreover, the findings underscore a strong endorsement of inclusive education practices among respondents. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on inclusive education, providing valuable insights into the readiness and perspectives of educators in accommodating and supporting diverse learners within mainstream educational settings.

Keywords: Inclusive education, teacher efficacy, special needs accommodation

Introduction

Teachers play a pivotal role in the implementation of inclusive education, where learners with special educational needs (LSENs) are educated alongside their peers in a general education setting (Krischler & Pit-ten Cate, 2020). The success of this inclusive philosophy hinges significantly on the self-efficacy and attitudes of teachers (Mallory, 2021). According to Cho et al. (2020) self-efficacy, the belief in one's abilities to achieve outcomes, directly influences a teacher's approach to teaching and managing a diverse classroom. Positive attitudes towards inclusion are equally critical, as they shape teachers' willingness to adapt teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students (Boyle et al., 2020).



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The importance of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes cannot be overstated, especially when it comes to teaching LSENs (Yada et al., 2022). Research has consistently shown that teachers who believe in their capabilities to instruct and engage LSENs are more likely to employ innovative and effective teaching methods (Woodcock et al., 2023). These educators are also more inclined to seek out additional training and resources, further enhancing their ability to support LSENs (Arcuino et al., 2022). Conversely, a lack of self-efficacy and negative attitudes towards inclusion can hinder the educational progress of these students (Cook & Ogden, 2022).

For special education (SPED) teachers, their attitudes toward providing quality education are fundamental. Crispel & Kasperski (2021) a positive disposition towards inclusion not only affects their teaching methods but also influences the school culture and the attitudes of other staff members. SPED teachers with a strong belief in the value and effectiveness of inclusive education are likely to advocate for policies and practices that support the inclusion of all students, thereby promoting a more inclusive environment throughout the school (Boyle et al., 2020). However, there are numerous challenges that can impact teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards teaching SPED students and these challenges include a lack of adequate training in inclusive teaching strategies, insufficient resources, large class sizes, and a lack of administrative support (Alnahdi & Schwab, 2021; Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2023). Such obstacles may lead to feelings of frustration and overwhelm, diminishing teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively teach LSENs and potentially fostering negative attitudes towards inclusion (Johnson, 2020).

Evaluating teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes in SPED/LSEN settings is crucial for developing targeted professional development programs and for fostering an educational environment that supports the needs of all students. Despite the critical role of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes in the successful implementation of inclusive education, research gaps remain. Specifically, there is a need for more studies that explore the level of efficacy teachers feel in handling inclusive classes and their attitudes towards inclusive education. Understanding these aspects is essential for developing strategies and interventions that can enhance teachers' effectiveness in inclusive settings.

Addressing these research gaps requires a focus on the factors that influence teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion, such as the availability of resources, support from school leadership, and opportunities for professional development. Future research should also explore the impact of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes on student outcomes in inclusive settings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in inclusive education. Shedding light on these areas, stakeholders can better

support teachers, ultimately facilitating more effective and inclusive educational practices.

Methodology

This research utilized the Quantitative Research Design. The quantitative aspect of the study collected data on the demographic profile of the respondents, as well as the self-efficacy, attitudes, and challenges of the special and regular elementary school teachers, with data analysis and interpretation of the findings. The significant relationship between the self-efficacy and attitudes of the respondents was subjected to a 0.05 significance level. This accumulated a complete breadth of understanding and corroboration of a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, the quantitative design gave researchers across disciplines a rigorous approach to answering research questions. Quantitative research methodologies focus on objectivity, maintaining control, and achieving precise measurements. In terms of methodology, these approaches rely on deductive frameworks aimed at either disproving or bolstering evidence supporting specific theories and hypotheses.

The respondents of this study were the regular elementary school teachers in the five identified schools in the Balamban district, Cebu Province Division. This study employed purposive sampling to select locations that met specific criteria related to inclusive education. The sampling strategy involved the geographic location to capture the regional nuance. The study sought to gather in-depth and targeted information relevant to the research objectives by selecting schools on predetermined criteria.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Age and Gender

Age and Gender	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
50-59	7	12.96	0	0	7	12.96
40-49	14	25.93	0	0	14	25.93
30-39	27	50.00	2	3.70	29	53.70
20-29	4	7.41	0	0	4	7.41
Total	52	96.30	2	3.70	54	100.0

The data presented in Table 1 provides a breakdown of age and gender distribution across different age groups. It shows a total of 54 individuals, with a significantly higher representation of females (52 individuals, accounting for 96.30% of the total) compared to males (2 individuals, making up 3.70% of the total). The age group of 30-39 has the highest number of individuals, with 27 females (representing 50.00% of the total population) and 2 males (3.70% of the total),

amounting to 29 people (53.70% of the total). The 40-49 age group follows, with 14 females (25.93% of the total) and no males, while the 50-59 age group has 7 females (12.96% of the total) and no males. The least represented age group is 20-29, with 4 females (7.41% of the total) and no males. This data highlights a significant gender imbalance across all age groups, with a particularly stark contrast in the 30-39 age group, which also happens to be the most populous.

Table 2. Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	f	%
Master's Graduate	4	7.41
With Master's Units	32	59.26
Bachelor's Degree	18	33.33
Total	54	100.00

Table 2 delineates the highest educational attainment of a group of 54 teachers, showcasing a diverse range of academic qualifications. A small fraction of the teachers, precisely 4 or 7.41%, have attained a Master's degree, indicating they have completed their graduate studies. A significant majority, 32 teachers (59.26%), have pursued further education beyond their Bachelor's degree to some extent, as evidenced by their acquisition of Master's units, suggesting a strong inclination towards advanced studies and professional development within the group. Meanwhile, 18 teachers, equivalent to 33.33% of the total, hold a Bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification. This distribution underscores a substantial commitment among the teachers to enhance their educational credentials, with a predominant focus on graduate-level studies, highlighting the value placed on higher education within this professional community.

Table 3. Field of Specialization

Field of Specialization	f	%
English	7	12.96
Mathematics	9	16.67
Science	3	5.56
Social Science	2	3.70
Others	33	61.11
Total	54	100.00

Table 3 provides an overview of the fields of specialization among a group of 54 teachers, showcasing a wide range of expertise. The data reveals that the majority, 33 teachers or 61.11%, specialize in various fields categorized under "Others," indicating a diverse set of specializations outside the core subjects listed. Mathematics is the most represented core subject, with 9 teachers (16.67%) specializing in it, followed by English, where 7 teachers (12.96%) have their expertise. Science and Social Science have the fewest specialists, with 3 teachers (5.56%) and 2 teachers (3.70%) respectively, demonstrating a lower

representation in these areas. This distribution highlights a significant diversity in educational expertise, with a considerable emphasis on specialized fields, suggesting that the educational environment represented by this data benefits from a wide array of teaching disciplines and knowledge areas.

Table 4. Training and Seminars Attended

Number of Hours	f	%
50 and above	4	7.41
40-49	2	3.70
30-39	5	9.26
20-29	13	24.07
10-19	5	9.26
9 and below	25	46.30
Total	54	100.00

Table 4 outlines the distribution of training and seminar hours attended by a group of 54 individuals, reflecting their commitment to professional development and continuing education. The majority of the group, 25 individuals (46.30%), have attended training and seminars for 9 hours or less, indicating a significant portion of the group may engage in shorter, possibly more focused or specific professional development activities. Following this, 13 individuals (24.07%) have participated in training sessions lasting between 20 and 29 hours, showing a considerable interest in more extended learning opportunities. A smaller number, 5 individuals (9.26%), have attended training ranging from 30 to 39 hours, and another 5 individuals have participated in sessions lasting between 10 and 19 hours, both indicating a moderate level of engagement with professional development. The categories for 40 to 49 hours and 50 hours and above are the least represented, with 2 individuals (3.70%) and 4 individuals (7.41%) respectively, suggesting that very lengthy training sessions are less common among the group. This distribution highlights a varied engagement in professional development activities, with a clear preference for shorter to moderately lengthy sessions.

Table 5. Level of Confidence in teaching LSENs

Level of Confidence	f	%
Very High	0	0.00
High	2	3.70
Average	30	55.56
Low	18	33.33
Very Low	4	7.41
Total	54	100.00

Table 5 provides insight into the level of confidence among a group of 54 teachers regarding their ability to teach Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs). A striking observation is that none of the teacher's report having a "Very High" level of confidence, which indicates a potential gap in preparedness or resources for addressing

the needs of LSENs. Only a small fraction, 2 teachers (3.70%), feel "High" confidence in their teaching capabilities for LSENs, suggesting that very few feel thoroughly equipped or experienced in this area. The majority of teachers, 30 in total (55.56%), report an "Average" level of confidence, highlighting a moderate level of preparedness or comfort with teaching LSENs. This suggests that while they may have some experience or training, there might still be uncertainty or a perceived need for further development in this specialized area of education. A significant number, 18 teachers (33.33%), report a "Low" level of confidence, and an additional 4 teachers (7.41%) report a "Very Low" level of confidence, underscoring a considerable portion of the cohort that feels underprepared or insecure in their abilities to effectively teach LSENs. This distribution underscores the need for enhanced training and resources to support teachers in confidently addressing the diverse needs of LSENs, suggesting an area for targeted professional development and support within the educational community.

Table 6. Respondents' Level of Efficacy in Handling Inclusive Classes

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I can make my expectations about student behavior.	3.54	High
2	I am able to calm a student who is disruptive/noisy.	3.48	High
3	I can make parents feel comfortable coming to school.	3.96	High
4	I can assist families in helping their children do well in school.	3.65	High
5	I can accurately gauge student comprehension of what I have taught.	3.63	High
6	I can provide appropriate challenges for very capable students.	3.80	High
7	I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs.	3.61	High
8	I can control disruptive behavior in the classroom.	3.67	High
9	I am confident in my ability to get parents involved in the school activities of their children with disabilities.	3.52	High
10	I am confident in designing learning tasks so that the individual needs of students with disabilities are accommodated	3.48	High
11	I am able to get children to follow rules.	3.80	High
12	I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g. itinerant teachers/speech pathologist) in designing educational plans for students with disabilities	3.59	High
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.64	High

Table 6 presents an evaluation of respondents' self-reported efficacy in handling inclusive classes, specifically their confidence in various aspects of managing and teaching students with disabilities. All the indicators listed have a verbal description of "High," reflecting a strong sense of efficacy among the respondents in these areas. The scores range from 3.48 to 3.96, suggesting that, on average, the respondents feel capable in their abilities across a variety of key teaching and management tasks within inclusive educational settings. Notably, the highest confidence levels are reported in making parents feel comfortable coming to school (3.96) and providing appropriate

challenges for very capable students (3.80), indicating particular strengths in parental engagement and differentiated instruction. The indicators with the lowest WM, though still classified as high, are calming disruptive students and designing learning tasks for students with disabilities, both scoring 3.48. This slight variance underscores areas where confidence could be further enhanced, though it does not significantly detract from the overall high level of efficacy reported. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.64 consolidates these findings, reinforcing that the respondents perceive themselves as highly effective in managing inclusive classes. This collective self-assessment suggests a positive outlook towards inclusive education among the teachers surveyed, highlighting their readiness to tackle the challenges associated with teaching learners with special educational needs (LSENs).

Table 7. Level of Attitudes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below other students in the grade should be in inclusive classes.	3.02	Positive
2	Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in inclusive classes.	3.06	Positive
3	Students who cannot move without the help from others should be in inclusive classes.	3.02	Positive
4	Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in inclusive classes	3.06	Positive
5	Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below other students in the grade school should be in inclusive classes.	3.02	Positive
6	Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in inclusive classes.	3.06	Positive
7	Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in inclusive classes.	3.13	Positive
8	Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in inclusive classes.	3.00	Positive
9	Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in inclusive classes.	3.04	Positive
10	Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in inclusive classes.	3.04	Positive
11	Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in inclusive classes.	3.11	Positive
12	Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in inclusive classes.	3.13	Positive
13	Students who need individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in inclusive classes.	3.06	Positive
14	Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in inclusive classes.	3.07	Positive
15	Students who cannot follow school rules for conduct should be in inclusive classes.	3.06	Positive
16	Students who are frequently absent from school should be in inclusive classes.	3.02	Positive
	Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.05	Positive

Table 7 showcases the attitudes of respondents towards inclusive education, as reflected through their responses to 16 items indicators that explore the suitability of inclusive classes for students with a range of challenges and needs. The data reveals a consistently positive attitude towards inclusion, with all indicators receiving a weighted mean (WM) between 3.00 and 3.13 on a scale where higher scores indicate more positive attitudes. These results underscore a broad consensus among the respondents that inclusive education is appropriate for a wide variety of students, including those who are academically behind, physically or verbally aggressive, have mobility issues, experience communication challenges, or require specialized learning aids like Braille or sign language. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.05 reinforces the overall positive stance towards the inclusion of diverse learners in mainstream educational settings. This collective positivity towards inclusive education indicates a strong belief in the benefits of such an approach, suggesting that respondents view inclusive classes as beneficial environments that can accommodate the needs of all students, thereby promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity within the educational landscape.

Table 8. Test of Relationship between the Self-Efficacy and Attitudes of the Respondents towards Inclusive Education

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Self-Efficacy and Attitudes	0.175	Negligible Positive	0.206	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 8 presents the results of a statistical analysis aimed at exploring the relationship between the self-efficacy of respondents and their attitudes towards inclusive education. The analysis yields an r-value of 0.175, indicating a negligible positive correlation between the two variables. This suggests that there is a very slight positive relationship where increases in self-efficacy might be associated with more positive attitudes towards inclusive education, but the strength of this relationship is weak. The p-value of 0.206, which exceeds the conventional threshold for significance of 0.05, leads to the decision not to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). This outcome denotes that the observed correlation between self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education is not statistically significant. In other words, the data does not provide sufficient evidence to assert that a meaningful relationship exists between the self-efficacy levels of educators and their attitudes towards inclusive education. The remarks section highlights this by labeling the correlation as "Not Significant," emphasizing that any observed correlation does not imply a strong or

meaningful connection between these two important facets of educator psychology and philosophy towards inclusive teaching practices.

Conclusion

The data provided offers a comprehensive overview of respondents' perceived efficacy in managing inclusive classes and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with diverse needs and behaviors. The findings reveal a high level of confidence among respondents in their abilities to handle various aspects of inclusive education, such as managing student behavior, engaging with parents, providing appropriate challenges, and collaborating with other professionals. This suggests a strong foundation of skills and confidence among educators in fostering an inclusive classroom environment. Similarly, it reflects a positive disposition towards the inclusion of students with a wide range of challenges, from academic and communication difficulties to behavioral and physical needs. This indicates a general consensus among respondents that inclusive education is beneficial and necessary for students with diverse needs, including those who are academically behind, have physical or verbal aggression, require assistive technologies like Braille or sign language, and need individualized support. Moreover, the data portrays an optimistic picture of inclusive education, highlighting both the confidence of educators in their own abilities to manage inclusive classes effectively and their positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with various needs. This aligns with the principles of inclusive education, which emphasize the importance of providing equal opportunities for all students to learn and participate in a supportive and accommodating environment.

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