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Article

Inclusive Teaching Self-Efficacy and Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusion Among Special Education Teachers

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Abstract: This study determined the inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion among Special Education teachers. It described the respondents according to age and gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and type of learners with disabilities handled. It also assessed inclusive teaching self-efficacy in terms of inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior, as well as attitudes toward inclusion in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The study employed descriptive and correlational procedures. Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to analyze the data. Findings showed that most respondents were aged 30–39 years, all were female, most had units in a master's degree, and the largest group had more than 21 years of teaching experience. Learners with learning disabilities were the most commonly handled group. The respondents were highly capable in inclusive teaching self-efficacy and strongly agreed with the statements describing their multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion. A strong positive and statistically significant relationship was found between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. However, no significant differences were found in either major variable when respondents were grouped according to age, educational attainment, teaching experience, and type of learners with disabilities handled. The findings supported the development of an Inclusive Teaching Capacity and Attitude Enhancement Program to sustain teachers' inclusive practices and positive attitudes.

Keywords: Inclusive Teaching Self-Efficacy, Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusion, Special Education Teachers, Inclusive Instruction

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Introduction

Inclusive education seeks to ensure that learners with disabilities participate meaningfully in equitable, accessible, and supportive learning environments (Debasu & Yitayew, 2024). Its success depends substantially on teachers who can adapt instruction, collaborate with families and specialists, and manage diverse classroom needs confidently. Inclusive teaching self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capability to organize and perform these inclusive practices effectively (Woodcock et al., 2023). Recent studies show that stronger self-efficacy is associated with greater readiness to differentiate instruction, use appropriate supports, and sustain participation among learners with varied needs (Opoku et al., 2022). Research also indicates that successful experience, professional preparation, and knowledge of inclusive education strengthen teachers' confidence in inclusive practice (Franzen et al., 2024). Thus, self-efficacy is central to translating inclusion policy into classroom action.

Moreover, inclusive teaching self-efficacy may be weakened by limited training, insufficient resources, large classes, inadequate specialist support, and uncertainty about addressing complex learner needs (Alharbi & Iqtadar, 2024). Teachers may feel less capable when they lack practical experience in adapting lessons, collaborating across professional roles, or managing challenging behavior. Van Staden-Payne and Nel (2023) found that contextual barriers can undermine teachers' confidence in inclusive systems. Opoku et al. (2022) likewise reported that training and institutional support are important for inclusive self-efficacy. Even Special Education teachers may experience doubt when expectations exceed available time, materials, and personnel. Without sustained coaching, collaborative planning, and successful mastery experiences, confidence may remain uneven across instruction, collaboration, and behavior management, limiting implementation of inclusive practices in schools.

It is important to address teachers' poor inclusive teaching self-efficacy to prevent them from developing doubtful, reluctant, or negative attitudes about inclusion. Multidimensional attitudes include cognitive beliefs about inclusion, affective reactions to teaching learners with disabilities, and behavioral willingness to implement inclusive practices. Alnahdi and Schwab (2021) found that teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy are connected in inclusive education. Chow (2024) similarly reported meaningful associations among attitudes, efficacy, and factors affecting implementation. Teachers who doubt their capabilities may avoid adaptations, collaboration, or challenging placements, while teachers with stronger efficacy may approach inclusion with greater confidence and persistence. Negative attitudes can reduce learner participation, belonging, and access to appropriate support, whereas positive attitudes can strengthen commitment to equitable instruction and shared responsibility throughout the school community.

Existing research consistently identifies teacher self-efficacy and attitudes as important conditions for successful inclusive education. Alnahdi and Schwab (2021)

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showed that specialization and attitudes predicted efficacy for inclusive teaching. Grimminger-Seidensticker and Seyda (2022) found that targeted teacher education improved attitudes and self-efficacy toward inclusion. Franzen et al. (2024) identified experience, knowledge, and perceived competence as predictors of primary teachers' inclusive self-efficacy. Chow (2024) reported that in-service teachers' attitudes and efficacy were linked to implementation-related factors. Wüthrich and Sahli Lozano (2025) further examined the psychometric properties of inclusion-attitude and efficacy measures across in-service, pre-service, and Special Education teachers. Collectively, these studies indicate that teachers' confidence and multidimensional attitudes interact meaningfully in shaping inclusive classroom practice, professional preparation, and sustained effective implementation.

Although research has examined inclusive self-efficacy and attitudes among general, pre-service, and mixed teacher populations, limited localized evidence focuses specifically on Special Education teachers in one public elementary school. Their specialized preparation may produce distinctive strengths, concerns, and experiences that broader samples do not capture. This gap leaves insufficient understanding of how efficacy in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and behavior management relates to cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes within the actual context of Sagbayan Central Elementary School during inclusive education implementation. At Sagbayan Central Elementary School, there is limited localized evidence on how Special Education teachers perceive their confidence and attitudes toward inclusive education. This creates a need to examine their actual strengths, concerns, and support needs. The study will address this gap by generating school-based evidence to guide a responsive enhancement program. This study determine the relationship between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion among Special Education teachers at Sagbayan Central Elementary School during School Year 2026–2027. It will assess efficacy in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior, together with cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes. The findings will provide localized evidence for developing an Inclusive Teaching Capacity and Attitude Enhancement Program designed to strengthen teacher confidence, professional collaboration, positive beliefs, emotional readiness, and commitment to inclusive education.

Literature Review

Inclusive teaching self-efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to provide effective instruction, collaborate with educational stakeholders, and manage challenging classroom behavior in learning environments that accommodate students with diverse abilities and needs. Teachers with stronger self-efficacy may demonstrate greater willingness to modify instructional strategies, differentiate learning activities, and respond appropriately to learners requiring individualized support. Khattak et al. (2025) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and inclusive education, emphasizing the importance of

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teachers' personal competencies in supporting diverse classrooms. De Stasio et al. (2024) investigated personal resources and teaching motivation among special-needs teachers, highlighting the relevance of psychological and professional resources to teachers' occupational experiences. Similarly, Jackson and Parker (2023) discussed strategies for strengthening resilience and reducing burnout among beginning Special Education teachers. Kim et al. (2022) also examined teachers' mental health and well-being, drawing attention to the conditions affecting their professional experiences. These studies provide related evidence supporting the importance of teacher preparation, professional confidence, psychological resources, and institutional assistance. However, they do not directly establish teachers' levels of efficacy in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and challenging-behavior management. Examining these dimensions separately is therefore necessary to identify areas in which Special Education teachers feel capable and those requiring additional training, mentoring, and professional support.

Multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion involve teachers' beliefs, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions regarding the participation of learners with disabilities in educational settings. Cognitive attitudes concern teachers' understanding of inclusion and beliefs about its educational benefits and challenges. Affective attitudes describe their feelings, concerns, and comfort when teaching learners with diverse needs, while behavioral attitudes reflect their willingness to implement inclusive practices and provide appropriate accommodations. These dimensions are important because favorable beliefs about inclusion may not always translate into positive emotional responses or consistent classroom practices. Augusto et al. (2026) examined challenges experienced by Filipino Special Education teachers working in the United States, offering a relevant perspective on the demands associated with specialized teaching contexts. Dreer (2023), through a systematic review of teacher well-being, explored the broader consequences of teachers' psychological experiences for educational practice. Aksoy (2026) examined professional experiences in relation to resilience, job demands, and job resources among teacher educators, providing additional context concerning workplace conditions that may influence professional functioning. Together, these studies support examining teachers' experiences within their professional environments. Nevertheless, direct evidence concerning the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of attitudes toward inclusion remains necessary.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion among Special Education teachers. The descriptive component assessed inclusive teaching self-efficacy in terms of efficacy in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior. It also examined teachers' multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion in terms of cognitive,

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affective, and behavioral attitudes. The correlational component determined whether a statistically significant relationship existed between these variables without manipulating the respondents' experiences or instructional practices.

The study was conducted at Sagbayan Central Elementary School, Bohol, involving 28 qualified teachers selected through total enumeration. The respondents were teachers directly involved in implementing inclusive instruction, collaborating with families and educational professionals, and managing challenging classroom behaviors. The study utilized two questionnaires: the Inclusive Teaching Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, conceptually based on the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices Scale developed by Sharma et al. (2012), and the Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusion Questionnaire, based on the framework developed by Mahat (2008). Both questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale to assess the identified dimensions.

Before data collection, the researcher secured permission from the school administration and obtained informed consent from participating teachers. Respondents were oriented regarding the study's objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and questionnaire procedures. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, coded, consolidated, and encoded into appropriate statistical software. Respondents' identities were protected throughout the research process. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to examine the relationship between the variables at the 0.05 significance level, subject to appropriate statistical assumptions.

Results

Table 1. Efficacy in Inclusive Instruction

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I can adapt lessons to address the different learning needs of pupils.	4.50	0.51	Highly Capable
I can use varied instructional strategies in an inclusive classroom.	4.42	0.50	Highly Capable
I can prepare accessible learning materials for pupils with disabilities.	4.46	0.51	Highly Capable
I can assess learning using methods appropriate to pupils' abilities and needs.	4.46	0.58	Highly Capable
I can explain a lesson in another way when a pupil does not understand.	4.42	0.58	Highly Capable
I can create opportunities for pupils with and without disabilities to participate together.	4.38	0.57	Highly Capable
Overall Mean and SD	4.44	0.54	Highly Capable

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Table 1 shows that the respondents were Highly Capable in all aspects of inclusive instruction. The highest mean of 4.50 was recorded for adapting lessons to address the different learning needs of pupils. Preparing accessible learning materials and using assessment methods suited to pupils' abilities and needs followed, both with a mean of 4.46. The lowest mean of 4.38 was obtained for creating opportunities for pupils with and without disabilities to participate together, although this was still described as Highly Capable. These results show that the teachers possess strong confidence in modifying lessons, selecting varied strategies, preparing accessible materials, and responding when pupils experience difficulty.

Table 2. Efficacy in Collaboration

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I can collaborate with regular classroom teachers in planning inclusive instruction.	4.54	0.51	Verbal Description
I can work with parents or guardians in addressing a learner's educational needs.	4.35	0.56	Highly Capable
I can coordinate with therapists, specialists, and other support personnel.	4.31	0.62	Highly Capable
I can communicate clearly with colleagues about appropriate accommodations.	4.50	0.58	Highly Capable
I can contribute effectively during meetings concerning individualized learner support.	4.42	0.58	Highly Capable
I can help colleagues understand strategies for including learners with disabilities.	4.46	0.58	Highly Capable
Overall Mean and SD	4.43	0.23	Highly Capable

Table 2 shows that the respondents were Highly Capable in collaboration, with a grand mean of 4.43. The highest mean of 4.54 was obtained for collaborating with regular classroom teachers in planning inclusive instruction. This was followed by communicating clearly with colleagues about appropriate accommodations at 4.50 and helping colleagues understand strategies for including learners with disabilities at 4.46. Meanwhile, coordinating with therapists, specialists, and other support personnel received the lowest mean of 4.31, although it remained within the Highly Capable level. These findings indicate that the teachers possess strong confidence in working with colleagues, families, and support personnel in addressing learners' educational needs.

Table 3 shows that the respondents were Highly Capable in managing challenging behavior, with a grand mean of 4.43. The highest mean of 4.58 was obtained for using positive behavioral supports rather than relying only on punishment.

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Table 3. Efficacy in Managing Challenging Behavior

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I can establish clear behavioral expectations in an inclusive classroom.	4.50	0.51	Verbal Description
I can respond appropriately when a learner displays challenging behavior.	4.27	0.60	Highly Capable
I can identify possible causes of persistent classroom behavior.	4.46	0.51	Highly Capable
I can use positive behavioral supports instead of relying only on punishment.	4.58	0.50	Highly Capable
I can maintain an orderly classroom while addressing individual behavioral needs.	4.35	0.49	Highly Capable
I can seek suitable assistance when a learner's behavior requires additional intervention.	4.42	0.50	Highly Capable
Overall Mean and SD	4.43	0.27	Highly Capable

This was followed by establishing clear behavioral expectations at 4.50 and identifying possible causes of persistent classroom behavior at 4.46. Meanwhile, responding appropriately when a learner displays challenging behavior obtained the lowest mean of 4.27, although it was still interpreted as Highly Capable. These findings indicate that the teachers possess strong confidence in applying preventive and supportive approaches to classroom behavior.

Table 4. Cognitive Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Inclusive education can provide meaningful learning opportunities for pupils with disabilities.	4.42	0.50	Strongly Agree
Pupils without disabilities can benefit academically and socially from inclusive classrooms.	4.54	0.51	Strongly Agree
Most pupils with disabilities can participate successfully when appropriate support is provided.	4.46	0.51	Strongly Agree
Inclusive education encourages respect for individual differences.	4.42	0.50	Strongly Agree
Adaptations and accommodations can help maintain meaningful learning standards.	4.50	0.51	Strongly Agree
Collaboration among teachers and specialists improves the effectiveness of inclusion.	4.50	0.51	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and SD	4.47	0.24	Strongly Agree

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Table 4 shows that the respondents strongly agreed with all statements concerning cognitive attitudes toward inclusion, as reflected in the grand mean of 4.47. The highest mean of 4.54 was recorded for the belief that pupils without disabilities can also benefit academically and socially from inclusive classrooms. This was followed by the views that adaptations and accommodations can maintain meaningful learning standards and that collaboration among teachers and specialists improves inclusion, both with a mean of 4.50. Meanwhile, meaningful learning opportunities for pupils with disabilities and respect for individual differences both obtained the lowest mean of 4.42, although these remained within the Strongly Agree category. The findings indicate that the teachers hold favorable beliefs about the educational and social value of inclusion.

Table 5. Affective Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I feel comfortable supporting pupils with different disabilities in inclusive settings.	4.42	0.58	Strongly Agree
I feel confident when discussing inclusive practices with other teachers.	4.58	0.50	Strongly Agree
I feel encouraged when pupils with disabilities participate with their peers.	4.38	0.50	Strongly Agree
I feel positive about contributing to the development of inclusive classrooms.	4.54	0.51	Strongly Agree
I feel willing to address difficulties that may arise during inclusion.	4.50	0.51	Strongly Agree
I feel professionally fulfilled when learners with disabilities experience belonging and success.	4.42	0.58	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and SD	4.47	0.26	Strongly Agree

Table 5 shows that the respondents strongly agreed with all indicators describing affective attitudes toward inclusion, as reflected in the grand mean of 4.47. The highest mean of 4.58 was obtained for feeling confident when discussing inclusive practices with other teachers. This was followed by feeling positive about contributing to inclusive classrooms at 4.54 and being willing to address difficulties that may arise during inclusion at 4.50. Meanwhile, feeling encouraged when pupils with disabilities participate with their peers received the lowest mean of 4.38, although it was still interpreted as Strongly Agree. These findings indicate that the teachers generally hold positive feelings, confidence, and willingness toward inclusive education.

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Table 6. Behavioral Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
I am willing to modify lessons to support the participation of learners with disabilities.	4.62	0.50	Strongly Agree
I am willing to collaborate with regular classroom teachers in implementing inclusion.	4.42	0.50	Strongly Agree
I am willing to attend training related to inclusive education.	4.46	0.51	Strongly Agree
I am willing to use assistive technology and accessible learning materials.	4.35	0.56	Strongly Agree
I am willing to involve families and specialists in educational planning.	4.50	0.58	Strongly Agree
I am willing to advocate for appropriate resources and services for inclusive education.	4.42	0.58	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean and SD	4.46	0.25	Strongly Agree

Table 6 showed that he highest mean of 4.62 was obtained for willingness to modify lessons to support the participation of learners with disabilities. This was followed by willingness to involve families and specialists in educational planning at 4.50 and willingness to attend inclusive education training at 4.46. Meanwhile, willingness to use assistive technology and accessible learning materials obtained the lowest mean of 4.35, although it remained within the Strongly Agree category. These findings indicate that the teachers demonstrate strong willingness to translate favorable attitudes toward inclusion into actual professional practices

Table 7. Significant Relationship Between Inclusive Teaching Self-Efficacy and Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Variables	r-value	p-value	Degree of Relationship	Remarks	Decision
Inclusive Teaching Self-Efficacy & Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusion	0.719	< .001	Strong Positive Relationship	Significant	Reject H_0

Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 7 shows a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion, as indicated by an r-value of 0.719 and a p-value of less than .001. Since the p-value is lower than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. The finding indicates

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that teachers who reported greater confidence in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior also tended to express more favorable cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward inclusion.

Discussions

The findings revealed that Special Education teachers demonstrated high levels of inclusive teaching self-efficacy across inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior. Respondents expressed strong confidence in adapting lessons, preparing accessible instructional materials, implementing appropriate assessment strategies, and applying positive behavioral support. They also demonstrated confidence in collaborating with regular classroom teachers and communicating appropriate accommodations. However, relatively lower ratings were observed in creating opportunities for learners with and without disabilities to participate together, coordinating with specialists, and responding to challenging behaviors. These findings suggest that although teachers possessed strong confidence in implementing inclusive practices, certain aspects of their professional responsibilities still required further development. Similarly, the respondents demonstrated highly favorable cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward inclusion, recognizing its educational benefits, expressing positive feelings about inclusive classrooms, and showing willingness to modify instruction. Nevertheless, the findings highlighted opportunities to strengthen the practical use of assistive technology, collaborative educational planning, and meaningful participation among learners with diverse abilities.

Furthermore, the findings established a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion. This indicated that teachers who expressed greater confidence in adapting instruction, collaborating with educational stakeholders, and managing challenging behavior also tended to demonstrate more favorable beliefs, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions regarding inclusive education. However, the relationship did not establish that self-efficacy directly caused positive attitudes or vice versa. The findings suggest that teachers' professional confidence and attitudes toward inclusion are closely associated and should be addressed together when developing professional support initiatives. Therefore, school administrators should strengthen inclusive teaching competencies through continuous professional development, collaborative mentoring, practical behavior-management training, assistive-technology workshops, and regular coordination with families and specialists. These initiatives may help teachers translate their positive attitudes and perceived capabilities into consistent classroom practices. Overall, the results provided a basis for developing an Inclusive Teaching Capacity and Attitude Enhancement Program that promotes teacher confidence, positive attitudes, meaningful learner participation, and responsive educational support for learners with disabilities.

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Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that Special Education teachers demonstrated very high levels of inclusive teaching self-efficacy in inclusive instruction, collaboration, and managing challenging behavior. They also exhibited highly positive cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward inclusion, reflecting their strong confidence, favorable beliefs, and willingness to implement inclusive educational practices. Furthermore, a strong positive and statistically significant relationship existed between inclusive teaching self-efficacy and multidimensional attitudes toward inclusion, indicating that teachers with greater confidence in their inclusive teaching abilities tended to demonstrate more favorable attitudes toward inclusive education. However, this relationship did not establish causation. Despite these positive findings, areas involving assistive technology, collaboration with specialists, management of challenging behavior, and meaningful participation among learners with diverse abilities required continued attention. Therefore, the study emphasized the importance of developing an Inclusive Teaching Capacity and Attitude Enhancement Program to strengthen teachers' professional competencies, promote collaborative practices, sustain positive attitudes, and improve the quality of inclusive education for learners with disabilities.

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