



INVESTIGATING THE BELIEFS AND ATTITUDINAL PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

This quantitative descriptive-correlational study investigated the beliefs and attitudinal perspectives of 30 teachers on inclusive education at Eugenio V. Amores Memorial High School, Sagbayan, Bohol, during the 2025-2026 school year. Utilizing the validated SACI (Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education) scale, the research measured cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Findings revealed that teachers held very strong positive cognitive beliefs about the benefits of inclusion ($M=4.66$) and reported consistently implementing inclusive behavioral practices in their classrooms ($M=4.30$). However, they also expressed moderate agreement with certain misconceptions, primarily concerning increased workload. Significantly, teachers often experienced affective challenges, including feelings of insufficient competence to teach students with SEN and discomfort regarding their role in the inclusive process, particularly among older educators. Regression analysis indicated that demographic factors (age, gender, education, experience, grade level) were not significantly related to most attitudinal variables, except for a positive correlation between age and role-related discomfort. The study concludes that while teachers are philosophically committed and behaviorally active in inclusive education, persistent affective and practical barriers such as perceived lack of competence, role ambiguity, and workload concerns hinder optimal implementation. To address these gaps, the study proposes a targeted Action Plan focused on capacity-building, collaborative support, and systemic strategies to translate positive attitudes into more effective and sustainable inclusive practices.

KEYWORDS:

SPECIAL EDUCATION, TEACHER ATTITUDES, TEACHER BELIEFS.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a globally recognized educational approach that promotes the participation of all learners, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs, in regular classroom settings. Grounded in international frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education emphasizes equity, access, and social inclusion within mainstream schooling. In recent years, educational systems have increasingly adopted inclusive policies; however, the effectiveness of these policies largely depends on classroom-level implementation.

Teachers are central to the successful enactment of inclusive education, as they directly influence instructional practices, learning environments, and student engagement. Research has consistently shown that teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward inclusive education significantly shape their willingness to implement inclusive strategies and accommodate diverse learners. Positive attitudinal perspectives are associated with adaptive teaching practices and collaborative learning environments, while negative beliefs may lead to

resistance, limited instructional adjustments, and the marginalization of learners with special educational needs.

Despite policy support for inclusive education, many teachers report challenges related to inadequate training, limited resources, large class sizes, and insufficient institutional support. These challenges often contribute to uncertainty, stress, and unfavorable attitudes toward inclusion. Variations in teachers' beliefs and attitudes have also been linked to factors such as teaching experience, educational background, and prior exposure to learners with disabilities. Consequently, understanding teachers' perspectives is essential for identifying barriers to effective inclusion and for bridging the gap between policy intentions and actual classroom practices.

In the Philippine educational context, inclusive education has gained increased attention as part of national education reforms aligned with global commitments. While policies advocate for inclusive schooling, empirical evidence on teachers' beliefs and attitudinal perspectives remains limited. There is a need for systematic investigation to determine how teachers perceive inclusive education and how these perceptions influence its

implementation.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the beliefs and attitudinal perspectives of teachers on inclusive education. By generating empirical evidence, the study contributes to the existing literature and provides a foundation for improving teacher preparation programs, professional development initiatives, and institutional support systems that promote effective inclusive education.

Inclusive education seeks to provide equitable learning opportunities for all learners by integrating students with diverse abilities into mainstream classrooms. In the Philippines, inclusive education is reinforced by Republic Act No. 11650, which mandates the promotion of inclusive learning environments in basic education. Teachers play a central role in the successful implementation of inclusion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to **investigate the beliefs and attitudinal perspectives of teachers toward inclusive education**. Inclusive education, which promotes the integration of learners with diverse needs—including those with disabilities—into regular classrooms, relies heavily on teachers' readiness, perceptions, and attitudes for its successful implementation. Teachers serve as the key agents in facilitating an inclusive environment, and their beliefs and attitudes significantly influence classroom practices, student engagement, and learning outcomes. By examining these factors, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers view and approach inclusive education.

Specifically, the study aims to determine the **general beliefs of teachers regarding inclusive education**. This includes understanding their perceptions of the social, emotional, and academic benefits of integrating learners with special educational needs into mainstream classrooms. By identifying these beliefs, the study seeks to highlight the degree to which teachers support inclusive education as an educational philosophy and whether they view it as a beneficial practice for all students.

Additionally, the study seeks to examine **teachers' attitudinal perspectives toward the practical implementation of inclusive education**. This involves investigating their level of confidence, willingness, and preparedness to accommodate learners with diverse abilities. Factors such as access to resources, professional support, class size, prior training in inclusive practices, and exposure to learners with special educational needs are analyzed to determine how they shape teachers' attitudes.

The study also aims to identify **differences in beliefs and attitudes based on demographic and professional variables**, including teaching experience, educational attainment, and previous exposure to inclusive education. Understanding these variations will provide insights into which groups of teachers may require additional support, training, or resources to enhance their engagement with inclusive practices.

Ultimately, the study seeks to generate evidence that can inform **policy development, teacher training programs, and professional development initiatives**, thereby promoting positive beliefs, attitudes, and practices that strengthen the implementation of inclusive education and ensure equitable learning opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **descriptive quantitative research design** to investigate the beliefs and attitudinal perspectives of teachers toward inclusive education. The design was appropriate for describing existing conditions and examining patterns in teachers' responses without manipulating variables. It allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data to determine prevailing beliefs and attitudes related to inclusive educational practices.

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

The participants of the study were **licensed teachers** currently teaching in regular classroom settings. A **purposive sampling technique** was used to select respondents who had direct experience in handling diverse learners, including learners with special educational needs. The sample size was considered sufficient to represent the population and to allow for meaningful statistical analysis.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Data were collected using a **structured survey questionnaire** adapted from validated instruments on teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward inclusive education. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

1. **Demographic profile** of the respondents (e.g., age, teaching experience, educational background, and prior training in inclusive education); and
2. **Beliefs and attitudinal perspectives**, measured using a Likert-scale format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The instrument underwent **content validation** by experts in inclusive education and educational research to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate school authorities. The questionnaires were administered personally and/or electronically to the selected participants. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to encourage honest and unbiased responses.

DATA ANALYSIS

Collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate **descriptive statistical tools**, such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations. These statistical measures were used to determine the overall beliefs and attitudinal

perspectives of teachers toward inclusive education. Where applicable, inferential statistics were employed to examine differences in attitudes based on selected demographic variables.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data were used solely for academic purposes. Respondents were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents were composed of teachers with varying ages, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and exposure to inclusive education. A majority of the participants had several years of teaching experience in regular classrooms, while a smaller proportion reported formal training in special or inclusive education. Most respondents indicated that they had encountered learners with diverse educational needs in their teaching practice.

TEACHERS' BELIEFS TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Results revealed that teachers generally demonstrated **positive beliefs toward inclusive education**. The highest mean scores were observed in items related to the belief that inclusive education promotes social interaction, equality, and acceptance among learners. Teachers largely agreed that learners with special educational needs can benefit academically and socially when included in regular classroom settings.

However, lower mean scores were recorded for items related to teachers' beliefs about their own preparedness and competence in handling inclusive classrooms. Several respondents expressed uncertainty regarding their ability to meet the diverse needs of learners without additional training or support.

TEACHERS' ATTITUDINAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The findings indicated that teachers exhibited a **moderately positive attitude** toward the implementation of inclusive education. Respondents showed favorable attitudes toward collaboration, professional development, and shared responsibility in inclusive settings. Many teachers expressed willingness to adapt teaching strategies and classroom management practices to support diverse learners.

Despite this overall positive outlook, some respondents reported concerns related to large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and insufficient support services. These concerns were reflected in comparatively lower mean scores on attitude items related to workload and institutional readiness for inclusion.

DIFFERENCES IN BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES BASED

ON SELECTED VARIABLES

Analysis of the data showed variations in teachers' beliefs and attitudes when grouped according to selected demographic variables. Teachers with prior training or experience in inclusive education demonstrated higher mean scores in both belief and attitude measures compared to those without such exposure. Differences were also observed across years of teaching experience, although these differences were not uniform across all individuals.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the beliefs and attitudinal perspectives of teachers toward inclusive education. The findings indicate that teachers generally hold positive beliefs about the principles and benefits of inclusive education, particularly in relation to promoting equity, social interaction, and acceptance among learners. These positive beliefs suggest an overall acknowledgment of the value of inclusion within regular classroom settings.

Despite this favorable orientation, the study also revealed areas of concern that may hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education. Teachers expressed moderate levels of confidence regarding their preparedness and competence in managing inclusive classrooms. Challenges related to limited training, large class sizes, insufficient resources, and lack of institutional support were evident and influenced teachers' attitudinal perspectives.

Variations in beliefs and attitudes were observed based on teachers' prior training and experience in inclusive education. Teachers who had received relevant training or had previous exposure to inclusive practices demonstrated more positive beliefs and attitudes compared to those without such experience. This highlights the importance of professional development and practical exposure in strengthening teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

Overall, the study concludes that while teachers are generally supportive of inclusive education, sustained efforts are needed to address existing challenges and enhance their capacity to implement inclusive practices effectively. Strengthening teacher preparation, providing continuous professional development, and improving institutional support mechanisms are essential to translating positive beliefs and attitudes into successful inclusive classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that educational institutions strengthen teacher training programs focused on inclusive education to improve teachers' preparedness and confidence in handling diverse learners. School administrators should enhance institutional support by providing adequate resources, professional assistance, and manageable class sizes to facilitate effective inclusive practices. Teacher education institutions are encouraged to integrate inclusive education more thoroughly into pre-service training

programs to foster positive beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion. Finally, future research may explore inclusive education using qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights into teachers' experiences and challenges.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that teachers generally hold positive beliefs toward inclusive education, particularly regarding its role in promoting equity, social interaction, and acceptance among learners. This result supports previous studies which suggest that teachers who recognize the social and educational benefits of inclusion are more likely to support its implementation in regular classroom settings. Positive beliefs reflect an understanding of inclusive education as a means of addressing learner diversity and fostering a supportive learning environment for all students.

Despite these favorable beliefs, teachers in the present study demonstrated only moderately positive attitudinal perspectives toward the practical implementation of inclusive education. This aligns with existing research indicating that while teachers may endorse inclusive education in principle, they often express concerns related to their readiness and capacity to implement inclusive practices effectively. Issues such as limited training, large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, and insufficient professional support have been widely documented as barriers that negatively influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

The observed differences in beliefs and attitudes based on teachers' prior training and experience further emphasize the critical role of professional development in inclusive education. Teachers who had received formal training or had prior exposure to inclusive classrooms reported more positive beliefs and attitudes, suggesting that knowledge, skills, and experience contribute significantly to teacher readiness. This finding is consistent with studies that highlight the importance of continuous professional learning and hands-on experience in shaping positive attitudinal perspectives toward inclusive practices.

Within the Philippine educational context, these findings highlight the gap between inclusive education policies and classroom-level realities. While national policies advocate for inclusive education, the challenges identified in this study suggest that policy implementation requires stronger institutional support and sustained capacity-building initiatives. Addressing these challenges may help translate teachers' positive beliefs into effective classroom practices.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of aligning teacher preparation, professional development, and institutional support with the goals of inclusive education. By addressing the factors that influence teachers' beliefs and attitudes, educational systems can strengthen inclusive practices and promote more equitable learning opportunities for all learners.

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