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Training Exposure and Readiness of Regular Elementary Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in the District of Sibulan 2

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ABSTRACT

Republic Act No. 11650 and DepEd Order No. 044, s. 2021 require schools to accommodate learners with disabilities in regular classrooms, placing new demands on regular teachers who often lack specialized preparation. This study determined the extent of training exposure, the level of readiness, the relationship between training exposure and readiness, and the training needs of regular elementary teachers in implementing inclusive education in the District of Sibulan 2, Division of Negros Oriental. A quantitative descriptive-correlational survey design was employed. Fifty-eight regular elementary teachers from nine public elementary schools voluntarily answered a researcher-made online questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Training exposure was low to moderate ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.49$): 25.9% of the teachers had attended 16 hours of training, while 19.0% had none. Readiness was moderate ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.43$); the belief that inclusive education benefits all learners was rated highest (3.34), while classroom behavior management (2.60) and confidence in teaching learners with special needs (2.62) were rated lowest. Training exposure had a moderate, positive, and significant relationship with readiness ($r = .49$, $t = 4.20$, $p < .001$); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The most frequently identified training need was crafting and implementing Individualized Education Programs (75.9%). Teachers are willing to embrace inclusion, but their readiness depends partly on training. The district may prioritize practical, needs-based professional development on IEP preparation, behavior management, differentiated instruction, and assistive technology, especially for teachers with little or no training.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Teacher Readiness, Training Exposure, Regular Elementary Teachers, Individualized Education Program, Professional Development*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education means providing quality education to all learners, including learners with special educational needs, in regular classrooms. Internationally, inclusion is framed as ensuring that every learner, regardless of identity, background, or ability, has access to meaningful learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2020). In the Philippines, this commitment is anchored on the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013), which established a learner-oriented basic education system responsive to learners' diverse needs and circumstances; the Inclusive Education Act (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022), which institutionalizes a policy of inclusion and the provision of services and reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities; and

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of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

DepEd Order No. 044, s. 2021, which sets the guidelines for educational programs and services for learners with disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program (Department of Education [DepEd], 2021).

These policies place significant responsibility on regular classroom teachers, who must accommodate learners with varying abilities, learning needs, and backgrounds, often without specialized training in special education. Research shows that teachers' preparedness varies with their training and background. Philippine studies have reported moderate competence and readiness among secondary teachers (Atillo et al., 2025), gaps in knowledge, confidence, and classroom management, particularly in universal design for learning, adaptive technology, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) implementation (Vergara et al., 2025), and positive acceptance of inclusion accompanied by a continuing need for structured training (Cola et al., 2025). Relevant training and educational attainment have also been linked to teachers' inclusive education competencies (Iglupas et al., 2025; Sabanal et al., 2025), while barriers and enablers in primary schools show that teacher preparation must be aligned with policy and school conditions (Factor & Saenz, 2025; Paculanang et al., 2025).

Most of these studies, however, involved secondary teachers or single schools, and little is known about the training exposure and readiness of regular elementary teachers in the District of Sibulan 2, Division of Negros Oriental. Evidence on whether the training these teachers have received is associated with their readiness can guide the division and district in designing professional development that responds to actual needs. This study therefore determined the relationship between training exposure and readiness of regular elementary teachers in implementing inclusive education. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the extent of training exposure of regular elementary teachers in inclusive education? (2) What is the level of readiness of regular elementary teachers in implementing inclusive education in terms of knowledge, skills in handling diverse learners, attitudes toward inclusion, and teaching approaches and strategies? (3) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' training exposure and their readiness in implementing inclusive education? (4) What training and support do regular elementary teachers need to effectively implement inclusive education? The null hypothesis tested was that there is no significant relationship between training exposure and readiness in the implementation of inclusive education.

Literature Review

Teacher Readiness for Inclusive Education

Teacher readiness refers to the extent to which teachers perceive themselves as prepared to address the academic, behavioral, social, and learning needs of diverse learners, and it encompasses knowledge about inclusive education, practical skills, attitudes toward inclusion, and the ability to apply appropriate instructional approaches. Moon (2023) examined teachers' readiness and teaching performance in the implementation of an inclusive education program and found that teachers demonstrated readiness in classroom instruction, curriculum content, assessment of student performance, and monitoring of learners' progress, underscoring the importance of teacher preparedness for program implementation. Among teachers in Catholic schools, Evangelico (2025) found generally high knowledge of inclusive education, a weak but significant positive correlation between knowledge and readiness, and a high level of challenges linked to limited resources, training, and support, which particularly affected elementary teachers.

Philippine studies show that readiness is multidimensional and uneven. Vergara et al. (2025) found teachers generally confident, moderately knowledgeable, and able to manage inclusive classrooms, but identified gaps in adapting to diverse learner needs, understanding universal design for learning, using adaptive technologies, and implementing IEPs. Atillo et al. (2025) reported that length of service and relevant training positively influenced secondary teachers' attitudes and practical application of inclusive practices, while Dizon (2026) found that teachers in the Division of Angeles City were moderately ready across cognitive, affective, behavioral, and support-system domains, with persistent difficulty in assessment, classroom accommodations, and instruction.

ISSN: 3116-3475
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of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

These findings support assessing readiness across several domains rather than relying on a single measure of preparedness.

Teacher Attitudes and Acceptance Toward Inclusion

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are an important dimension of readiness because acceptance of diverse learners influences teachers' willingness to implement inclusive practices. Cola et al. (2025) found that teachers at Sogod Central School, Southern Leyte, were moderately prepared and moderately accepting of inclusion, with preparedness and acceptance strongly and positively related, particularly in instructional strategies and pedagogical knowledge. Iglupas et al. (2025) similarly reported generally positive attitudes toward inclusive education among secondary teachers despite gaps in knowledge and skills.

Positive attitudes, however, do not by themselves ensure effective implementation. Among non-SpEd teachers at Matab-ang Elementary School, Paculanang et al. (2025) found moderate knowledge, generally positive attitudes, and highly inclusive classroom practices, with knowledge, rather than attitude, significantly related to practices ($r = 0.423$). This suggests that willingness to embrace inclusion must be supported by adequate knowledge and instructional competence.

Training Exposure and Professional Development

Training programs, seminars, workshops, and other professional development activities give teachers opportunities to understand inclusive education and learn strategies for addressing diverse learner needs. In Greek secondary schools, Kazanopoulos et al. (2022) found differences in self-efficacy between special and general education teachers and identified training as a significant factor associated with teachers' self-efficacy toward inclusive practices. In the Philippines, Sabanal et al. (2025) found that educational attainment and relevant training had significant positive relationships with secondary teachers' knowledge and skills in inclusive education, while age, gender, and length of service showed weak or nonsignificant relationships.

Dizon (2026) likewise found that training was significantly associated with teachers' readiness in all four domains examined, with trained teachers showing higher readiness and teachers prioritizing peer mentoring, seminar-workshops on inclusive strategies, hands-on training in differentiated instruction, and classroom management. Barriers in Philippine primary schools also indicate that training cannot be separated from school conditions: in Camarines Norte, only 12.3% of SPED and receiving teachers had SPED specialization, and family and community, policy, resource, and attitudinal barriers were all rated as significant, while collaborative school culture, inclusive curriculum, and teacher training were the strongest enablers (Factor & Saenz, 2025).

Skills, Teaching Approaches, and Training Needs

Inclusive education requires practical skills in classroom management, communication, instructional adaptation, differentiated instruction, assessment, learner support, and collaboration with parents and other professionals. The areas repeatedly identified as needing development (universal design for learning, adaptive technology, IEP implementation, and classroom management) correspond closely to the competencies regular teachers need when supporting learners with diverse needs (Vergara et al., 2025). Teachers may possess general knowledge about inclusion while still requiring preparation to translate inclusive principles into classroom practice, and Evangelico (2025) observed that elementary teachers were especially affected by challenges related to limited training and support.

Taken together, the literature indicates that readiness for inclusive education involves knowledge, skills, attitudes, and teaching approaches; that relevant training is associated with readiness; and that teachers continue to need practical support. Because most available studies involve secondary teachers or single schools, context-specific evidence from regular elementary teachers in the District of Sibulan 2 is needed.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that learning and behavior are shaped by the reciprocal interaction of personal factors, behavior, and the environment. In inclusive

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Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

education, teachers' knowledge, beliefs, confidence, and attitudes interact with their professional experiences and the support available in their schools. Professional training serves as an environmental and experiential factor through which teachers acquire knowledge, develop skills, and strengthen their confidence in using appropriate teaching approaches, classroom management strategies, differentiated instruction, assessment practices, and IEP strategies.

The study is also supported by the concept of teacher self-efficacy, teachers' belief in their capability to organize and carry out the actions required to accomplish specific teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers who believe they are capable are more likely to persist in addressing challenges and to apply appropriate practices. As shown in Figure 1, training exposure is viewed as a factor that may strengthen self-efficacy and readiness in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and teaching approaches, which in turn support the implementation of inclusive education. Following an Input–Process–Output model, the teachers' training exposure and readiness served as inputs, the survey and statistical analysis as the process, and a basis for professional development and support programs as the output. Because the study is correlational, training exposure was examined as a variable associated with readiness rather than as a direct cause.

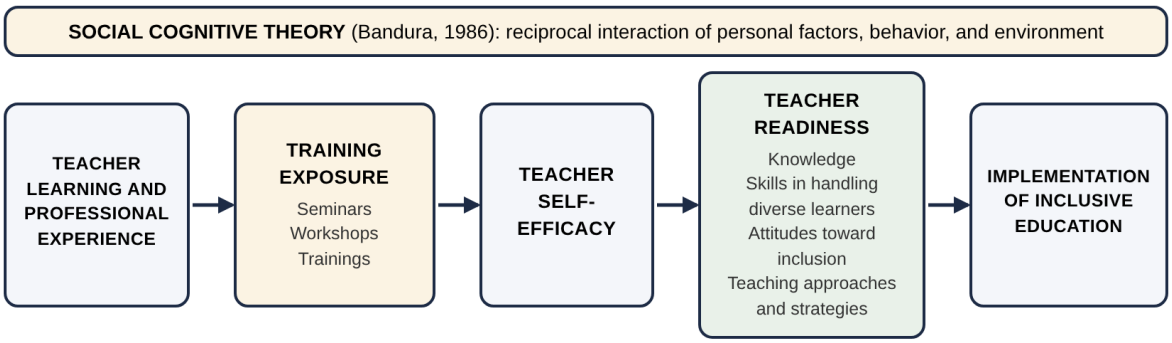

Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational research design using the survey method. Quantitative research provides systematic procedures for collecting and analyzing numerical data about educational phenomena (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019), and descriptive research describes conditions as they naturally occur without manipulation of variables (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The descriptive component determined the extent of training exposure, the level of readiness, and the training needs of the teachers, while the correlational component determined the degree of association between training exposure, the independent variable, and teacher readiness, the dependent variable, without manipulating either (Creswell, 2014).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the public elementary schools of the District of Sibulan 2, Schools Division of Negros Oriental, Negros Island Region. The district was selected because its schools enroll learners with diverse educational needs in regular classes under the policies on inclusive education.

Respondents and Sampling

The respondents were 58 regular elementary public-school teachers who voluntarily answered the online survey. School heads, special education teachers, and secondary school teachers were excluded, because the study aimed to determine how general educators who may not have specialized SPED degrees are coping with the

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

inclusion of diverse learners. Table 1 shows that the respondents came from nine elementary schools, with Magsaysay MES contributing the largest share (36.2%), followed by LOCMES (19.0%) and Escaguit ES (12.1%).

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents by School*

School	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Magsaysay MES	21	36.2
LOCMES	11	19.0
Escaguit ES	7	12.1
Maningcao ES	5	8.6
Balugo ES	4	6.9
Cantalawan ES	4	6.9
Looc ES	3	5.2
Tubod Bagtic ES	2	3.4
Cambajao ES	1	1.7
Total	58	100.0

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a structured, researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the research questions, the study variables, and the reviewed literature (DeVellis, 2016; Fowler, 2014). Part I gathered the respondents' profile and training exposure, including the types of training, seminars, workshops, and orientations attended and their total duration, which was coded from 0 (no training) to 5 (more than 40 hours). Part II measured readiness to implement inclusive education across knowledge, skills in handling diverse learners, attitudes toward inclusion, and teaching approaches and strategies, using a four-point Likert scale (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). Part III identified the areas in which respondents needed additional training and support. Overall readiness scores were interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.99, low readiness; 2.00–2.49, slightly moderate readiness; 2.50–3.24, moderate readiness; and 3.25–4.00, high readiness.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and, upon approval, coordinated with the district supervisor of Sibulan 2 to conduct the study. The questionnaire was encoded in Google Forms, and the link was shared with regular elementary teachers through the district's Messenger group chats. Respondents were given sufficient time to answer, after which the responses were downloaded, organized, and prepared for analysis.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' distribution by school, their training exposure, and their identified training needs. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine training exposure and the level of readiness. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between training exposure and readiness, and its significance was tested using the t-test for Pearson's r with $n - 2$ degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted with the approval of the Schools Division Office and the district supervisor. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could decline or stop answering the questionnaire at any time. No names were required, the confidentiality of responses was assured, and the data were used solely for research purposes.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of Training Exposure of Regular Elementary Teachers

Table 2 shows that the largest group of teachers (15, or 25.9%) had attended 16 hours (two days) of training related to inclusive education, followed by 14 (24.1%) who had attended 8 hours (one day) and 10 (17.2%) who had attended 24 hours (three days). Only 2 (3.4%) had attended 40 hours and 6 (10.4%) more than 40 hours, while 11 teachers (19.0%) had no training at all. The mean training score of 1.95 (SD = 1.49) indicated generally low to moderate training exposure.

Table 2. *Distribution of Teachers According to Training Exposure*

Training Exposure	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
No training	11	19.0
8 hours (1 day)	14	24.1
16 hours (2 days)	15	25.9
24 hours (3 days)	10	17.2
40 hours (5 days)	2	3.4
More than 40 hours	6	10.4
Total	58	100.0

Note. Training score: M = 1.95, SD = 1.49 (low to moderate training exposure).

Most teachers had attended only one to two days of training, and nearly one in five had never been trained, which suggests that professional development opportunities in inclusive education have not been equally available to all teachers in the district. This mirrors Factor and Saenz (2025), who found that only a small proportion of primary teachers had SPED specialization, and Dizon (2026), who documented differences in readiness between trained and untrained teachers. Limited training may leave teachers underprepared in differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, behavior support, and individualized planning, although training hours alone do not determine readiness.

Level of Readiness of Regular Elementary Teachers

Table 3 presents the teachers' readiness indicators. The belief that inclusive education benefits all learners obtained the highest weighted mean (3.34, Strongly Agree), followed by willingness to adjust teaching strategies (3.22). In terms of knowledge, teachers agreed that they knew the different types of learning disabilities (3.02) and the laws on inclusive education (2.90). Among skills, modifying lessons and activities (3.03) and selecting appropriate assessment tools (2.93) were rated higher than managing classroom behavior (2.60), which was the lowest-rated indicator, while confidence in teaching learners with special needs was also comparatively low (2.62). The overall readiness score was 3.02 (SD = 0.43), interpreted as moderate readiness.

Table 3. *Readiness of Teachers to Implement Inclusive Education*

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge of inclusive education laws	2.90	Agree
Knowledge of different types of learning disabilities	3.02	Agree
Classroom behavior management	2.60	Agree
Modification of lessons and activities	3.03	Agree
Selection of appropriate assessment tools	2.93	Agree
Belief that inclusive education benefits all learners	3.34	Strongly Agree
Confidence in teaching learners with special needs	2.62	Agree
Willingness to adjust teaching strategies	3.22	Agree
Overall readiness score (SD = 0.43)	3.02	Moderate readiness

Note. Scale: 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree. Overall readiness: 2.50–3.24 = moderate readiness.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

The results show that teachers hold positive attitudes and a developing level of knowledge and skills in inclusive education, consistent with the moderate preparedness and acceptance reported by Cola et al. (2025) and the moderate readiness documented by Dizon (2026). The gap between strong belief in inclusion and lower confidence and behavior-management skills reflects the pattern noted by Vergara et al. (2025) and Paculanang et al. (2025), in which favorable attitudes coexist with gaps in practical competence. From a Social Cognitive Theory perspective, teachers' willingness to include learners is not yet matched by mastery experiences that build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), particularly in managing the behavior of learners with conditions such as ADHD, ASD, and sensory challenges.

Relationship Between Training Exposure and Readiness

Table 4 shows that training exposure and readiness had a moderate positive correlation ($r = .49$) that was statistically significant ($t = 4.20$, $df = 56$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Teachers with greater exposure to inclusive education training tended to report higher readiness to implement inclusive education.

Table 4. *Relationship Between Training Exposure and Readiness to Implement Inclusive Education*

Variables	M	SD	r	t	p	Decision
Training exposure	1.95	1.49	.49	4.20	< .001	Reject Ho
Readiness	3.02	0.43				

Note. n = 58; df = 56; two-tailed test at the 0.05 level of significance. The coefficient indicates a moderate positive relationship.

This finding is consistent with Kazanopoulos et al. (2022), who found training to be significantly associated with teachers' self-efficacy toward inclusive practices, and with Philippine studies linking relevant training to teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and readiness (Atillo et al., 2025; Dizon, 2026; Sabanal et al., 2025). It supports the theoretical position that professional learning experiences contribute to teachers' perceived capability to implement inclusive education (Bandura, 1986). Because the relationship is moderate rather than strong, other factors such as teaching experience, personal attitudes, instructional resources, administrative support, and collaboration with other professionals likely also shape readiness, as reflected in the systemic barriers and enablers identified by Factor and Saenz (2025). As a correlational result, it shows association rather than causation.

Training and Support Needs of Regular Elementary Teachers

Table 5 presents the training needs identified by the teachers. Crafting and implementing IEPs was the most frequently identified need (75.9%), followed by understanding the types of disabilities (62.1%) and classroom management strategies (60.3%). More than half also identified designing differentiated lesson plans, collaborating with SPED professionals, using assistive technology, parent–teacher collaboration, and assessing learners with special needs, while emotional and psychological support was identified by 43.1%.

Table 5. *Training Needs Identified by Regular Elementary Teachers*

Training Need	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Crafting and implementing IEPs	44	75.9
Understanding types of disabilities	36	62.1
Classroom management strategies	35	60.3
Designing differentiated lesson plans	34	58.6
Collaborating with SPED professionals	33	56.9
Use of assistive technology	32	55.2
Parent–teacher collaboration	31	53.4
Assessing learners with special needs	30	51.7
Emotional and psychological support	25	43.1

Note. n = 58; multiple responses were allowed.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 11 (November 2026)

The prominence of IEP preparation indicates that many regular teachers need guidance in identifying individual learning needs, setting appropriate goals, selecting strategies, and monitoring the progress of learners with disabilities. The identified needs correspond with the gaps reported by Vergara et al. (2025) in IEP implementation, adaptive technology, and classroom management, and with the priorities of differentiated instruction and classroom management identified by Dizon (2026). They are also consistent with the teachers' moderate readiness and lower confidence in this study, and they highlight the importance of collaboration among regular teachers, SPED professionals, parents, and school administrators (Factor & Saenz, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Regular elementary teachers in the District of Sibulan 2 have varied and generally limited exposure to inclusive education training, with a considerable number having attended only brief training or none at all. They demonstrate a moderate level of readiness to implement inclusive education, characterized by positive attitudes toward inclusion and willingness to adjust their teaching, but with lower confidence and weaker skills in classroom behavior management. Training exposure has a significant moderate positive relationship with readiness, indicating that teachers with more relevant training tend to be better prepared; however, training is not the only consideration, as instructional resources, administrative support, and collaboration with special education professionals also matter. The teachers' most pressing needs center on the preparation and implementation of IEPs, understanding disabilities, classroom management, and differentiated instruction. Strengthening teachers' access to relevant and practical training, together with sustained school support, is therefore necessary to improve their readiness to create inclusive and responsive learning environments.

Recommendation

The Schools Division Office, district supervisor, and school heads may organize regular, needs-based training on inclusive education, giving priority to teachers with limited or no training and focusing on hands-on workshops on preparing and implementing IEPs, understanding disabilities, behavior support for learners with ASD, ADHD, intellectual disabilities, and other needs, differentiated instruction, assessment, and assistive technology. The District of Sibulan 2 may institutionalize a continuing inclusive education training and support program based on the identified needs, such as the learning and development design proposed by the researchers. School heads may provide adapted learning resources, assessment tools, visual supports, and assistive devices, and may establish mentoring and coaching in which SPED teachers and experienced colleagues guide regular teachers through demonstrations, peer observation, and collaborative lesson planning. Schools may use Learning Action Cell sessions and professional learning communities to build teacher confidence and shared responsibility, strengthen partnerships among regular teachers, SPED professionals, and parents, and regularly monitor the application of inclusive practices to identify further training needs. Future researchers may use probability sampling across districts, validated and reliability-tested instruments, classroom observation, and additional variables such as teaching experience and school support.

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