

Teachers' Readiness and Self-Reported Implementation of Inclusive Practices in Rural Public High Schools in Zamboanga Sibugay

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Abstract. Republic Act No. 11650 obliges Philippine public schools to deliver inclusive education, yet school-level evidence on teacher preparedness in rural divisions is limited. This descriptive-correlational study measured readiness for inclusive education and self-reported implementation of inclusive practices among junior high school teachers in four public high schools of the Schools Division of Zamboanga Sibugay during School Year 2025–2026. A researcher-made 40-item instrument measured four readiness and four implementation dimensions on a four-point scale, with pilot Cronbach's alpha of .80 for readiness and .83 for implementation and main-sample dimension alpha from .74 to .90. Analyses of 130 completed questionnaires used Welch's analysis of variance, Pearson correlation, and two ordinary least squares models. Attitude toward inclusion was the highest readiness dimension ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.45$), while access to support and confidence ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 0.48$) and knowledge of inclusion policies ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.52$) were lowest. Behavior support and classroom management was the highest implementation dimension ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.69$) and collaboration with stakeholders the lowest ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.70$). Readiness differed by training sessions attended, Welch $F(3, 11.3) = 19.02$, $p < .001$, $\omega^2 = .287$, and implementation by class size, Welch $F(3, 39.9) = 7.53$, $p < .001$, $\omega^2 = .084$. The two composites were positively associated, $r = .40$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.25, .54]. After adjustment, training exposure remained associated with readiness, while readiness and class size remained associated with implementation. Applied policy knowledge and specialist access are capacity-building priorities, while large-class workload requires administrative, staffing, or workload-management responses.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Project BRIDGE; Public high schools; Teacher readiness; Universal Design for Learning

Introduction

Inclusive education rests on the principle that every learner should participate in equitable, high-quality schooling with the accommodations that participation requires, a commitment carried by Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNESCO, 2020). Whether it reaches learners depends not only on policy mandates but also on teacher preparedness, institutional support, and available resources (Ainscow, 2020; Florian & Camedda, 2020).

The Philippines has established several laws and policies supporting inclusive education. Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) instituted a national policy of inclusion and mandated the establishment of Inclusive Learning Resource Centers in all school districts, municipalities, and cities. Whether such a center served the participating schools was not measured here, so the mandate is treated as a legal requirement rather than an accomplished condition. DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 treated inclusion as a participation strategy, and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 set guidelines for services for learners with disabilities. DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2022 issued the Child Find Policy, specifying how needs are recognized, referred, and coordinated (Department of Education, 2009, 2021, 2022). Such mandates assign teachers procedural duties: recognizing observable difficulties, using the Learner Information System, making referrals, documenting concerns, and providing reasonable accommodations.

Professional development for disability inclusion in low- and middle-income Asia-Pacific countries shows substantial geographical and research gaps (Ahmed et al., 2022). Philippine and comparable rural studies have documented continuing gaps in teacher preparation, specialist support, and the implementation of inclusive education in resource-constrained schools (Atillo et al., 2025; Barco, 2024; Martin, 2026; Ramatea & Govender, 2025). However, few studies have jointly examined teacher readiness and self-

reported implementation in rural public secondary schools, particularly in resource-constrained Philippine divisions. This study therefore measured readiness and self-reported implementation in the same respondents within School Learning Center 3 of the Schools Division of Zamboanga Sibugay, a rural cluster covering Buug, Diplahan, Imelda, and Malangas.

Research Questions

This study determined the readiness of junior high school teachers for inclusive education and the extent of their self-reported implementation of inclusive practices. Specifically, it addressed the following questions.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, subject taught, in-service training sessions on inclusive education in the previous three years, class size handled, and primary grade level taught?
2. What is the level of teachers' readiness for inclusive education in terms of knowledge of inclusion policies, attitude toward inclusion, instructional strategies, and access to support and confidence?
3. What is the extent of teachers' self-reported implementation of inclusive practices in terms of differentiated instruction, behavior support and classroom management, collaboration with stakeholders, and assessment and progress tracking?
4. Is there a significant difference in teachers' readiness for inclusive education when the respondents are grouped according to their profile variables?
5. Is there a significant difference in the extent of self-reported implementation when the respondents are grouped according to their profile variables?
6. Is there a significant relationship between readiness and self-reported implementation?
7. Based on the findings, what training program can be proposed?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study covered junior high school teachers of the four public secondary schools of School Learning Center 3 in the Schools Division of Zamboanga Sibugay during School Year 2025–2026. It measured readiness and self-reported implementation with a researcher-made questionnaire and related both to nine profile variables. The focus was the classroom teacher's perspective, so classroom observation, learner outcomes, and the views of learners, parents, and school heads were outside its scope.

Literature Review

Policy Knowledge and Institutional Support

Philippine inclusive education is a statutory duty rather than a discretionary programme. Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) instituted a national policy of inclusion and mandated Inclusive Learning Resource Centers, while DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009, DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021, and DepEd Order No. 23, s. 2022 set out participation strategies, service guidelines for learners with disabilities, and the Child Find process (Department of Education, 2009, 2021, 2022). Awareness of a mandate, however, is not the same as command of what it requires. Studying two Philippine districts, Martin (2026) found that school heads and teachers were both aware of inclusive education but differed in emphasis, with school heads more conversant with its legal provisions and teachers with its pedagogical ones, and identified limited functional transition programmes and insufficient content and pedagogical competencies among the institutional challenges to implementation. Attilo et al. (2025) surveyed Philippine secondary public-school teachers and reported that demographic characteristics bore little relation to knowledge and skill competencies, whereas length of service and relevant training were positively related to inclusive attitudes and practical application; their sample of 30 teachers in a single city school indicates both the relevance and the limited scale of the available Philippine secondary evidence. A wider body of work identifies the institutional side of readiness, in which training, collaboration, leadership support, and resources recur as conditions associated with teacher self-efficacy for inclusion (Woodcock et al., 2022, 2023; Wray et al., 2022), and reviews of international experience treat teacher preparedness, institutional support, and resource availability as conditions for inclusive policy reaching learners (Ainscow, 2020; Florian & Camedda, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

Inclusive Pedagogy, Differentiated Instruction, and Universal Design for Learning

Teacher attitudes toward inclusion are generally favorable and have grown more positive over two decades, although they vary by disability type and context (Guillemot et al., 2022; Lindner et al., 2023). Attitudes have been linked to self-efficacy and training (Ediyanto & Kawai, 2023; Yada et al., 2022), and Dignath et al. (2022) found room for growth in appraisals and self-efficacy beliefs, with training helping most when it included practical classroom experience. Universal Design for Learning supplies the pedagogical

content for acting on a favorable disposition through multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression (CAST, 2024), and syntheses report favorable effects (Almeqdad et al., 2023). Implementation nonetheless remains uneven. Zhang et al. (2024) found implementation inconsistent when awareness training was unsupported by help with lesson design and coordination, and Lindner and Schwab (2025) reported that alignment between design decisions and identified barriers is often absent or insufficiently documented. At the secondary level specifically, Nketsia et al. (2025) surveyed 204 high school teachers and found differentiated instruction rated positively alongside a relationship between teacher readiness and reported teaching strategies, concluding that targeted training in differentiation is required. Readiness and enacted pedagogy are therefore related without being equivalent.

Collaboration and Individualized Planning

Inclusive practice that goes beyond whole-class adjustment depends on coordination. Individualized planning, referral, and progress monitoring under Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) and DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2021 require teachers to work with specialists, guidance personnel, parents, and school leaders rather than to act alone (Department of Education, 2021). The depth of that collaboration appears to matter. Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023) distinguished exchange, synchronization, and co-construction, and found that teachers collaborate mainly through the least demanding forms, such as sharing teaching materials and content-related information, while the more demanding forms were the ones significantly associated with differentiated instructional practice. In a rural setting, Ramatea and Govender (2025) likewise emphasized strengthening stakeholder collaboration and drawing on local resources. Where specialist personnel are shared across schools or absent altogether, the collaborative requirements of individualized planning fall on teachers whose access to the relevant expertise is itself constrained (Woodcock et al., 2023).

Training, Class Size, and Rural Resource Constraints

Professional development is the most commonly proposed remedy, and its design determines its usefulness. Donath et al. (2023) reported positive but uneven effects, with better transfer when training was sustained, practically relevant, and active, and Wood et al. (2026) identified the same profile of components in in-service inclusive education programmes. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model anticipates such unevenness by treating adoption as developmental rather than immediate (Hall & Hord, 2020). Access to that development is not evenly distributed: Ahmed et al. (2022) mapped substantial geographical and research gaps in professional development for disability inclusion across low- and middle-income Asia-Pacific countries. Rural settings compound the problem. Ramatea and Govender (2025) examined a rural school in Lesotho and identified a lack of financial support and limited parental involvement as constraints on inclusive implementation, while arguing against treating rural contexts as simply deficient. Philippine divisional evidence points in the same direction (Barco, 2024). Workload is the second structural condition. Differentiation, individualized planning, learner monitoring, and documentation are time-intensive, so class size and teaching load plausibly bear on whether inclusive practice is feasible independently of teacher disposition or training, although the present study measured the association rather than the mechanism. Overall, the literature indicates that inclusive implementation depends on teachers' policy knowledge, institutional support, differentiated pedagogy, collaboration, individualized planning, and manageable workloads. However, few studies have jointly examined teacher readiness and self-reported implementation across these dimensions in rural Philippine public secondary schools. This gap provides the basis for the present study.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive component profiled respondents and summarized their readiness and implementation ratings; the correlational component examined the association between the composites. The non-experimental approach suited a study measuring existing conditions without manipulation, whose purpose was baseline evidence rather than evaluation of a treatment. Readiness and self-reported implementation were treated as distinct constructs. Readiness is defined as teachers' knowledge of inclusion policy, attitudes toward inclusion, perceived capability to use inclusive approaches, and perceived access to institutional support. Self-reported implementation is defined as teachers' own rating of the extent to which they enact observable inclusive classroom practices. Two features of the response format bear on the dimension-level results. Both scales used the same four-point format, from Very High to Very Low, and the instructional strategies dimension of the readiness scale is worded behaviorally, which places it closer to the implementation scale than the other three readiness dimensions.

Sampling Design

Sampling proceeded in two stages. School Learning Center 3 was selected purposively because it matched the study setting, a rural cluster in which inclusive education is mandated but specialist support is limited, and all four public secondary schools in the cluster were included. Across the four participating schools, eligible teachers were invited to take part through their school heads. The study records do not contain the total number of eligible teachers on the school registries, the number of invitations issued, or the number of refusals. An overall response rate therefore cannot be calculated and nonresponse bias cannot be assessed; these figures are reported as absent rather than estimated, and none has been imputed. A total of 130 completed questionnaires was returned and formed the analytic sample. The sample size was not fixed in advance by a sampling formula or an a priori power analysis: it is the number of eligible teachers who consented and returned complete questionnaires within the approved collection period. A post-hoc sensitivity analysis indicates that this sample was adequate for the planned analyses at conventional criteria. With $N = 130$, $\alpha = .05$ two-tailed, and power = .80, the smallest detectable correlation is $|r| = .24$, against an observed $r = .40$; for the two regression models the smallest detectable effect is $f^2 = .12$, against observed values of $f^2 = .48$ and $f^2 = .37$. The setting was purposively selected, followed by voluntary recruitment of eligible teachers; the sample was therefore not probability-based, and the results describe the participating teachers rather than a wider population.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in School Learning Center 3 of the Schools Division of Zamboanga Sibugay, Region IX, Philippines, a rural cluster covering the municipalities of Buug, Diplahan, Imelda, and Malangas, whose four public secondary schools serve learners from farming and fishing communities. Inclusive education is mandated in these schools under Republic Act No. 11650. According to administrative information provided by the participating schools, none hosts a resident special education program and specialist personnel are shared across municipalities. The cluster was selected to describe readiness and reported practice in one rural, resource-constrained setting of the kind in which inclusion is mandated without a resident special education program.

Research Participants

The respondents were junior high school teachers from Buug, Diplahan, Imelda, and Malangas National High Schools within School Learning Center 3. Selection proceeded in two stages. The four schools were chosen purposively because they matched the study setting. Within them, teachers were eligible if they held permanent or temporary appointments with at least one year of experience, carried a Grade 7 to 10 load during School Year 2025–2026, and interacted regularly with diverse learners. Participation was voluntary, making recruitment a voluntary response rather than a random selection, and the number of eligible teachers per school was not recorded. The analytic sample comprised 130 completed questionnaires. School-level collection records report these as Diplahan 38 (29.2%), Imelda 35 (26.9%), Malangas 30 (23.1%), and Buug 27 (20.8%); these counts come from the author's field records rather than from the analytic file, which carries no school identifier, so school cannot be entered as a variable.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire in three parts was used. Part 1 collected the nine demographic variables. Part 2 measured readiness through 20 items distributed equally across knowledge of inclusion policies, attitude toward inclusion, instructional strategies, and access to support and confidence. Part 3 measured implementation through 20 items distributed equally across differentiated instruction, behavior support and classroom management, collaboration with stakeholders, and assessment and progress tracking. Both scales used four response options, from 4 for Very High or Very High Extent to 1 for Very Low or Very Low Extent, interpreted with the ranges 3.50 to 4.00, 2.50 to 3.49, 1.50 to 2.49, and 1.00 to 1.49. Each composite was its items' unweighted mean. Item content was drawn from Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) and DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 and No. 44, s. 2021, the governing issuances when the instrument was drafted. The policy-knowledge items refer to provisions of the Act and procedures named in those orders, including the Learner Information System, disability classifications, recognition of observable signs, and accommodation requirements. The administered instrument contained no item derived from the implementing rules and regulations of the Act, which were in force during the study period (Department of Education, 2025), limiting the extent to which the policy-knowledge scores represent the procedural duties those rules specify. The complete item-to-dimension mapping is supplied as a supplementary file. The questionnaire was administered in English, the medium of instruction and the language of the issuances the items reference, so no translation was undertaken. All 40 items are positively phrased, which keeps the response format consistent across dimensions. The questionnaire was evaluated by three experts: a

university-based validator holding a doctorate with a graduate specialization in special education, a school head, and an education supervisor. Each rated the items against five criteria, namely relevance, clarity, balance, objectivity, and presentation, and returned written comments, and the instrument was revised before administration. No content-validity index was computed for this instrument: item-level and scale-level content-validity indices were not calculated, no numerical decision threshold was applied, and the study records contain no item-by-item audit trail of retained, revised, and removed items. Of the three evaluations, one completed validation form, dated 6 November 2025, is retained in the study records and supplied as a supplementary file; the forms of the two remaining validators were not archived. The documentary evidence of content validation is therefore limited to that single form and the stated credentials of the three validators, so content validity should be regarded as expert-reviewed but not quantified. Because the administered policy-knowledge items did not incorporate the 2025 implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 11650, the instrument did not assess teachers' knowledge of provisions introduced by the 2025 implementing rules and regulations; this limitation should be considered when interpreting the policy-knowledge results. The instrument was pilot-tested with 30 teachers outside the main sample, producing Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .80 for the 20-item readiness scale and .83 for the 20-item implementation scale. In the main sample, coefficients for the eight proposed domains ranged from .74 to .90, while corrected item-total correlations ranged from .45 to .78. Sampling adequacy was high, with a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .929 and a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(780) = 3460.2$, $p < .001$. A principal component analysis of the 40 administered items with varimax rotation was then conducted. Two components were not retained on the basis of parallel analysis or a scree criterion: they were fixed in advance to test whether the readiness items and the implementation items would separate, and that decision is the study's stated retention basis. The unrotated eigenvalues of the first two components were 15.38 and 6.10, with the third at 1.23, and the two retained components explained 53.7% of the total variance. Communalities ranged from .28 to .69. All 20 readiness items took their primary loading on one component, ranging from .52 to .71, and all 20 implementation items took their primary loading on the other, ranging in absolute value from .74 to .83. One cross-loading of .30 or higher was observed: the item on whether the school provides sufficient support systems loaded .34 in absolute value on the implementation component. Given 130 respondents for 40 items and a two-component extraction forced within the same sample used for the substantive analyses, the structure is preliminary and exploratory rather than a confirmatory measurement model, and it should be replicated in a larger independent sample. The four domains under each composite are therefore reported as descriptive groupings. A sensitivity analysis excluding the behaviorally worded readiness domain produced a correlation of $r = .402$, compared with $r = .401$ for the full readiness composite.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed the divisional approval and proceeded during School Year 2025–2026. Principals were consulted before respondents were approached, and each school received information on the study's purpose, eligibility, and the voluntary nature of participation. Consent procedures explained the questionnaire, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. Screening for missing values, duplicates, and out-of-range values identified 130 complete cases.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, teaching position, subject taught, in-service training sessions on inclusive education in the previous three years, class size handled, and primary grade level taught?

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Teacher Respondents (N = 130)

Profile Variable and Category	f	%	Profile Variable and Category	f	%
Age			Subject taught		
20–29 years	44	33.8	English	18	13.8
30–39 years	46	35.4	Mathematics	17	13.1
40–49 years	27	20.8	Science	17	13.1
50–59 years	10	7.7	Filipino	16	12.3
60 years and above	3	2.3	Araling Panlipunan	16	12.3
Sex			MAPEH	16	12.3
Male	40	30.8	TLE or EPP	15	11.5
Female	90	69.2	ESP or Values Education	15	11.5
Highest educational attainment			Inclusive-education training sessions, past three years		
Bachelor's degree	71	54.6	0	96	73.8

With master's units	39	30.0	1-2	21	16.2
Master's degree	13	10.0	3-4	9	6.9
With doctoral units	4	3.1	5 or more	4	3.1
Doctoral degree	3	2.3	Class size currently handled		
Years of teaching experience			Less than 30 learners	11	8.5
1-5 years	45	34.6	30-40 learners	31	23.8
6-10 years	33	25.4	41-50 learners	64	49.2
11-15 years	26	20.0	51 or more learners	24	18.5
16-20 years	13	10.0	Primary grade level taught		
21 years and above	13	10.0	Grade 7	35	26.9
Teaching position or rank			Grade 8	33	25.4
Teacher I	50	38.5	Grade 9	32	24.6
Teacher II	39	30.0	Grade 10	30	23.1
Teacher III	26	20.0			
Master Teacher I	9	6.9			
Master Teacher II	4	3.1			
Special Science Teacher II	2	1.5			

The sample was concentrated in the earlier career stages: 90 respondents (69.2%) were aged 20 to 39 years, 78 (60.0%) had ten years of experience or less, and 115 (88.5%) held ranks from Teacher I to Teacher III. Ninety (69.2%) were female and 59 (45.4%) reported postgraduate study. Two findings are particularly relevant. Ninety-six respondents (73.8%) had attended no inclusive-education training in the previous three years and 117 (90.0%) no more than two, while 88 (67.7%) handled classes larger than 40 learners. The questionnaire did not ask why training was unavailable or unattended, so the findings show only that recent exposure was limited and large classes common.

Research Question 2: What is the level of teachers' readiness for inclusive education in terms of knowledge of inclusion policies, attitude toward inclusion, instructional strategies, and access to support and confidence?

Table 2. Level of Teachers' Readiness for Inclusive Education (N = 130)

Dimension and Indicator	M	SD
Knowledge of Inclusion Policies		
1. Familiar with key national inclusion policies	2.75	0.68
2. Applies policies in identifying learners through the Learner Information System	1.87	0.73
3. Knows disability classifications under Department of Education guidelines	1.92	0.65
4. Identifies observable signs of special educational needs	1.88	0.72
5. Aware of accommodation requirements under Republic Act No. 11650	1.85	0.72
Composite	2.05	0.52
Attitude Toward Inclusion		
1. Believes diverse abilities enrich the learning environment	3.16	0.62
2. Positive about adapting teaching to diverse needs	3.28	0.65
3. Open to collaborating with specialists and support personnel	3.26	0.68
4. Views inclusive teaching as rewarding	3.18	0.68
5. Supports full participation regardless of ability	3.50	0.59
Composite	3.28	0.45
Instructional Strategies		
1. Uses varied teaching methods for diverse needs	2.75	0.73
2. Adapts materials and setup for movement difficulties	2.58	0.69
3. Incorporates visual aids for hearing impairments	2.85	0.71
4. Adjusts pacing and provides processing time	2.58	0.81
5. Employs hands-on activities for intellectual disabilities	2.38	0.70
Composite	2.63	0.53
Access to Support and Confidence		
1. Has access to adequate resources for inclusive teaching	1.63	0.66
2. Confident in seeking collaboration for communication needs	1.62	0.69
3. School provides sufficient support systems	1.65	0.66
4. Confident in managing inclusive classes	1.55	0.66
5. Has sufficient training for challenging behaviors	1.68	0.65
Composite	1.63	0.48
Overall readiness	2.40	0.44

Readiness varied across the four dimensions. Attitude toward inclusion was strongest ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.45$), with support for full participation reaching Very High ($M = 3.50$), and instructional strategies also fell in the High category ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 0.53$). Knowledge of inclusion policies ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.52$) and access to support and confidence ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 0.48$) were Low, so only two of the four dimensions reached the 2.50 cutoff. Familiarity with key provisions of national policy was High ($M = 2.75$) while the four specific items were Low: the Learner Information System ($M = 1.87$), disability classifications ($M = 1.92$), observable signs ($M = 1.88$), and accommodation requirements ($M = 1.85$). The gaps of 0.84 to 0.90 points indicate a distance between recognizing a policy and knowing what it requires in practice, and because the items measured self-rated familiarity, a validated competency task would be needed to assess procedural mastery. This pattern is consistent with Martin (2026), who reported that Philippine teachers were aware of inclusive education while its legal provisions were held more securely by school heads. Access to support and confidence was the lowest dimension, with all five items between 1.55 and 1.68. Because access and confidence were combined, the composite cannot separate resources, specialist availability, school processes, and personal confidence.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of teachers' self-reported implementation of inclusive practices in terms of differentiated instruction, behavior support and classroom management, collaboration with stakeholders, and assessment and progress tracking?

Table 3. Extent of Self-Reported Implementation of Inclusive Practices ($N = 130$)

Dimension and Indicator	M	SD
Differentiated Instruction		
1. Modifies lesson content for individual learner needs	2.37	0.87
2. Provides multiple ways to show learning	2.35	0.90
3. Uses assistive technology to support learning	2.40	0.84
4. Presents information in multiple formats, following Universal Design for Learning	2.40	0.86
5. Groups learners flexibly depending on the activity	2.26	0.82
Composite	2.36	0.72
Behavior Support and Classroom Management		
1. Uses recognition and rewards for appropriate behavior	3.08	0.82
2. Creates structured routines and clear expectations	2.99	0.88
3. Uses positive behavior intervention strategies	2.85	0.84
4. Implements individualized behavior support plans	1.86	0.79
5. Builds a classroom of respect and peer support	2.91	0.86
Composite	2.74	0.69
Collaboration with Stakeholders		
1. Consults parents on learning needs and progress	2.11	0.85
2. Works with special education specialists when available	1.90	0.80
3. Involves community or external support services	2.02	0.85
4. Collaborates with fellow teachers on inclusive strategies	2.15	0.83
5. Participates in case conferences or planning meetings	2.14	0.86
Composite	2.06	0.70
Assessment and Progress Tracking		
1. Uses varied assessment tools for diverse learners	2.73	0.92
2. Allows assistive devices during examinations	2.74	0.82
3. Adapts tests for learners requiring accommodations	2.69	0.92
4. Monitors growth using multiple forms of evidence	2.52	0.87
5. Develops and monitors individualized education plans	2.19	0.85
Composite	2.57	0.74
Overall implementation	2.43	0.68

Behavior support and classroom management was highest ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 0.69$), and assessment and progress tracking also reached High Extent ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.74$). In contrast, differentiated instruction ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.72$) and collaboration with stakeholders ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.70$) were Low Extent. Item standard deviations were larger for implementation (0.79 to 0.92) than readiness (0.59 to 0.81). Differences also appeared within the two higher-rated dimensions. Within behavior support the four whole-class items ranged from 2.85 to 3.08 while the individualized behavior support plan was the single Low Extent entry ($M = 1.86$). Within assessment, discrete accommodations ranged from 2.52 to 2.74 while developing and monitoring individualized education plans was Low Extent ($M = 2.19$). Respondents gave higher ratings to whole-class practices than to the individualized documented planning that Republic Act No. 11650 (2022) contemplates. Such planning requires coordination and specialist input, which the participating schools obtain from specialists shared across municipalities. Differentiated instruction was uniformly Low Extent from 2.26 to 2.40, with flexible grouping lowest. Reviews of Universal Design for Learning and differentiation report favorable outcomes alongside inconsistent implementation, and note that alignment

between design decisions and identified barriers is often absent or insufficiently reported (Almeqdad et al., 2023; Lindner & Schwab, 2025; Zhang et al., 2024). Collaboration was the lowest dimension, its lowest item being work with special education specialists ($M = 1.90$). The pattern is consistent with Pozas and Letzel-Alt (2023), who found that teachers collaborate mainly through the least demanding forms while the more demanding forms are the ones associated with differentiated practice. Implementation scores should be read within the context of the rural school setting. Practices such as consulting special education specialists or coordinating community support services depend on the availability of those personnel and on established institutional structures, which are constrained in rural divisions. Lower implementation in these areas may therefore reflect limited institutional resources and specialist access rather than a lack of teacher initiative, a reading consistent with the rural constraints reported by Ramatea and Govender (2025).

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in teachers' readiness for inclusive education when the respondents are grouped according to their profile variables?

Table 4. Analysis of Variance by Demographic Profile ($N = 130$)

Profile Variable	Least n	Welch F (df)	p	ω^2	F (df)	p	η^2
Panel A. Readiness							
Age	3	0.79 (4, 13.4)	.550	0	0.52 (4, 125)	.722	.016
Sex	40	0.01 (1, 72.0)	.908	0	0.01 (1, 128)	.906	< .001
Educational attainment	3	0.35 (4, 9.7)	.836	0	0.37 (4, 125)	.830	.012
Teaching experience	13	0.43 (4, 43.5)	.785	0	0.43 (4, 125)	.787	.014
Teaching position	2	2.57 (5, 8.9)	.104	0	0.63 (5, 124)	.677	.025
Subject taught	15	1.07 (7, 51.6)	.395	.012	1.23 (7, 122)	.294	.066
Number of training sessions	4	19.02 (3, 11.3)	< .001	.287	18.48 (3, 126)	< .001	.306
Class size	11	0.47 (3, 36.7)	.705	0	0.47 (3, 126)	.704	.011
Grade level taught	30	2.97 (3, 69.3)	.038	.043	2.96 (3, 126)	.035	.066
Panel B. Self-Reported Implementation							
Age	3	0.43 (4, 14.1)	.786	0	0.46 (4, 125)	.766	.014
Sex	40	2.05 (1, 68.1)	.156	.009	2.23 (1, 128)	.138	.017
Educational attainment	3	0.35 (4, 9.1)	.836	0	0.38 (4, 125)	.821	.012
Teaching experience	13	1.19 (4, 42.0)	.330	.012	1.38 (4, 125)	.245	.042
Teaching position	2	0.22 (5, 8.4)	.946	0	0.20 (5, 124)	.960	.008
Subject taught	15	0.78 (7, 52.0)	.607	0	0.79 (7, 122)	.595	.043
Number of training sessions	4	3.92 (3, 10.8)	.040	.066	4.05 (3, 126)	.009	.088
Class size	11	7.53 (3, 39.9)	< .001	.084	4.97 (3, 126)	.003	.106
Grade level taught	30	0.83 (3, 69.5)	.484	0	0.79 (3, 126)	.500	.019

Welch's analysis of variance indicated that readiness differed by training exposure, $F(3, 11.3) = 19.02$, $p < .001$, $\omega^2 = .287$, and by grade level, $F(3, 69.3) = 2.97$, $p = .038$. Implementation differed by class size, $F(3, 39.9) = 7.53$, $p < .001$, $\omega^2 = .084$, and by training exposure, $F(3, 10.8) = 3.92$, $p = .040$. The other six variables were not significant for either outcome. Under the Bonferroni threshold of .0028 for 18 tests, readiness by training sessions and implementation by class size remain significant on both the Welch and the conventional test. Readiness by grade level and implementation by training sessions do not, and are treated as exploratory.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant difference in the extent of self-reported implementation when the respondents are grouped according to their profile variables?

Table 5. Games-Howell Comparisons Reaching the .05 Criterion

Outcome	Factor	Pairwise Comparison	Mean Difference	p
Panel A. Comparisons not involving a sparse category				
Readiness	Training sessions	0 versus 1–2	0.25	.002
Implementation	Class size	41–50 versus less than 30	0.68	.002
Implementation	Class size	51 or more versus less than 30	0.81	.001
Panel B. Exploratory comparisons involving a category with $n = 9$ or $n = 4$				
Readiness	Training sessions	0 versus 3–4	0.73	.006
Readiness	Training sessions	0 versus 5 or more	0.93	.015
Readiness	Training sessions	1–2 versus 5 or more	0.68	.036
Implementation	Training sessions	0 versus 3–4	0.62	.033

Training exposure produced the clearest ordered pattern, listed in Table 5. Because only nine teachers attended 3–4 training sessions and four attended five or more sessions, the results for these two categories are presented descriptively and should not be generalized. Inferential comparisons involving these sparse groups are treated as exploratory, particularly when the p values do not meet the Bonferroni-adjusted significance level. The one comparison that does not depend on a sparse category is the contrast between the no-training group and the 1–2-session group, in which readiness was 0.25 points higher for the trained group, $p = .002$. Descriptively, Figure 2 shows readiness rising across the four training bands from 2.28 to 2.53, 3.01, and 3.21, and implementation rising from 2.34 to 2.51, 2.96, and 3.10. The groups were unequal at 96, 21, nine, and four respondents, and the design cannot determine whether training raised readiness or more ready teachers sought training. The direction of the association is nonetheless consistent with Attilo et al. (2025), who reported that relevant training was positively related to the inclusive attitudes and practical application of Philippine secondary teachers.

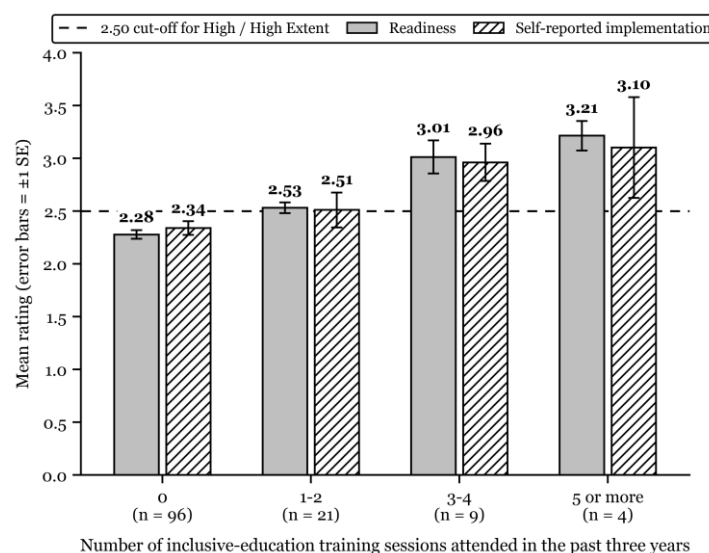


Figure 2. Mean readiness and implementation by training sessions attended.

Class size showed a monotonic decline in implementation, from 3.02 in classes below 30 learners to 2.59, 2.34, and 2.21 in the larger categories (Figure 3). Games-Howell placed the fewer-than-30 group above the 41-to-50 and 51-or-more groups. The pattern is consistent with the practical demands of large classes, since individualized planning, learner monitoring, flexible grouping, and documentation require additional teacher time, although no such mechanism was measured, and the smallest group held 11 teachers. Class size was unrelated to readiness, $F(3, 126) = 0.47$, $p = .704$.

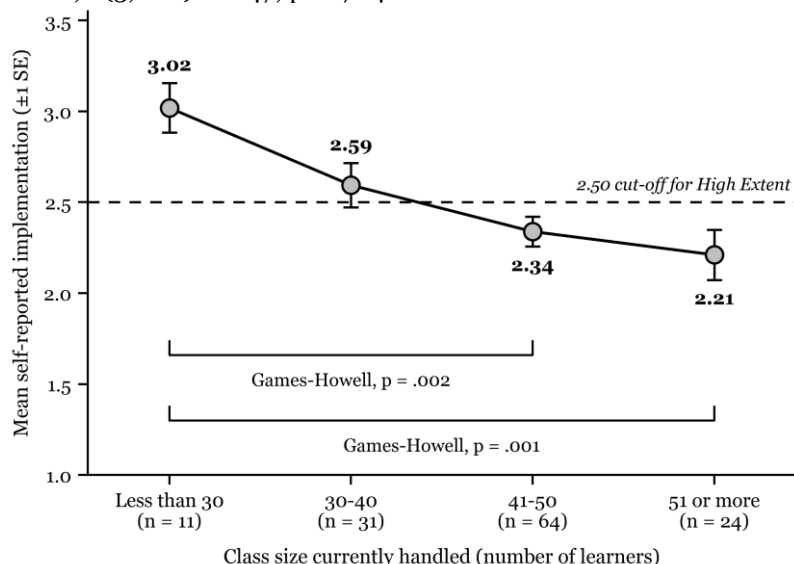


Figure 3. Mean self-reported implementation by class size, with significant Games-Howell comparisons.

For grade level, readiness declined from 2.56 in Grade 7 to 2.28 in Grade 10 and only that contrast met the Tukey criterion, unconfirmed by Games-Howell at $p = .063$, while implementation did not differ, $F(3, 126) = 0.79$, $p = .500$. No developmental interpretation is therefore supported.

Relationship Between Readiness and Self-Reported Implementation

Scores on the readiness composite were positively associated with scores on the implementation composite, $r = .40$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.25, .54], so the third null hypothesis is rejected. The component analysis was consistent with two separable scales. Figure 4 displays the scatter with the least-squares fit and its 95% confidence band. With $r^2 = .161$ the composites shared about 16.1% of their variance, so readiness is relevant to implementation without being a sufficient account of it. The correlation cannot establish precedence, and shared method variance may inflate it. A comparable readiness-to-practice association has been reported among secondary teachers elsewhere (Nketsia et al., 2025).

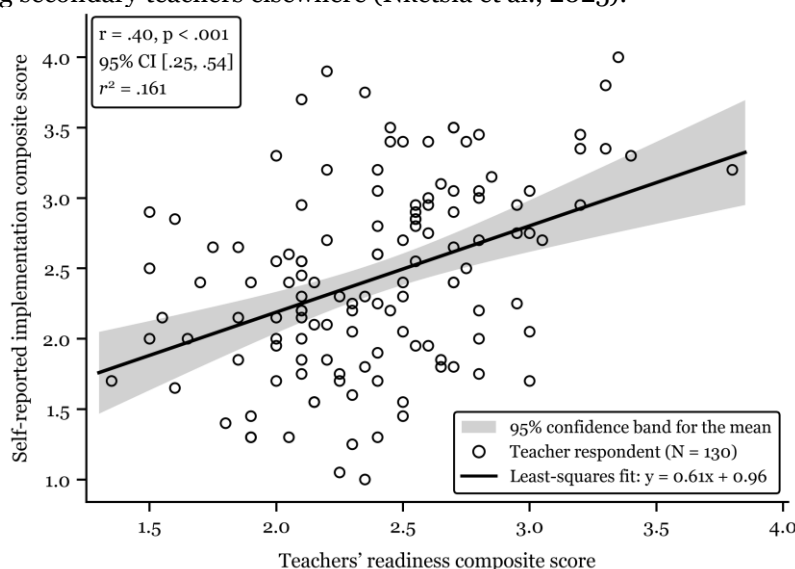


Figure 4. Readiness and self-reported implementation ($N = 130$).

Research Question 6: Is there a significant relationship between readiness and self-reported implementation?

Table 6. Adjusted Models for Readiness and Implementation ($N = 130$)

Model and Predictor	B	95% CI	p
Model 1. Readiness, adjusted $R^2 = .278$			
1–2 training sessions	0.25	[0.07, 0.44]	.007
3–4 training sessions	0.73	[0.46, 0.99]	< .001
5 or more training sessions	0.93	[0.55, 1.32]	< .001
30–40 learners	-0.18	[-0.45, 0.08]	.176
41–50 learners	-0.14	[-0.39, 0.12]	.297
51 or more learners	-0.16	[-0.46, 0.13]	.273
Teaching experience	-0.05	[-0.13, 0.03]	.204
Educational attainment	0.05	[-0.06, 0.16]	.349
Model 2. Implementation, adjusted $R^2 = .228$			
Readiness composite	0.51	[0.23, 0.79]	< .001
30–40 learners	-0.34	[-0.76, 0.08]	.107
41–50 learners	-0.65	[-1.03, -0.26]	.001
51 or more learners	-0.76	[-1.20, -0.32]	< .001
1–2 training sessions	-0.04	[-0.34, 0.26]	.785
3–4 training sessions	0.17	[-0.30, 0.63]	.483
5 or more training sessions	0.43	[-0.23, 1.10]	.200

In Model 1 each training band was associated with higher readiness than the no-training reference, and the contrasts were ordered: 0.25, 0.73, and 0.93. The association persisted after adjustment for teaching experience, educational attainment, and class size, none of which was associated with readiness. The two highest training bands rest on nine and four respondents, so their coefficients are correspondingly imprecise, as their confidence intervals show. In Model 2 the readiness composite was associated with the implementation composite, $B = 0.51$, 95% CI [0.23, 0.79]. Class size was also associated, with the two largest

bands 0.65 and 0.76 below the fewer-than-30 reference. None of the training contrasts was associated with implementation once readiness was in the model, so the training association was attenuated and no longer statistically significant. No mediation analysis was conducted.

Research Question 7: Based on the findings, what training program can be proposed?

Proposed Project BRIDGE Training Program. Based on the findings, Project BRIDGE (Building Readiness, Inclusion, Differentiation, Guidance, and Engagement) is proposed as a school-based professional development program to strengthen teachers' readiness and capacity to implement inclusive practices in rural public high schools. The program has four interconnected components: (1) Policy Application and Learner Identification, (2) Pedagogical Tooling for Specialized Instruction, (3) School-Based Referral and Stakeholder Collaboration, and (4) Coaching and Confidence Building. The first component focuses on strengthening teachers' understanding of their responsibilities under Republic Act No. 11650 and related DepEd policies, particularly in recognizing, documenting, and referring to observable learner difficulties without diagnosing learners. The second component develops teachers' skills in differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, assistive technology, positive behavior support, individualized planning, and inclusive assessment. The third component strengthens school-based referral systems and collaboration among teachers, school heads, families, special education personnel, and relevant community services. The fourth component provides continuing support through coaching, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, peer review, and reflective practice to help teachers apply the training in their classrooms. Each component will result in practical teacher outputs, such as learner documentation and referral tools, differentiated lesson plans, behavior-support plans, assessment-accommodation records, referral directories, and reflective practice records. The program may initially be delivered through a three-day cluster training followed by school-based coaching and monitoring. However, Project BRIDGE is a proposed program and has not yet been validated as an intervention. Before wider implementation, it should be reviewed and refined with teachers, school administrators, special education personnel, families, and other relevant stakeholders. Pilot testing should also include clear learning outcomes, implementation-fidelity measures, and appropriate evaluation procedures. Future research may use matched comparison groups or a stepped-wedge design to provide stronger evidence of program effects. Thus, Project BRIDGE is presented as a research-informed training proposal based on the study findings and not as an established intervention with demonstrated causal effects.

Ethical Considerations

The study received institutional research authorization from the Division Research Committee of the Schools Division of Zamboanga Sibugay, Department of Education Region IX, through Approval Letter Reference No. ZS-RespLtr-SGOD-P&R-2025-10-1068, dated 6 November 2025. The cited division approval constituted the applicable institutional research authorization for conducting the study. No separate clearance or exemption from a research ethics committee was sought or issued, so the division authorization is the only regulatory approval on record for this study. Data collection proceeded only after that approval was granted. The authorization required voluntary and unremunerated participation, administration outside class hours, protection of respondent identities, and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Written informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw without penalty. Questionnaires carried no respondent names and were returned in sealed envelopes through designated school-level coordinators. Responses were handled confidentially and are reported only in aggregate, and the data files will be securely destroyed two years after completion of the study. The author held no supervisory or evaluative authority over any respondent.

Conclusion

Readiness among the 130 teachers varied systematically across dimensions. Attitude toward inclusion and instructional strategies fell above the scale midpoint, whereas knowledge of inclusion policies and access to support and confidence fell below it. Respondents therefore reported lower knowledge of inclusion policies and lower access to support and confidence than favorable attitudes. A similar pattern appeared in the implementation results: whole-class behavior routines and discrete assessment accommodations reached High Extent, while differentiated instruction, stakeholder collaboration, and the two individualized planning items were Low Extent. At the nominal .05 level, training exposure, grade level, and class size showed subgroup differences; after Bonferroni correction, only readiness by training exposure and implementation by class size remained statistically robust. The readiness and implementation composite scores were positively related, $r = .40$, sharing 16.1% of their variance. The component analysis separated the

two scales under rotation, and both were measured with one positively worded instrument at a single sitting. In adjusted models, training exposure was associated with readiness, and readiness and class size with implementation, while none of the training contrasts was statistically significant in the implementation model. The cross-sectional findings do not establish causation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, four recommendations are proposed. School administrators, in coordination with the division office, teachers, families, and relevant specialists, should first co-design and assess the feasibility of Project BRIDGE, then pilot it through approved school-improvement and professional-development mechanisms, subject to applicable Department of Education policies and available resources. Teachers should treat their favorable disposition as a foundation for procedural practice, documenting observable concerns without diagnosing and following established referral procedures. The Schools Division and regional offices should strengthen access to qualified special education and guidance personnel, maintain a referral directory, and review sectioning and workload alongside training. Future researchers should evaluate Project BRIDGE prospectively with a controlled quasi-experimental design using matched comparison schools or a stepped-wedge rollout, validate the instrument independently, and record the eligible population, invitations, and refusals so that response rates can be reported.

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