International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com

Original Article

Early Childhood Teachers' Readiness and Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education: Basis for a Professional Development Program

Queenihar S. Lantaka

Author Information:
Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University, Zamboanga City, Philippines

Correspondence:
lantakaqueenie@gmail.com

Article History:

Date Received: August 2, 2026
Date Revised: August 31, 2026
Date Accepted: October 12, 2026
Date Published: October 16, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0385

Document ID: *2026IJROMS0385*

Recommended Citation:
Lantaka, Q. S. (2026). Early Childhood Teachers' Readiness and Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education: Basis for a Professional Development Program. International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies, 1(9), 407–430. https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0385

Abstract. Implementing inclusive education in kindergarten requires teachers to address diverse learning needs; however, limited evidence is available on teachers' perceived readiness and the practical challenges they encounter in selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City. This study assessed kindergarten teachers' perceived readiness to implement inclusive education, identified the challenges they encountered, and proposed a Professional Development Program (PDP) based on the findings. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 30 kindergarten teachers using the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale, retaining the original 18 items without wording changes but modifying the response scale from six points to four points. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize readiness ratings, while the Kruskal–Wallis test examined differences in perceived readiness according to educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with five purposively selected teachers, one from each school, and analyzed thematically. Results indicated that teachers perceived themselves as ready in classroom management (M = 3.22) and highly ready in instructional strategies (M = 3.26) and collaboration and support practices (M = 3.17). No statistically significant differences in perceived readiness were found according to educational attainment, $\chi^2(2) = 0.129$, $p = .938$; specialization, $\chi^2(2) = 0.927$, $p = .629$; or number of trainings attended, $\chi^2(4) = 8.292$, $p = .081$. Five major challenges emerged: limited professional development and training, diverse learner behaviors and needs, insufficient parental support, limited resources and facilities, and difficulties applying effective classroom practices and strategies. The findings indicate that relatively high self-reported readiness coexists with practical challenges in implementing inclusive education. Accordingly, the proposed PDP focuses on classroom management, differentiated instruction, family collaboration, policy awareness, and the use of available resources. Further review and evaluation are necessary to establish the program's effectiveness.

Keywords: Teacher Readiness; Inclusive Education; Classroom Management; Instructional Strategies; Professional Development

Introduction

Inclusive education aims to ensure that all learners, including those with disabilities and diverse learning needs, have meaningful opportunities to participate and learn. However, implementing inclusive education requires more than placing diverse learners in the same classroom. Teachers are expected to adapt instruction, manage diverse learning and behavioral needs, and provide appropriate opportunities for participation and learning (UNESCO, 2020). These responsibilities can be particularly demanding in early childhood settings, where teachers support learners with diverse developmental and learning needs during an important period of growth and development. Effective implementation therefore requires teachers to have the knowledge and perceived capacity to apply inclusive practices, together with appropriate professional support and learning resources. In the Philippine context, inclusive education is supported by Republic Act No. 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022,

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

which provides for inclusive education and support services for learners with disabilities. The law also emphasizes teacher training and continuing professional development to strengthen teachers' capacity to support diverse learners (Republic Act No. 11650, 2022). Despite this policy direction, implementing inclusive education continues to present challenges in school settings. Kim et al. (2026) found that Philippine early childhood teachers experienced gaps between their professional needs and the resources available to support the inclusion of autistic children. Similarly, Almeron (2025) reported that Philippine kindergarten teachers encountered challenges related to limited training, resources, specialist support, and other contextual barriers to inclusive education. These findings highlight the importance of examining not only teachers' perceived readiness but also the practical difficulties and support needs that influence the implementation of inclusive practices. The five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, provide a specific local setting for examining inclusive education implementation among early childhood teachers. Examining this context is important because teachers' experiences are shaped by the professional support, learning resources, and classroom conditions available within their respective school settings. Localized evidence can help identify the areas in which teachers perceive themselves as ready to implement inclusive practices and the difficulties they continue to encounter in their classrooms. Such evidence may also inform professional development initiatives that respond to the needs identified within the participating schools. Teacher readiness and implementation challenges represent related but distinct aspects of inclusive education. In this study, perceived readiness refers to teachers' self-reported capacity to implement inclusive practices in classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices. Challenges, on the other hand, refer to the difficulties teachers encounter when applying these practices in actual classroom settings. Teachers may perceive themselves as ready in particular areas while still experiencing difficulties associated with diverse learner needs, classroom management, limited resources, or insufficient professional support. Examining both dimensions is therefore important because readiness scores alone may not fully reflect the practical difficulties teachers experience, while accounts of implementation challenges may not adequately indicate the areas in which teachers perceive themselves as capable of implementing inclusive practices. Although previous studies have examined teachers' preparedness, experiences, and challenges in implementing inclusive education, further localized evidence is needed to understand how perceived readiness relates to the practical difficulties encountered by early childhood teachers in Philippine public-school settings. Studies conducted in the Philippine context have identified concerns involving professional development, learning resources, specialist support, and other contextual barriers (Kim et al., 2026; Almeron, 2025). However, findings on teachers' perceived readiness alone may not fully explain the difficulties they encounter when applying inclusive practices in actual classrooms. Conversely, accounts of implementation challenges may not adequately indicate the areas in which teachers perceive themselves as ready to implement inclusive education. Examining classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices alongside teachers' reported implementation challenges can provide a more comprehensive, context-specific understanding of their professional development needs. This is particularly relevant in the five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, where such evidence can inform a professional development program responsive to teachers' identified needs. This study examined kindergarten teachers' perceived readiness to implement inclusive education in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices, as well as the challenges they encountered in five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City. It also examined whether perceived readiness differed according to educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, the study first assessed teachers' perceived readiness and subsequently explored their implementation challenges through interviews. Examining these dimensions together was necessary because readiness scores indicate teachers' perceived capacity to implement inclusive practices, whereas qualitative accounts provide further insight into the practical difficulties they encounter in classroom settings. Integrating these findings provided a context-specific basis for identifying areas requiring further professional support and developing a proposed Professional Development Program that builds on teachers' perceived readiness while addressing their reported implementation challenges.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the level of readiness and the challenges encountered by Early Childhood Teachers in implementing inclusive education.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

1. What is the level of early childhood teachers' readiness in implementing inclusive education in terms of:
   1.1 Classroom management,
   1.2 Instructional strategies, and
   1.3 Collaboration and support practices
2. What are the challenges encountered by early childhood teachers in implementing inclusive education?
3. Is there a significant difference in the overall perceived readiness of early childhood teachers when grouped according to:
   3.1 Educational attainment,
   3.2 Specialization, and
   3.3 Number of trainings attended
4. Based on the identified areas of relatively lower readiness and the challenges encountered by early childhood teachers, what professional development program can be developed?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined early childhood teachers' perceived readiness to implement inclusive education in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices. It also explored the challenges encountered by the teachers in implementing inclusive education and examined whether their overall perceived readiness differed according to educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended. Based on the findings, the study aimed to develop a proposed Professional Development Program (PDP) that builds on the teachers' perceived readiness while addressing the areas of relatively lower readiness and the implementation challenges identified in the study. The study involved 30 early childhood teachers from five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, identified in the manuscript as School A, School B, School C, School D, and School E. The quantitative phase assessed teachers' perceived readiness using the adapted Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) instrument. The qualitative phase involved interviews with five purposively selected teachers, with one participant representing each school. These participants were selected based on their relatively lower readiness scores within their respective schools to gain further insight into the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education. The study was limited to data collected during the summer of School Year 2025–2026 and relied on teachers' self-reported responses and interview accounts. Consequently, the findings reflect the participants' perceived readiness and reported experiences rather than independently observed teaching competence or objectively measured implementation effectiveness. The study focused on the selected profile variables of educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended. It did not directly assess other factors that may influence inclusive education implementation, such as school infrastructure, funding, the availability of specialist services, or broader policy implementation. Furthermore, the findings were limited to the participating teachers and schools and were not intended to represent all early childhood teachers or public elementary schools in Zamboanga City or elsewhere. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases served as the basis for identifying professional development needs and formulating the proposed PDP. The program was intended to respond to the identified areas of relatively lower readiness and the challenges reported by the participants, rather than to serve as an evaluated intervention. Its implementation and effectiveness were beyond the scope of the present study.

Literature Review

Inclusive Education in Early Childhood

Inclusive education in early childhood involves providing children equitable opportunities to participate and learn regardless of differences in abilities, developmental needs, or other characteristics. In early childhood classrooms, inclusion requires teachers to respond to learner diversity while maintaining meaningful participation in classroom activities. Teacher capacity is therefore important because inclusive placement alone does not ensure effective practice. Teachers may require appropriate knowledge, skills, and support to respond to diverse learning needs. Philippine studies have documented factors associated with teachers' experiences of inclusive education. Magtuba (2024), for example, examined public-school teachers' perceptions of contextual factors and attitudes toward inclusive education and found that teacher training received the lowest rating among the contextual factors examined. The study also found a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

contextual factors and their attitudes toward inclusive education. Similarly, Villar and Marcia (2025) examined receiving teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 6 in the Valencia City Division and described their perceived preparedness for inclusive classrooms. These studies suggest that teachers' experiences of inclusion are associated with both individual and contextual factors, including preparation and school support. Evidence from early childhood settings also shows that teachers' experiences of inclusion involve related but distinct constructs. Kondo et al. (2023) examined early childhood educators' attitudes toward and self-efficacy for providing inclusive programs for preschool-age children with disabilities in California. Although most participants expressed positive views of inclusion, they reported less comfort with supporting children with disabilities in their programs. The study also examined whether teachers' education and experience were associated with their understanding of disability-related laws and comfort with inclusion. These findings provide evidence about attitudes, self-efficacy, and comfort with inclusion but do not establish that self-efficacy is equivalent to readiness. In the Philippine context, Que (2017) examined perceived teaching efficacy among beginning preschool teachers in private preschools in Metro Manila. The study identified areas in which teachers needed greater knowledge and support, particularly concerning disabilities and disruptive behavior. Together, these studies indicate that inclusive education in early childhood requires teachers to respond to diverse learner needs through classroom, instructional, and collaborative practices. However, these studies also show that attitudes, efficacy, preparedness, and readiness are related but distinct aspects of teachers' capacity for inclusion. This distinction supports examining readiness through specific practice-oriented dimensions.

Teacher Readiness for Inclusive Education

Teacher readiness for inclusive education is related to, but distinct from, teacher efficacy, preparedness, competence, attitudes, and confidence. Preparedness generally refers to the extent of teachers' preparation for a professional task, whereas competence encompasses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform it. Self-efficacy concerns teachers' beliefs about their capability to perform particular activities, while attitudes refer to their perceptions or dispositions toward inclusion. Here, readiness refers specifically to teachers' perceived capacity to undertake selected practices required in inclusive classrooms. The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma, Loreman, and Forlin (2012) was originally designed to measure teachers' perceived self-efficacy for implementing inclusive practices. The 18-item scale identified three factors involving efficacy in using inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in dealing with disruptive behaviors. Thus, the TEIP provides a structured measure of perceived efficacy in practice areas relevant to inclusive teaching. It was not originally developed as a measure of teacher readiness. Selected TEIP items were adapted into three practice domains—classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices. These domains serve as operational indicators of teacher readiness. This adaptation maintains the distinction between readiness and self-efficacy while using TEIP-related practice areas to examine selected aspects of teacher capacity. The domain labels used here reflect the adaptation of selected TEIP items to the study context and are not the original factor labels of the TEIP. TEIP psychometric literature also highlights the importance of defining the construct carefully across populations and contexts. Selenius and Ginner Hau (2024) reviewed 15 peer-reviewed studies on the psychometric properties of the TEIP. They found support for the original three-factor structure in several samples, although some studies reported alternative structures. The review also found generally sufficient or good internal consistency but concluded that further validation is needed before the TEIP is used to compare populations and contexts. These findings reinforce the importance of considering population and context when applying the scale. The three adapted domains are treated as complementary aspects of inclusive classroom practice. Classroom management concerns teachers' perceived capacity to respond to diverse behaviors and maintain classroom conditions that support participation. Instructional strategies concern teachers' capacity to adapt teaching activities and approaches to differences among learners. Collaboration and support practices concern teachers' capacity to communicate and work with families, colleagues, and other individuals involved in supporting learners. Together, these domains provide a practice-oriented framework for examining selected aspects of teacher readiness. They do not, however, encompass all components of teacher competence or professional preparedness. Philippine studies have examined teacher capacity for inclusive education using different constructs. Que (2017) examined perceived teaching efficacy among beginning preschool teachers in private preschools in Metro Manila. Villar and Marcia (2025) focused on perceived preparedness among receiving teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 6 in Valencia City Division. Arboiz and Aoanan (2024), meanwhile, examined teacher efficacy, attitudes, and readiness

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

among purposively selected public elementary teachers in Region XI using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Their quantitative findings showed high ratings for the constructs examined. Their analysis also reported significant influence of teacher efficacy and attitude on readiness within that context. The study therefore provides a Philippine example of examining readiness alongside efficacy and attitudes. Its findings should not, however, be generalized to all Philippine teachers or interpreted as evidence that these constructs are interchangeable. These studies differ in population, context, and construct. Existing Philippine literature has examined efficacy, preparedness, attitudes, and readiness among different teacher populations and educational settings. This research focuses on early childhood/kindergarten teachers and uses the three adapted TEIP practice domains as operational indicators of readiness. This approach allows readiness to be examined through concrete areas of inclusive classroom practice while maintaining the conceptual distinction between readiness and related constructs.

Classroom Management

Classroom management is an important component of inclusive practice because teachers must respond to differences in behavior, participation, attention, and learning needs while maintaining a supportive learning environment. In inclusive early childhood classrooms, classroom management extends beyond maintaining order. It includes responding to learner behavior, establishing supportive routines, adapting classroom responses, and enabling children with different needs to participate meaningfully. Philippine studies have examined classroom management in different inclusive settings. Sanchez (2023) focused on classroom management and teaching strategies among general education teachers, while Rafailes and Marikit (2024) examined receiving teachers' experiences with behavioral issues. Tero and Revalde (2024) explored approaches and challenges in managing inclusive classrooms, and Elbancol and Marquez (2025) examined classroom management for learners with emotional and behavioral needs. Although these studies differ in participants and contexts, they converge in showing that classroom management in inclusive settings involves responding to diverse learner behaviors and needs rather than simply maintaining classroom order. O'Grady et al. (2024), focusing specifically on early childhood educators, examined teachers' descriptions of classroom discipline policies and procedures in relation to challenging behavior. The teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by challenging behavior and identified a need for additional support to effectively meet children's needs. These findings indicate that early childhood classroom management involves not only teachers' responses to challenging behavior but also the availability of support to address such situations. The literature therefore supports classroom management as a relevant practice area for examining teacher readiness. However, these studies also show that classroom-management practices alone do not establish teacher readiness. Some studies examine actual practices, while others focus on teachers' experiences or challenges. Here, teachers' perceived capacity to manage classroom situations is examined as one operational dimension of readiness. The qualitative findings further describe challenges encountered in applying inclusive practices.

Instructional Strategies

Inclusive education requires teachers to adapt instructional practices to differences in learners' abilities, developmental levels, and participation in classroom activities. Instructional strategies may include modifying activities, providing alternative explanations, using flexible grouping, embedding learning opportunities in routines, and creating multiple ways for learners to participate. Symeonidou and Loizou (2023), in their study titled *Bridging Early Childhood Education and Inclusive Practices in Classrooms That Serve Children with Disabilities: A Narrative Portrait*, examined how early childhood teachers in Cypriot public schools combined early childhood and inclusive pedagogies in classrooms serving children with disabilities. Through interviews with seven teachers, the study described practices that connected early childhood and inclusive pedagogies. It emphasized knowledge of early childhood and inclusive pedagogy, as well as individual and collective approaches to educating all children. The study therefore illustrates how inclusive teaching can involve the integration of early childhood and inclusive pedagogical approaches rather than the use of a single instructional technique. Philippine evidence provides a different but complementary perspective. Lampa and Musico (2024) examined the learning strategies used by Grade 1 elementary teachers in teaching students with special needs, together with their reflections and dispositions. The study involved 10 teachers from selected public schools in Davao City who had experience teaching Grade 1 learners with disabilities. The study focused on teachers' learning strategies, reflections, and dispositions rather than on teacher readiness as a general construct. It therefore provides contextual evidence on instructional practices among

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

teachers working with learners with special needs. It does not directly measure readiness or represent all Philippine inclusive classrooms. Rakap et al. (2024) examined a more specific instructional and professional-development approach in their study, *Promoting Inclusion Through Embedded Instruction: Enhancing Preschool Teachers' Implementation of Learning Opportunities for Children with Disabilities*. The researchers used a multiple-baseline-across-participants design involving four preschool teachers and four children with disabilities to examine the effects of coaching on teachers' implementation of embedded learning opportunities. Teachers' implementation improved after workshop training but reached criterion-level performance only after practice-based coaching was introduced. High levels of implementation were subsequently maintained during maintenance sessions. These findings provide specific evidence that practice-based coaching can support preschool teachers' implementation of embedded instructional opportunities. The studies converge in showing that inclusive instruction requires teachers to adapt or embed learning opportunities in ways that respond to individual learner needs. However, their purposes and methods differ. Symeonidou and Loizou (2023) explored pedagogical practices, Lampa and Musico (2024) examined learning strategies and teacher reflections, and Rakap et al. (2024) examined the effects of coaching on embedded instruction. These distinctions are important because the presence of instructional practices does not necessarily demonstrate teacher readiness. Teachers' perceived capacity to use instructional strategies is therefore examined as an operational dimension of readiness.

Collaboration and Support Practices

Inclusive education is not implemented solely through the individual efforts of classroom teachers. Collaboration with parents, colleagues, school personnel, and other support persons may help teachers understand learner needs, coordinate support, and monitor progress. Collaboration can therefore involve communication, sharing of information, coordination of responsibilities, and participation in educational planning. Ovati et al. (2024) examined teacher perceptions of parent collaboration in multi-ethnic early childhood education and care settings in Norway. The study involved 266 teachers across 56 centers and 198 classrooms. It examined perceptions of parent communication and challenges in collaboration. Teachers with higher self-efficacy reported more communication with parents and fewer collaboration challenges. However, teachers with greater experience in more linguistically diverse centers reported more challenges in parent collaboration. The findings illustrate that collaboration is influenced not only by teachers' characteristics but also by the context in which teacher-parent interactions occur. In the Philippine context, Cagas et al. (2023) examined inclusive education practices among SPED and general education teachers in Davao City, including aspects of communication, family-school partnerships, professional development, and collaboration. Ebron (2026) examined teacher-parent collaboration in relation to the implementation of Individualized Education Plans from teachers' perspectives in a public elementary school in Batangas City. Together, these studies show how collaboration operates through family communication, coordinated responsibilities, and support for learners with special educational needs. Although the studies consistently recognize collaboration as relevant to inclusive education, they differ in the type of collaboration examined. Ovati et al. (2024) focused specifically on teacher-parent collaboration in early childhood settings, while Cagas et al. (2023) considered broader inclusive education practices and Ebron (2026) examined collaboration related to Individualized Education Plans. This variation suggests that collaboration comprises coordinated practices shaped by learner needs and available support structures. Accordingly, collaboration and support practices serve as one operational dimension of teacher readiness. This dimension captures teachers' perceived capacity to work with families and other support persons. The qualitative findings further identify challenges affecting collaboration in the local context.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

The implementation of inclusive education may involve challenges related to learner diversity, teacher preparation, classroom demands, available resources, family involvement, and access to professional support. These challenges should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of teacher inadequacy. Rather, they provide contextual information about the conditions under which teachers implement inclusive practices. A particularly relevant Philippine study is that of Kim et al. (2026), *Early Childhood Teachers' Perceptions, Experiences, and Needs Related to the Inclusion of Autistic Children in a Developing Country*. The study examined the experiences of eight early childhood teachers in the Philippines concerning the inclusion of autistic children. Using interviews and the socio-ecological model, the researchers identified themes across individual, interpersonal, organizational, community,

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

and public-policy levels. The findings highlighted disparities between teachers' needs and available resources. They also emphasized the need for targeted professional development and systemic support. Malanog, Manliguis, and Abenoja (2024) likewise explored the lived experiences of 12 non-Special Needs Education teachers at New Corella National High School through a qualitative phenomenological study. The participants reported challenges involving diverse learning needs, inadequate training and resources, and difficulties with integration and inclusion. The study also described teachers' coping responses and insights gained from their experiences. Although the participants were not early childhood teachers, the study provides Philippine contextual evidence on challenges encountered by general education teachers in inclusive settings. Forrosuelo (2025) also examined teaching strategies and challenges associated with teaching learners with special needs in selected elementary schools and reported concerns related to teacher preparation, class conditions, and available resources. These Philippine studies, although differing in population and setting, point toward a common pattern: challenges in inclusive education are not confined to teachers' individual capabilities but may also arise from the resources, support, training, and classroom conditions surrounding their practice. The literature therefore supports examining challenges alongside teacher readiness, but it does not justify treating challenges as a dependent variable caused by readiness. In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, readiness is examined quantitatively, while challenges are explored qualitatively to provide contextual understanding of teachers' experiences. This distinction is important because a teacher may report a high level of perceived readiness while still encountering resource, behavioral, parental, or institutional challenges in actual classroom implementation.

Professional Development

Professional development is frequently identified as an important mechanism for strengthening teachers' capacity to implement inclusive education. However, the provision of training alone does not necessarily ensure changes in teachers' knowledge or practice. The relevance, design, duration, and connection of professional learning to classroom contexts are important considerations. Donath et al. (2023), in a meta-analysis of professional development for inclusive education, reviewed a large body of literature and reported positive but varying effects on teachers' knowledge, skills, beliefs, and student behavior. The findings support professional development as a means of strengthening aspects of teachers' capacity for inclusive education while also indicating that its effects vary according to the outcome examined. This suggests that professional development should be designed around specific teacher and classroom needs rather than treated as a uniform intervention. Yang et al. (2022) specifically examined coaching for early childhood teachers through a systematic review of 33 randomized controlled and quasi-experimental studies. Their findings indicated positive effects of coaching on teacher knowledge and instructional competencies as well as on child outcomes. The review further highlighted the importance of professional learning situated within teachers' actual teaching contexts. This evidence is particularly relevant because the proposed professional development program is intended to address practical areas of inclusive classroom implementation. Rakap et al. (2024) provides further support for practice-based professional development. Their study found that preschool teachers' implementation of embedded learning opportunities reached criterion levels only after practice-based coaching following workshop training. This finding suggests that workshop-based training may be strengthened by opportunities for practice and coaching during actual instructional implementation. Raguindin and Li (2025), through a Delphi study on the competencies needed by Filipino teachers for inclusive education, identified six competency domains: understanding the tenets of inclusive education, high regard for diversity, pedagogy for the inclusive classroom, advocacy and networking, personal and professional development, and ethical and human rights issues. Their findings support a Philippine view of professional development that addresses specific knowledge, pedagogical competencies, advocacy, and ethical dimensions rather than focusing solely on general awareness of inclusion. Taken together, these studies suggest that professional development for inclusive education should be needs-based, practice-oriented, and connected to classroom application. Donath et al. (2023) provides broad evidence concerning professional development for inclusive education, Yang et al. (2022) emphasizes coaching and situated learning in early childhood settings, and Rakap et al. (2024) provides specific evidence concerning practice-based coaching for preschool teachers. These findings inform the proposed professional development program by supporting a design that responds to the specific readiness areas and challenges identified among participating kindergarten teachers rather than prescribing a generic training program.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to examine the readiness and challenges of early childhood teachers in implementing inclusive education (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design was implemented in two sequential phases, with the quantitative phase conducted first, followed by the qualitative phase. This sequence allowed the qualitative findings to provide further explanation and contextual understanding of the quantitative results. In the quantitative phase, data were collected from 30 eligible early childhood teachers from the five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City. The quantitative phase assessed the teachers' perceived readiness to implement inclusive education in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices using the adapted Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale. After the quantitative data were collected and analyzed, the results were used to inform the selection of participants for the qualitative phase. Specifically, one teacher from each of the five participating schools who obtained the relatively lowest overall readiness score within their respective school was purposively selected and invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The selection of these participants was intended to provide deeper explanations of the challenges associated with implementing inclusive education that were reflected in the quantitative findings. In the qualitative phase, the five selected teachers participated in semi-structured interviews concerning their experiences and challenges in implementing inclusive education. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and explanations related to the teachers' experiences. The quantitative and qualitative findings were then examined together to determine how the teachers' reported experiences and challenges helped explain and provide context for the quantitative results. The integrated findings provided a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' readiness and challenges and served as a basis for identifying teachers' professional development needs and developing the proposed professional development program.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City. These schools were selected based on their accessibility and feasibility within the available period for data collection. The participating schools had kindergarten teachers who met the inclusion criteria of the study and had direct experience or exposure to teaching learners with diverse needs in regular classroom settings. To maintain the confidentiality of the participating schools, they are identified in this study as School A, School B, School C, School D, and School E. The selected schools provided an appropriate setting for examining teachers' readiness and challenges in implementing inclusive education because the study focused on kindergarten teachers working in regular classroom settings where they encounter and respond to diverse learner needs. The locale therefore allowed the researcher to gather data on teachers' perceived readiness and experiences related to inclusive education within their actual classroom contexts.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were early childhood teachers from the five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City. A total of 30 kindergarten teachers participated in the quantitative phase of the study. The participants were those who were currently teaching kindergarten and had direct experience or exposure to teaching learners with diverse needs in regular classroom settings. The participants' profiles were described in terms of educational attainment, area of specialization, and number of relevant trainings attended. These characteristics were included to provide a description of the participants and to examine whether differences in teachers' readiness were observed when grouped according to these variables. For the qualitative phase, five teachers were selected from among the 30 quantitative participants, with one participant from each of the five participating schools. The participants were selected based on the quantitative results, specifically those who obtained the relatively lowest overall readiness score within their respective school. They were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to provide further explanations of the quantitative findings and deeper insights into the challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education.

Research Instrument

The study utilized an adapted version of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma, Loreman, and Forlin (2012) to assess the teachers' perceived readiness to

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

implement inclusive education. The TEIP Scale consists of 18 items categorized into three dimensions: Classroom Management, Instructional Strategies, and Collaboration and Support Practices. These dimensions were considered relevant to the present study because they represent key areas of teacher efficacy associated with the implementation of inclusive practices in regular classroom settings. For the present study, the 18 original item statements were retained without modification to their wording. However, the original six-point Likert response format was modified to a four-point Likert scale to conform to the institutional preference for the instrument and to provide respondents with a clear directional choice without a neutral midpoint. The response categories were: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, and 4 – Strongly Agree. Higher mean scores indicated a higher level of teachers' perceived readiness to implement inclusive education. Prior to administration, the adapted instrument underwent content validation by three education specialists. The validators examined the items in terms of their relevance, clarity, and appropriateness to the context of the study. The instrument was subsequently pilot-tested to determine its internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was computed for the overall instrument and for each of its three dimensions. The overall 18-item instrument obtained a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .868$. The reliability coefficients for the three dimensions were $\alpha = .816$ for Classroom Management, $\alpha = .734$ for Instructional Strategies, and $\alpha = .867$ for Collaboration and Support Practices. These coefficients indicate acceptable to good internal consistency among the items of the adapted instrument. The teachers' perceived readiness scores were interpreted based on the four-point Likert scale. The mean scores were categorized as follows: 1.00–1.75 = Strongly Disagree, 1.76–2.50 = Disagree, 2.51–3.25 = Agree, and 3.26–4.00 = Strongly Agree. Mean scores were computed for each dimension and for the overall instrument to determine the level of perceived readiness across the three areas measured by the adapted TEIP Scale. In addition to the adapted TEIP Scale, a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative data on the teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing inclusive education. The interview questions were developed in accordance with the objectives of the study and were further informed by the quantitative findings that required clarification or contextual explanation. The interview guide was reviewed by the same three education specialists to assess the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the questions before its use in the qualitative phase. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I gathered the participants' demographic information, specifically educational attainment, area of specialization, and number of relevant trainings. Part II contained the 18 TEIP items, which assessed teachers' readiness to implement inclusive education across the three dimensions of classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices. The mean scores obtained from the participants' responses were interpreted using the predetermined scoring and interpretation ranges presented in the study. These ranges were used to determine the corresponding level of teachers' readiness in implementing inclusive education. For the qualitative component, a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was utilized to gather information on the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing inclusive education. The interview guide was developed based on the study objectives and the areas identified in the quantitative findings that required further explanation. The guide was reviewed and validated by the same three education specialists who evaluated the survey questionnaire to establish the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the interview questions. The questions were designed to elicit participants' experiences, perceptions, and explanations regarding the challenges they encountered in implementing inclusive education in their kindergarten classrooms.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, formal permission was sought from the Public Schools District Supervisor to conduct the study among early childhood teachers in the five selected schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, during the summer of School Year 2025–2026. Upon approval, the participating teachers were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their rights as research participants. Informed consent was obtained before the administration of the questionnaire and conduct of the interviews. The quantitative phase was conducted first through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire included the adapted Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale and the participants' demographic information. All 30 eligible early childhood teachers from the five selected schools participated in the quantitative phase. The participants were given approximately 15–20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After the quantitative data were collected and analyzed, the results were reviewed to guide the selection of participants for the qualitative phase. Five teachers were purposively selected from among the 30 quantitative participants, with one teacher selected from each participating school. The teacher who obtained the relatively lowest overall readiness score within each school was

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

identified and invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The selected teachers were informed about the purpose and procedures of the qualitative phase, and their participation was voluntary. The qualitative phase involved individual semi-structured interviews conducted through Facebook Messenger, Google Meet, or Zoom, depending on the participant's availability and preference. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes. The researcher contacted each participant individually and conducted the interview with only the researcher and participant present. Participants were encouraged to choose a private location for the interview to minimize the possibility of others hearing their responses. With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate documentation of their responses. The researcher followed the prepared interview guide and used appropriate follow-up questions to clarify and further explore the participants' experiences and challenges in implementing inclusive education. Following each interview, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings and reviewed the transcripts against the corresponding recordings to ensure accuracy and completeness. Identifying information was replaced with participant codes, and participants' names were not used in reporting the findings. The audio recordings and transcripts were stored on an external USB drive kept in a secured drawer, with access restricted to the researcher. The recorded data and transcripts will be retained only until the completion of the study, after which the electronic files will be permanently deleted.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the level of early childhood teachers' readiness in implementing inclusive education in terms of classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices?

Table 1. Early Childhood Teachers' Level of Readiness in Classroom Management (N=30)

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. I can make my expectations clear about student behavior	3.26	Highly Ready
1. I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy	3.17	Ready
2. I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs	3.22	Ready
3. I can control disruptive behavior in the classroom	3.22	Ready
4. I am able to get children to follow classroom rules	3.40	Highly Ready
5. I am confident when dealing with students who are physically aggressive	3.08	Ready
Overall Mean	**3.22**	**Ready**

Table 1 shows the level of early childhood teachers' readiness in classroom management in implementing inclusive education. The results revealed that early childhood teachers reported the highest level of readiness in establishing classroom rules, which obtained a mean of 3.40, and in communicating behavioral expectations to learners, with a mean of 3.26, both of which were interpreted as "Highly Ready." These results suggest that the teachers perceived themselves as ready to establish classroom expectations and guide learner behavior, which are important aspects of creating a well-managed and supportive learning environment. Lutz et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of classroom management in inclusive and special education settings, particularly in organizing learning environments for heterogeneous groups and addressing learners' diverse needs. Similarly, Duan et al. (2024) found that classroom management self-efficacy is associated with classroom-level factors such as classroom climate, classroom management, student misbehavior, classroom interaction, and student–teacher relationships. On the other hand, early childhood teachers' readiness in managing learners with physically aggressive behavior obtained the lowest mean score of 3.08, while their readiness in handling disruptive and noisy learners obtained a mean score of 3.17. Both indicators were interpreted as "Ready." These results suggest that although teachers generally perceived themselves as ready to manage classroom behaviors, situations involving disruptive or physically aggressive behaviors may require a higher level of readiness and additional strategies. This is particularly relevant in inclusive classroom settings, where teachers are expected to respond to learners with diverse needs and

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

characteristics. Rahmadani and Kurniawati (2021) noted that teachers in inclusive primary schools must manage classrooms that accommodate learners with diverse needs and found that teacher self-efficacy in inclusive practice was related to classroom management through teacher engagement. Nevertheless, the overall mean of 3.22, interpreted as "Ready," indicates that the 30 early childhood teachers generally perceived themselves as ready in classroom management practices within inclusive education settings. The findings indicate a positive level of self-reported readiness, particularly in establishing classroom rules and communicating behavioral expectations, while managing more challenging behaviors may remain an area for further development. These findings highlight the practical importance of professional development focused on classroom management strategies, particularly those addressing disruptive and physically aggressive behaviors. Overall, the findings suggest that the teachers' perceived readiness in classroom management provides a positive foundation for inclusive classroom practice, while continued opportunities to develop strategies for responding to challenging behaviors may further support their implementation of inclusive education.

Table 2. Early Childhood Teachers' Level of Readiness in Instructional Strategies (N=30)

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. I can accurately gauge student comprehension of what I have taught	3.30	Highly Ready
2. I can provide appropriate challenges for every capable student	3.26	Highly Ready
3. I am confident in designing learning tasks so that the individual needs of students with disabilities are accommodated	3.13	Ready
4. I am confident in my ability to get students to work together in pairs or in small groups.	3.30	Highly Ready
5. I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessment)	3.26	Highly Ready
6. I am able to provide an alternate explanation or example when students are confused	3.30	Highly Ready
Overall Mean	**3.26**	**Highly Ready**

Table 2 presents the level of early childhood teachers' readiness in terms of instructional strategies. The data revealed that teachers reported the highest level of readiness in assessing learner comprehension, facilitating collaborative learning through pair or small-group activities, and providing alternative explanations or examples when learners experience difficulty in understanding lessons. These indicators obtained the highest mean score of 3.30 and were interpreted as Highly Ready. These results suggest that teachers reported a high level of readiness in adjusting their instruction based on learners' understanding and promoting active learning interactions. Griful-Freixenet et al. (2021) found that teachers who apply differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are better able to adapt instruction to learners' diverse needs by using flexible teaching approaches and ongoing assessment, thereby supporting inclusive classroom practices. Similarly, Griful-Freixenet et al. (2020) emphasized that differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning provide flexible teaching approaches that help teachers respond to learners' diverse needs and promote inclusive learning environments. Meanwhile, readiness in designing learning tasks to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities obtained the lowest mean score of 3.13 and was interpreted as Ready. This suggests that, while teachers are generally Highly Ready in terms of instructional strategies, their reported readiness is slightly lower when it comes to designing inclusive and differentiated learning tasks. This finding supports the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023), which emphasizes that inclusive education requires teachers to adapt teaching and assessment to meet learners' diverse needs through continuous professional learning. Similarly, Gheyssens et al. (2023) explain that differentiated instruction requires teachers to adjust learning activities based on students' readiness, interests, and learning needs, making it a challenging part of inclusive teaching. Therefore, teachers may benefit from additional training on designing inclusive and differentiated learning tasks to improve their readiness in implementing inclusive education. Overall, the findings imply that early childhood teachers' level of readiness in implementing instructional strategies, particularly in classroom interaction and instructional adjustment, is Highly Ready, with a mean score of 3.26.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

However, continuous enhancement may still be needed in designing differentiated tasks and expanding assessment methods to further strengthen inclusive instructional practices.

Table 3. Early Childhood Teachers' Level of Readiness in Collaboration and Support Practices (N=30)

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. I can make parents feel comfortable coming to school	3.26	Highly Ready
2. I can assist families in helping their children do well in school	3.26	Highly Ready
3. I am confident in my ability to get parents involved in the school activities of their children with disabilities	3.17	Ready
4. I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g., itinerant teachers or speech pathologists) in designing educational plans for students with disabilities	3.13	Ready
5. I am able to work jointly with other professionals and staff (e.g., aides, other teachers) to teach students with disabilities	3.13	Ready
6. I am confident in informing others who know little about laws and policies related to the inclusion of students with disabilities	3.08	Ready
Overall Mean	**3.17**	**Ready**

Table 3 presents the level of early childhood teachers' readiness in terms of collaboration and support practices. The results showed that teachers reported the highest level of readiness in making parents feel comfortable coming to school and assisting families in helping their children do well in school, with both indicators obtaining a mean score of 3.26 and interpreted as Highly Ready. These findings suggest that teachers are highly ready to engage parents and provide support to families in relation to their children's learning. This is consistent with Mann and Gilmore (2023), who emphasized the importance of positive parent–teacher relationships and effective engagement between teachers and parents in inclusive education, particularly for students with disabilities. Similarly, Sheridan et al. (2019), in a meta-analysis of 117 studies, found that family–school interventions were positively associated with children's social-behavioral competence and mental health, with communication, collaboration, and parent–teacher relationships identified as relevant components of effective family–school interventions. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration between teachers and families in supporting children within inclusive educational settings. However, teachers' readiness in informing others about laws and policies related to the inclusion of students with disabilities obtained the lowest mean score of 3.08, although it was still interpreted as Ready. This indicates that, while teachers reported readiness across the collaboration and support practices assessed, their reported readiness was relatively lower in communicating information concerning inclusive education laws and policies. This area may reflect a need for further opportunities to strengthen teachers' knowledge and confidence regarding policy-related aspects of inclusion. The UNESCO (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that inclusive education requires teachers to possess appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and skills and highlights the importance of quality teacher education and professional learning in areas such as inclusive teaching, classroom management, collaboration with professionals, and assessment. Thus, continued professional development may help strengthen teachers' understanding of inclusive education policies and their confidence in communicating relevant information to others. Overall, the findings yielded an overall mean of 3.17 , interpreted as Ready, indicating that early childhood teachers reported as ready in collaboration and support practices. The highest-rated areas were related to engaging parents and supporting families in their children's learning, while the relatively lower rating concerned informing others about laws and policies related to the inclusion of students with disabilities. Although these results indicate favorable self-reported readiness, they should not be interpreted as direct evidence of teachers' actual competence or effectiveness in implementing these practices. Rather, the findings identify areas in which teachers perceive themselves as more or less ready and may therefore inform professional development initiatives. In particular, further professional learning may be considered to strengthen teachers'

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

understanding of inclusive education policy frameworks and their confidence in communicating policy-related information within their school communities.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges encountered by early childhood teachers in implementing inclusive education?

The analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in five major themes representing the challenges identified by the participants in implementing inclusive education.

Theme 1: Lack of Professional Development and Training

This theme highlights the participants' perceived challenges related to professional development and training in implementing inclusive education. All five participants identified concerns related to professional development or training, particularly in addressing learners' diverse behavioral and learning needs. These concerns were evident in their responses:

"Lack of training." (Participant 1) *"Although I have knowledge and experience in handling learners with different needs still i am not expert in handling challenged learners in the classroom."* (Participant 2) *"Teachers also need real training on how to handle tantrums and simple tools like wiggle cushions or a quiet corner to help students stay calm."* (Participant 3) *"We don't have enough trainings and sometimes we don't know what to do."* (Participant 4) *"the government should provide Continuous Professional Development and Strengthen Collaborative Support Systems."* (Participant 5)

The above responses indicate that the participants perceived professional development and training as an area where further support may be beneficial, particularly in responding to diverse learner needs and challenging classroom situations. Participant 1 and Participant 4 explicitly referred to insufficient training, while Participant 2 expressed a need for further expertise in handling learners with diverse needs. Participant 3 emphasized practical training on managing tantrums and using simple classroom supports, and Participant 5 recommended continuous professional development and stronger collaborative support systems. These responses suggest that the participants were seeking not only general training but also practical and classroom-based learning opportunities related to behavior management, learner support, and inclusive classroom practices. The participants' perceptions are consistent with the findings of Donath et al. (2023), whose meta-analysis of professional development interventions for inclusive education found positive effects on teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs, although the magnitude of effects varied across outcomes. In particular, the study reported a large effect on teachers' knowledge regarding inclusive education and a moderate effect on teachers' skills. These findings provide support for the relevance of professional development in strengthening areas of teacher knowledge and practice associated with inclusive education. Similarly, Wray et al. (2022), in a systematic review, identified professional learning, pre-service teacher education, and in-service training as factors associated with teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive education. Their review also noted the relevance of knowledge about inclusive education policies and confidence in teaching in inclusive classrooms. The responses further indicate a perceived need for training that is directly connected to situations encountered in the classroom. Participant 3's reference to managing tantrums and using simple classroom supports illustrates a perceived need for concrete strategies that can be applied to immediate classroom situations. This is particularly relevant because inclusive education requires teachers to respond to differences in learners' needs through appropriate knowledge, skills, and support. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation and professional learning in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach diverse learners and participate effectively in inclusive education. Thus, the participants' expressed need for practical training may indicate an area for further professional development rather than evidence that they lack the ability to implement inclusive practices. Overall, the participants' accounts suggest that limited professional development and training were perceived as an area of difficulty in implementing inclusive education, particularly in relation to managing diverse learner needs and responding to challenging classroom situations. The findings do not establish that insufficient training was the sole cause of the challenges experienced by the participants; rather, the interviews indicate that teachers perceived further training and practical support as potentially useful. In this regard, continued professional development, particularly training that is practical, context-responsive, and focused on inclusive classroom situations, may provide opportunities for teachers to strengthen their knowledge and skills for responding to diverse learners (Donath et al., 2023; Wray et al., 2022).

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Theme 2: Difficulties in Managing Diverse Learner Behaviors and Needs

This theme highlights the challenges experienced by the participants in managing learners with diverse behaviors, developmental needs, and learning abilities within the same classroom. Three participants described difficulties involving behavioral concerns, short attention spans, communication difficulties, and learners requiring individualized support. These situations were perceived as affecting classroom routines, lesson delivery, and the ability to attend to the needs of all learners. This was evident in the participants' responses:

"One of which I would say is managing challenging behavior." (Participant 3) *"The most difficult situations are managing behavioral issues, short attention spans, and learners who need one-on-one support while teaching the whole class."* (Participant 4) *"The most difficult situations to manage are behavioral concerns, short attention spans, communication difficulties, and handling learners with different developmental levels at the same time."* (Participant 5)

The above responses indicate that managing diverse learner behaviors and needs was perceived as a challenge in implementing inclusive education. Participant 3 identified challenging behavior as a concern, while Participant 4 emphasized the difficulty of addressing behavioral issues and short attention spans while simultaneously providing one-on-one support and teaching the whole class. Participant 5 similarly identified behavioral concerns, communication difficulties, short attention spans, and differences in developmental levels as challenging to manage at the same time. These responses suggest that the challenge involves balancing individualized learner needs with the learning needs of the wider class. The participants' experiences are consistent with Szép et al. (2021), who found that teachers may experience difficulties in applying effective classroom management strategies when supporting learners with ADHD, particularly in the context of classroom-related challenges. Similarly, Orr et al. (2023) reported that disruptive classroom behavior can affect teaching and learning in inclusive classroom settings, highlighting the importance of effective classroom management. In the present study, the participants' accounts likewise indicate that behavioral concerns, short attention spans, and the need for individualized support can make classroom management more demanding. The responses further suggest that inclusive education requires teachers to manage individual differences while maintaining opportunities for participation among all learners. The difficulty described by Participant 4 in providing one-on-one support while teaching the whole class illustrates the practical challenge of balancing individualized assistance with whole-class instruction. Likewise, Participant 5's reference to learners with different developmental levels and communication difficulties indicates that teachers may need to adjust their classroom approaches according to varied learner characteristics. These findings do not imply that the participants are unable to manage diverse learners; rather, they identify specific classroom situations in which managing diverse needs may be more demanding. Overall, the participants' accounts suggest that managing diverse learner behaviors and needs remains a perceived challenge in inclusive classroom implementation. The findings point particularly to behavioral concerns, short attention spans, communication difficulties, and the need to provide individualized support while maintaining whole-class instruction. These concerns illustrate the practical complexity of addressing diverse learner needs within a regular classroom setting.

Theme 3: Lack of Parental Support

This theme highlights parental involvement as an important contextual factor in the implementation of inclusive education. Three participants described difficulties related to parental cooperation, communication, and continuity of support between home and school. Their responses particularly reflected situations in which limited parental involvement or delayed acceptance of a child's need for additional support made it more difficult to provide consistent assistance beyond the classroom. This was evident in the following responses:

"there is no follow-up, support and consistency from school to home." (Participant 1) *"sometimes it takes a long time for them to accept that their child needs special help, which slows down our progress."* (Participant 3) *"The lack of parental support is one of the biggest challenges I experienced as a teacher handling learners with diverse needs."* (Participant 5)

The participants' responses indicate that parental involvement was perceived as an important consideration in supporting learners with diverse needs. Participant 1 emphasized difficulties associated with limited cooperation and lack of consistency between school and home. Participant 3 described delayed parental acceptance of a child's need for additional support as a factor that may slow the progress of interventions. Participant 5 likewise identified lack of parental support as a significant challenge in providing assistance to learners with diverse needs. Taken together, these responses suggest that supporting learners with diverse needs may extend beyond classroom instruction and

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

involve continued communication and coordination between teachers and families. These findings are consistent with Garcia-Melgar et al. (2022), who examined collaborative teamwork involving teachers, teacher assistants, allied health professionals, and parents in supporting the inclusion of children with disability in mainstream schools. The study identified regular, consistent, and timely communication, practical ways of working together, and shared understandings as important factors in effective collaboration. Similarly, Paccaud et al. (2021) found that the quality of collaboration between families and schools was associated with parents' satisfaction with the school. The study further highlighted clear communication, parental involvement in supporting children, and opportunities for families to participate in decisions concerning their children's support. These findings underscore the importance of sustained family–school collaboration in supporting learners with diverse needs in inclusive education. It is also important to consider this qualitative finding alongside the quantitative results. The teachers obtained an overall mean of 3.26, interpreted as Highly Ready, in Collaboration and Support Practices. They also obtained a mean of 3.26 for making parents feel comfortable coming to school and assisting families in helping their children succeed. This does not necessarily contradict the participants' accounts of limited parental support. The quantitative results reflect teachers' perceived readiness in collaboration and support practices, whereas the qualitative responses describe contextual difficulties encountered in obtaining or sustaining parental involvement. Thus, teachers may perceive themselves as ready to establish collaborative relationships with families while still experiencing barriers that affect the extent to which parents participate in supporting learners. Overall, the participants' accounts indicate that parental involvement can influence the continuity and coordination of support provided to learners with diverse needs. The findings particularly point to challenges involving parental cooperation, communication, and acceptance of children's additional support needs. Rather than indicating a lack of willingness on the part of teachers to collaborate with families, the findings illustrate that effective family–school involvement may also depend on contextual factors beyond the classroom.

Theme 4: Limited Resources and Facilities

This theme highlights participants' concerns regarding the availability of resources, facilities, and specialized materials needed to support diverse learners in inclusive classrooms. Four participants described difficulties related to limited instructional materials, assessment tools, assistive devices, learning tools, and classroom facilities. Their responses indicate that the availability of appropriate resources was perceived as an important consideration in addressing the diverse needs of learners. This was evident in the following responses:

"*a lack of specialized learning materials, assessment tools, and facilities suitable for learners with special educational needs.*" (Participant 1) "*In our school we only have limited resources to support our teaching with a diverse learners in the classroom.*" (Participant 2) "*Unavailability of resources and facilities intended for children with different needs is also one of the existing challenges we are facing as a teacher.*" (Participant 3) *"lacking resources and facilities include specialized instructional materials, assistive devices, learning tools for diverse learners, and classrooms that are fully equipped for inclusive education."* (Participant 5)

The participants' responses indicate that limited resources and facilities were perceived as a challenge in implementing inclusive education. Participant 1 identified the lack of specialized learning materials, assessment tools, and appropriate facilities, while Participant 2 emphasized the limited resources available to support teaching in a classroom with diverse learners. Participant 3 similarly identified the unavailability of resources and facilities for children with different needs as an existing challenge. Participant 5 further described the need for specialized instructional materials, assistive devices, learning tools, and adequately equipped classrooms. Taken together, these responses suggest that the challenge involves not only the availability of instructional materials but also access to facilities and tools that can support learners with diverse needs. These findings are consistent with Beamish et al. (2024), who examined challenges to inclusive education across seven jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region. Their findings identified a lack of resources and support to meet the needs of students with special educational needs as one of the challenges affecting the implementation of inclusion. The authors also identified under-resourcing of mainstream schools as a significant concern and emphasized the need for adequate resources and institutional support. Similarly, Chow et al. (2024), in a scoping review of teachers' perceived support needs for implementing inclusive education, found that teachers commonly identified appropriate teaching materials and resources as important supports for addressing diverse learner needs. The review also identified the need for additional teaching support and adequate resources to help teachers implement inclusive practices. The participants' responses

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

further suggest that the availability of resources may influence how teachers respond to diverse learner needs in the classroom. For example, the concerns regarding specialized learning materials, assistive devices, and assessment tools indicate that teachers may require resources that allow them to adapt instruction and provide appropriate support to individual learners. However, these findings should not be interpreted to mean that the participants are unable to implement inclusive practices in the absence of such resources. Rather, the responses identify resource availability as a contextual factor that may make inclusive classroom implementation more demanding. Overall, the participants' accounts indicate that limited resources and facilities were perceived as a challenge in implementing inclusive education, particularly in relation to specialized instructional materials, assessment tools, assistive devices, learning tools, and adequately equipped classrooms. The findings highlight the importance of ensuring that teachers have access to appropriate resources and school-based support that can facilitate their efforts to address diverse learner needs.

Theme 5: Challenges in Applying Effective Classroom Practices and Teaching Strategies

This theme highlights the participants' perceived difficulties in applying classroom practices and teaching strategies that respond to the varied needs and learning abilities of learners in inclusive classrooms. All five participants described situations in which particular teaching approaches were perceived as difficult to apply effectively across learners with different needs, levels of understanding, and engagement. Their responses were expressed in the following statements:

"I find it difficult to use teaching strategies that effectively meet the needs of all learners in my class." (Participant 1*) "My classroom practices are sometimes not effective because learners have diverse needs that are hard to address at the same time."* (Participant 2) *"Some of my instructional strategies do not always work well because learners have different understanding levels."* (Participant 3) *"I struggle to make sure that my teaching methods are effective for both fast and slow learners."* (Participant 4) *"There are times when my classroom strategies do not fully engage all learners."* (Participant 5)

The participants' responses indicate that applying teaching strategies across learners with diverse needs was perceived as a challenge in inclusive classroom implementation. Participant 1 emphasized the difficulty of using strategies that meet the needs of all learners, while Participant 2 described the challenge of addressing diverse needs simultaneously. Participant 3 and Participant 4 similarly referred to differences in learners' levels of understanding and learning pace, while Participant 5 highlighted difficulties in engaging all learners. Taken together, these responses suggest that the challenge involves adapting classroom practices and instructional strategies to accommodate learner differences while maintaining meaningful participation in classroom activities. The participants' experiences are consistent with Øen et al. (2024), who examined the development of inclusive practice in relation to challenging behavior and found that teachers may experience difficulties in developing inclusive practices without appropriate support. The authors emphasized that support in the form of guidance, courses, further education, and collaborative learning within the professional community can help teachers develop confidence and strengthen inclusive practice. Similarly, UNESCO (2020) emphasized that inclusive teaching requires teachers to develop knowledge and skills related to instructional techniques, classroom management, learning assessment, and responding to diverse learner needs. The report also highlighted the importance of follow-up support that enables teachers to apply newly developed skills in classroom practice. The responses further indicate that the difficulty was not necessarily a lack of teaching strategies but rather the challenge of determining how particular strategies can be adapted to different learners within the same classroom. Participant 4's reference to teaching both "fast and slow learners" and Participant 5's concern about engaging all learners illustrate the practical demands of responding to learner differences during instruction. Thus, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that the participants' teaching practices are generally ineffective. Rather, they point to specific situations in which adapting instructional approaches to diverse learner needs may be more demanding. Overall, the participants' accounts indicate that applying effective classroom practices and teaching strategies was perceived as a challenge in implementing inclusive education. The concerns particularly involved adapting instruction to differences in learners' understanding, learning pace, needs, and engagement. These findings suggest that continued opportunities for professional learning, practical guidance, and collaborative support may help teachers further develop and adapt instructional approaches for diverse learners (Øen et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2020).

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the overall perceived readiness of early childhood teachers when grouped according to educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended?

Assumption Testing for Inferential Analysis

Before conducting the inferential analysis, the distributional characteristics of teachers' overall perceived readiness scores were examined across the grouping variables. Shapiro–Wilk tests were used to assess normality, while Levene's tests were used to assess homogeneity of variance as part of the preliminary checks for parametric analysis. For educational attainment, the Bachelor's Degree group showed a significant departure from normality, $W = .810$, $p = .003$, whereas the Master's Units group, $W = .875$, $p = .316$, and the Master's Degree group, $W = .911$, $p = .326$, did not show significant departures from normality. Levene's test was nonsignificant, $F(2, 27) = .590$, $p = .561$, indicating that the homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied. Because normality was not adequately met across the groups, a nonparametric procedure was considered more appropriate than one-way ANOVA. For area of specialization, all three groups showed significant departures from normality: Early Childhood Education, $W = .800$, $p = .002$; Generalist Elementary Education, $W = .832$, $p = .035$; and Other Specializations, $W = .750$, $p < .001$. Levene's test was nonsignificant, $F(2, 27) = .792$, $p = .463$, indicating that the homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied. Given the departures from normality, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was used to examine differences in overall perceived readiness across specialization groups. For number of relevant trainings attended, significant departures from normality were observed in the 0–5 training group, $W = .714$, $p = .001$; the 16–20 training group, $W = .730$, $p = .008$; and the 21 or more training group, $W = .761$, $p = .037$. The 6–10 training group, $W = .996$, $p = .878$, and the 11–15 training group, $W = .909$, $p = .462$, did not show significant departures from normality. Levene's test was nonsignificant, $F(4, 25) = 2.070$, $p = .115$, indicating that the homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied. Because normality was not adequately met across the training groups, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was likewise used. Overall, the normality results indicated that the assumptions for one-way ANOVA were not adequately satisfied across the grouping variables, although homogeneity of variance was maintained. Therefore, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was used to examine whether statistically significant differences existed in teachers' overall perceived readiness according to educational attainment, area of specialization, and number of relevant trainings attended. Ordinal epsilon-squared (ε^2R) was reported as the effect-size measure, consistent with the procedure described in the Data Analysis section.

Table 4. Early Childhood Teachers' Overall Perceived Readiness When Grouped According to Educational Attainment (N = 30)

Educational Attainment	N	Mean	χ^2	df	*p*	ε^2R	Interpretation
1. Bachelor's Degree	17	3.17					Ready
2. Master's Units	4	3.11	0.129	2	.938	.004	Ready
3. Master's Degree	9	3.11					Ready

Table 4 presents the overall readiness of early childhood teachers when grouped according to educational attainment. Teachers with a Bachelor's Degree obtained a mean readiness score of 3.17 ($n = 17$), whereas those with Master's Units and those with a Master's Degree obtained mean scores of 3.11 ($n = 4$) and 3.11 ($n = 9$), respectively. Based on the study's prescribed interpretation of readiness scores, all three groups were classified as Ready. The Kruskal–Wallis H test indicated no statistically significant difference in teachers' overall perceived readiness across educational-attainment groups, $\chi^2(2) = 0.129$, $p = .938$, $\varepsilon^2R = .004$. Therefore, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that overall perceived readiness differed according to educational attainment, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relatively close group means indicate that the average self-reported readiness scores were similar across the three educational-attainment groups within this sample. However, these findings reflect teachers' self-reported perceived readiness and should not be interpreted as evidence of equivalent demonstrated competence or actual effectiveness in implementing inclusive education.

Table 5. Early Childhood Teachers' Overall Perceived Readiness When Grouped According to Specialization (N = 30)

Specialization	N	Mean	χ^2	df	*p*	ε^2R	Interpretation
1. Early Childhood Education	17	3.17					Ready
2. Generalist Elementary Education	10	3.06	0.927	2	.629	.032	Ready
3. Others	3	3.26					Ready

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Table 5 presents the overall readiness of early childhood teachers when grouped according to specialization. Teachers specializing in Early Childhood Education obtained a mean readiness score of 3.17 (n = 17), while those classified under Generalist Elementary Education obtained a mean of 3.06 (n = 10). Teachers under other specializations obtained a mean of 3.26 (n = 3). Based on the study's prescribed interpretation of readiness scores, all three groups were classified as Ready. The Kruskal–Wallis H test indicated no statistically significant difference in teachers' overall perceived readiness across specialization groups, $\chi^2(2) = 0.927$, $p = .629$, $\varepsilon^2R = .032$. Therefore, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that overall perceived readiness differed according to area of specialization, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Although the group means varied somewhat, these differences were not statistically significant. The findings indicate that, within this sample, teachers reported broadly similar levels of perceived readiness across specialization groups. As with the other findings, these results represent self-reported perceived readiness and do not establish equivalence in actual competence or demonstrated inclusive-education practice.

Table 6. Early Childhood Teachers' Overall Perceived Readiness When Grouped According to Number of Trainings Attended (N = 30)

Number of Trainings Attended	N	Mean	χ^2	df	p	ε^2R	Interpretation
1. 0–5	10	3.25					Ready
2. 6–10	3	3.76					Highly Ready
3. 11–15	5	2.84	8.292	4	.081	.286	Ready
4. 16–20	7	2.97					Ready
5. 21 and above	5	3.11					Ready

Table 6 presents the overall readiness of early childhood teachers when grouped according to the number of relevant trainings attended. Teachers who attended 0–5 trainings obtained a mean readiness score of 3.25 (n = 10), while those who attended 6–10 trainings obtained the highest mean score of 3.76 (n = 3). Teachers who attended 11–15, 16–20, and 21 or more trainings obtained mean scores of 2.84 (n = 5), 2.97 (n = 7), and 3.11 (n = 5), respectively. Based on the study's prescribed interpretation of readiness scores, the 0–5, 11–15, 16–20, and 21-or-more training groups were classified as Ready, while the 6–10 training group was classified as Highly Ready. The results showed no statistically significant difference in teachers' overall perceived readiness across the five training groups, $\chi^2(4) = 8.292$, $p = .081$, $\varepsilon^2R = .286$. Thus, at the .05 significance level, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that overall perceived readiness differed according to the number of relevant trainings attended, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Although the group means showed some variation, ranging from 2.84 among teachers who attended 11–15 trainings to 3.76 among those who attended 6–10 trainings, these observed differences were not statistically significant. The reported ε^2R of .286 represents the magnitude of the observed group differences based on the ordinal epsilon-squared calculation and should be interpreted together with the nonsignificant p-value and the unequal group sizes, particularly the 6–10 training group (n = 3). Therefore, the results do not provide sufficient statistical evidence that the number of trainings attended was associated with differences in teachers' overall self-reported perceived readiness in this sample.

Overall, the Kruskal–Wallis H test results revealed no statistically significant differences in early childhood teachers' overall perceived readiness according to educational attainment, $\chi^2(2) = 0.129$, $p = .938$; area of specialization, $\chi^2(2) = 0.927$, $p = .629$; or number of relevant trainings attended, $\chi^2(4) = 8.292$, $p = .081$. Since all p-values exceeded the .05 significance level, the null hypotheses were not rejected. These findings indicate that the study did not provide sufficient statistical evidence of differences in teachers' self-reported readiness across the examined groups. However, the results should not be interpreted as proof that the groups are equivalent in their readiness or demonstrated competence in implementing inclusive education.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Table 7. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on Teachers' Readiness and Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Quantitative Findings (N = 30)	Qualitative Findings (n = 5)	Integrated Interpretation
1. Classroom Management: Overall M = 3.22 (Ready). Establishing classroom rules obtained the highest mean (M = 3.40, Highly Ready), while managing physically aggressive learners obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.08, Ready).	Difficulties in Managing Diverse Learner Behaviors and Needs. Reported by 3 of 5 participants. Teachers described difficulties involving disruptive behavior, short attention spans, communication difficulties, and providing individualized support while maintaining whole-class instruction.	The qualitative findings help explain the relatively lower readiness reported in managing more challenging learner behaviors. Although teachers perceived themselves as generally ready in classroom management, some behavioral situations remained more demanding in classroom contexts.
2. Instructional Strategies. Overall M = 3.26 (Highly Ready). Gauging comprehension, facilitating pair/small-group work, and providing alternative explanations obtained the highest means (all M = 3.30). Designing learning tasks that accommodate learners with disabilities obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.13, Ready).	Lack of Effective Classroom Practices and Teaching Strategies. Reported by 5 of 5 participants. Teachers described difficulties in developing strategies that address different learning abilities, levels of understanding, and engagement needs.	The qualitative findings explain and elaborate on the relatively lower readiness for designing learning tasks that accommodate learners with disabilities. Positive overall perceived readiness in instructional strategies coexists with specific difficulties in differentiated and responsive instruction.
3. Collaboration and Support Practices. Overall M = 3.17 (Ready). Making parents feel comfortable coming to school and assisting families obtained M = 3.26 for both indicators. Explaining inclusive education laws and policies obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.08, Ready).	Lack of Parental Support. Reported by 3 of 5 participants. Teachers described limited follow-up between school and home, delayed parental acceptance of additional support needs, and difficulties sustaining parental involvement.	The qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by showing that perceived readiness to collaborate does not necessarily eliminate contextual barriers to sustained family participation. Teachers may perceive themselves as ready to engage families while still experiencing difficulties in maintaining cooperation and continuity of support.
4. Collaboration and Support Practices. Explaining inclusive education laws and policies obtained the lowest item mean (M = 3.08, Ready).	Lack of Professional Development and Training. Reported by 5 of 5 participants. Teachers expressed a need for additional training and professional learning to strengthen their capacity to address diverse learner needs and implement inclusive practices.	This qualitative finding extends the quantitative results by identifying a need for continued professional learning and support that was not directly measured by the readiness scale. Although teachers reported Ready to Highly Ready levels of perceived readiness, their accounts indicate a continuing need for professional development to support inclusive classroom practices.
5. Across the three domains. Teachers reported Ready to Highly Ready levels of perceived readiness in classroom management, instructional strategies, and collaboration and support practices. The readiness scale did not directly measure the availability of specialized instructional materials, assistive devices, or inclusive classroom facilities.	Limited Resources and Facilities. Reported by 4 of 5 participants. Teachers described inadequate specialized instructional materials, assistive devices, learning tools, and facilities suitable for learners with diverse needs.	This finding identifies a contextual challenge that is not directly captured by the readiness ratings. Teachers may report being ready to implement inclusive practices while facing limitations in the materials and facilities needed to put those practices into action. Therefore, perceived readiness should be interpreted alongside the resources and support available to teachers.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Research Question 4: Based on the findings of the study, what professional development program may be developed?

The findings indicate that early childhood teachers generally demonstrate a high level of readiness to implement inclusive education; however, the convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence underscores the need for sustained, practice-oriented professional development to address specific implementation challenges in classroom management, inclusive instructional strategies, collaboration, family engagement, policy knowledge, and resource utilization. In particular, classroom management emerged as an area requiring further strengthening, with the lowest-rated indicators involving the management of physically aggressive learners (M = 3.08) and disruptive or noisy learners (M = 3.17), while qualitative accounts consistently identified difficulties in managing diverse learner behaviors and needs and a lack of professional development and training. Similarly, although teachers demonstrated high readiness in instructional strategies (M = 3.26), designing learning tasks for learners with disabilities received a comparatively lower rating (M = 3.13), consistent with reported challenges in applying effective teaching strategies and limitations in instructional resources and facilities. Collaboration and support practices also obtained a high overall rating (M = 3.26), yet comparatively lower ratings were observed in knowledge of relevant laws and policies (M = 3.08), collaboration with professionals and staff (M = 3.13), and parental involvement (M = 3.17), while qualitative findings highlighted insufficient parental support and continuing professional-learning needs. In response, a findings-based professional development program entitled "Empowering Early Childhood Teachers for Inclusive Education: A Professional Development Program," anchored on the theme "Empowered Teachers, Inclusive Classrooms, Successful Learners," is proposed for early childhood and kindergarten teachers implementing inclusive education in regular classrooms. The program is designed as a three-day professional learning intervention followed by school-based application, coaching, and monitoring over one quarter, with four integrated components: strengthening inclusive classroom management; enhancing inclusive and differentiated instruction; strengthening collaboration, family engagement, and knowledge of inclusive education policies; and supporting classroom application through follow-up coaching and monitoring. The program emphasizes practical, context-responsive learning through case analysis, demonstrations, role-play, lesson and assessment adaptation, development of low-cost instructional supports, policy-based problem solving, family-communication activities, and school-based action planning. Expected outputs include an inclusive classroom-management response plan, an adapted inclusive lesson or activity plan with appropriate assessment modifications and low-cost supports, a school-based inclusive education action plan and family-engagement communication plan, and documented classroom application supported by teacher reflection and coaching feedback. Program effectiveness is proposed to be examined through a structured evaluation framework encompassing learning, performance, application, support and coaching, and follow-up, using pre- and post-training assessments, performance rubrics, observation checklists, classroom application records, coaching documentation, teacher reflections, and end-of-quarter action-plan reviews. To promote sustainability, the program should be integrated into existing school-based professional-learning mechanisms, such as faculty meetings, learning action cell sessions, and other appropriate professional-development activities, with a simple monitoring record documenting identified needs, strategies implemented, classroom experiences, support received, and subsequent actions. Importantly, the proposed program is explicitly considered a findings-based intervention rather than an established or validated program; it has not yet undergone implementation, external expert validation, pilot testing, or outcome evaluation. Accordingly, qualified education professionals, school administrators, inclusive education practitioners, and relevant resource persons should review the program for content relevance, feasibility, clarity, and contextual alignment before implementation, followed by pilot testing and systematic evaluation of changes in teachers' knowledge, demonstrated practices, perceived readiness, use of inclusive strategies, and other appropriate outcomes. This approach positions the proposed professional development program not merely as a training activity but as a context-responsive, evidence-informed, and potentially sustainable professional learning intervention that can be empirically validated and refined before broader adoption.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with attention to the protection, privacy, confidentiality, and welfare of all participants. Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Public Schools District Supervisor. These procedures were implemented to ensure that the research was conducted in accordance with applicable institutional requirements and was appropriately authorized

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

before data collection began. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their role as respondents. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before participation in the study. Participants were also informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without penalty. To protect participants' confidentiality, names were not used in reporting the findings. Participants in the qualitative phase were identified using codes rather than their names. Because the study involved a relatively small professional community, identifying details that were not necessary for the analysis were excluded from the manuscript, and quotations were presented without information that could directly identify individual participants. All collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes. Quantitative data were collected through Google Forms, while qualitative interviews were conducted through Facebook Messenger, Google Meet, and Zoom. Interview recordings were made with participants' consent. Digital research files, including interview recordings and transcripts, were stored securely on a USB storage device and were accessible only to the researcher. The raw data were not disclosed to unauthorized individuals. The collected data will be retained securely for the period necessary to complete the study and its reporting. Interview recordings and other identifiable research files will be permanently deleted after this period. The external USB drive containing these files will be kept in a secured drawer, with access limited to the researcher.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the 30 kindergarten teachers from the five selected public elementary schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, generally perceived themselves as ready to highly ready to implement inclusive education in terms of classroom management (M = 3.22), instructional strategies (M = 3.26), and collaboration and support practices (M = 3.17). However, relatively lower ratings were observed in managing physically aggressive learners (M = 3.08), designing tasks that accommodate learners with disabilities (M = 3.13), and explaining inclusive education laws and policies (M = 3.08). These results reflect teachers' self-reported readiness and should not be interpreted as direct evidence of their demonstrated competence or classroom effectiveness. The qualitative findings further revealed five key challenges: limited professional development and training, diverse learner behaviors and needs, insufficient parental support, limited resources and facilities, and difficulties in applying effective classroom practices and strategies. These findings suggest that teachers' perceived readiness may coexist with practical challenges in implementing inclusive education. Furthermore, the Kruskal–Wallis test revealed no statistically significant differences in perceived readiness according to educational attainment, specialization, and number of trainings attended ($p > .05$), indicating insufficient evidence of differences among the groups in this sample. Based on the combined findings, a Professional Development Program titled *Empowering Early Childhood Teachers for Inclusive Education* is proposed to strengthen teachers' practical skills in classroom management, differentiated instruction, family collaboration, policy awareness, and the use of available resources. Since the program has not yet been implemented or evaluated, its relevance and effectiveness should be assessed through expert review, pilot implementation, and appropriate evaluation procedures. Overall, this study provides localized evidence on the perceived readiness and implementation challenges of kindergarten teachers in the selected schools in Putik District, Zamboanga City, and highlights the importance of context-responsive professional development and school-level support in strengthening inclusive education practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, school heads and inclusion coordinators are encouraged to provide targeted professional development opportunities that address teachers' identified needs, particularly in managing challenging learner behaviors, adapting instructional activities for learners with disabilities, applying effective inclusive classroom strategies, and understanding inclusive education policies. Teachers are encouraged to apply appropriate classroom management and differentiated instruction strategies in their classrooms, document their experiences, and reflect on areas that require further improvement. Schools may also strengthen family–school collaboration through regular, respectful communication with parents and caregivers regarding learners' progress, support needs, and appropriate follow-up actions. To address resource-related challenges, school heads and relevant personnel may conduct an inventory of available instructional materials and facilities, identify priority needs, and explore practical, low-cost, and adaptable resources that can support diverse learners. The proposed Professional Development Program should undergo expert review to assess its relevance, alignment with the study's findings, feasibility, and evaluation procedures before

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

implementation. If implemented, its outcomes may be assessed through pre- and post-training assessments, practical outputs, teacher reflections, and follow-up documentation of classroom application. The Schools District Supervisor and other relevant education personnel may also use the findings to guide context-responsive, school-based professional learning activities while recognizing that the results are limited to the five selected schools. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies involving larger and more diverse samples, complement self-reported readiness measures with classroom observations or practical demonstrations, and evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the proposed program to determine its contribution to teachers' knowledge and inclusive education practices.

References

Adams, D., Mohamed, A., Moosa, V., & Shareefa, M. (2023). Teachers' readiness for inclusive education in a developing country: Fantasy or possibility? Educational Studies, 49(6), 896–913. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2021.1908882

Aldrup, K., Carstensen, B., Köller, M. M., & Klusmann, U. (2022). Teacher self-efficacy, emotional competence, and classroom behavior: Examining reciprocal relations in the classroom. Teaching and Teacher Education, 109, Article 103569. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103569

Alkhateeb, N., Alrubaian, A., & Tamakloe, D. (2023). A dialogical inquiry of elementary school teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of students with special education needs and disability (SEND). SAGE Open, 13(2), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231162056

Arias, C. R., Calago, C. N. S., Calungsod, H. F. B., Delica, M. A., Fullo, M. E., & Cabanilla, A. B. (2023). Challenges and implementation of inclusive education in selected Asian countries: A meta-synthesis. International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 9(2), 512–534. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.3089

Balikci, Ş., Gulboy, E., & Rakap, S. (2025). Early childhood administrators' attitudes towards inclusive education: A systematic review. Education Sciences, 15(6), Article 734. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15060734

Beamish, W., Hay, S., & Yuen, M. (2024). Moving inclusion forward for students with special educational needs in the Asia-Pacific region. Frontiers in Education, 9, Article 1327516. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1327516

Calandri, E., Mastrokoukou, S., Marchisio, C., Monchietto, A., & Graziano, F. (2025). Teacher emotional competence for inclusive education: A systematic review. Behavioral Sciences, 15(3), Article 359. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030359

Chow, W. S. E., de Bruin, K., & Sharma, U. (2024). A scoping review of perceived support needs of teachers for implementing inclusive education. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 28(13), 3321–3340. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2244956

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Donath, J. L., Lüke, T., Graf, E., Tran, U. S., & Götz, T. (2023). Does professional development effectively support the implementation of inclusive education? A meta-analysis. Educational Psychology Review, 35(1), Article 30. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09752-2

Duan, S., Bissaker, K., & Xu, Z. (2024). Correlates of teachers' classroom management self-efficacy: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Educational Psychology Review, 36, Article 43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-024-09881-2

Evangelico, R. (2025). Assessing teachers' knowledge, readiness, and challenges in implementing inclusive education in Catholic schools. Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 43(5), 586–602. https://doi.org/10.70838/pemj.430504

Finkelstein, S., Sharma, U., & Furlonger, B. (2021). The inclusive practices of classroom teachers: A scoping review and thematic analysis. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 25(6), 735–762. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1572232

Florian, L., & Spratt, J. (2013). Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 28(2), 119–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2013.778111

Garcia-Melgar, A., Hyett, N., Bagley, K., McKinstry, C., Spong, J., & Iacono, T. (2022). Collaborative team approaches to supporting inclusion of children with disability in mainstream schools: A

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 9, pp. 407-430, October 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

co-design study. Research in Developmental Disabilities, 126, Article 104233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2022.104233

Gheyssens, E., Griful-Freixenet, J., & Struyven, K. (2023). Differentiated instruction as an approach to establish effective teaching in inclusive classrooms. In R. Maulana, M. Helms-Lorenz, & R. M. Klassen (Eds.), Effective teaching around the world (pp. 677–689). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31678-4_30

Griful-Freixenet, J., Struyven, K., & Vantieghem, W. (2020). Exploring the interrelationship between Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction (DI): A systematic review. Educational Research Review, 29, Article 100306. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100306

Griful-Freixenet, J., Struyven, K., & Vantieghem, W. (2021). Exploring pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices about two inclusive frameworks: Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction. Teaching and Teacher Education, 107, Article 103503. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103503

Griful-Freixenet, J., Struyven, K., Verstichele, M., & Andries, C. (2020). Higher education teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Variations in faculty perceptions and practices. Teaching and Teacher Education, 95, Article 103144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103144

Kazanopoulos, S., Mouchritsa, M., Tejada Garitano, E., & Basogain Olabe, X. (2021). Collaboration between in-service school teachers and families in the context of inclusive education: A review of the recent literature. Journal of Education and Practice, 12(6). https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/12-6-05

Korpershoek, H., Harms, T., de Boer, H., van Kuijk, M., & Doolaard, S. (2016). A meta-analysis of the effects of classroom management strategies and classroom management programs on students' academic, behavioral, emotional, and motivational outcomes. Review of Educational Research, 86(3), 643–680. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626799

Lahug, J. P., Delos Reyes, R. C., Cabigon, J. V., & Pinili, L. C. (2025). Readiness of Philippine secondary public-school teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies, 7(11). https://doi.org/10.32996/jhsss.2025.7.11.6

Lundqvist, J. (2026). How early childhood inclusion can be achieved: Literature reviews which address the perceived challenges of preschool staff. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 70(4), 844–861. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2025.2516441

Lutz, S., Frey, A., Rank, A., & Gebhardt, M. (2024). InClass—An instrument to assess classroom management in inclusive and special education with a focus on heterogeneous learning groups. Frontiers in Education, 9, Article 1316059. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1316059

Mann, G., & Gilmore, L. (2023). Barriers to positive parent–teacher partnerships: The views of parents and teachers in an inclusive education context. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 27(14), 1503–1515. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1900426

McKenzie, J., Shanda, N., & Aldersey, H. M. (2021). Family–teacher partnerships: Families' and teachers' experiences of working together to support learners with disabilities in South Africa. British Journal of Special Education, 48(1), 26–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12337

Meda, L., ElSayary, A., & Mohebi, L. (2023). Exploration of in-service teachers' preparedness and perceived challenges about inclusive education in the United Arab Emirates. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 13(1), 22–31. https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2023-0003

Mendoza, M., & Heymann, J. (2024). Implementation of inclusive education: A systematic review of studies of inclusive education interventions in low- and lower-middle-income countries. International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 71(3), 299–316. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2022.2095359

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). Equity and inclusion in education: Finding strength through diversity. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/e9072e21-en

Øen, K., Krumsvik, R. J., & Skaar, Ø. O. (2024). Development of inclusive practice—The art of balancing emotional support and constructive feedback. Frontiers in Education, 9, Article 1281334. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1281334

Orr, M., Isaacs, J., Ilie, A., Chambers, C. T., Smith, I. M., & Corkum, P. (2023). A systematic review and meta-analysis of teacher-implemented interventions for disruptive behaviour in the inclusive classroom. Educational Psychology Review, 35, Article 68. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09808-3

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Paccaud, A., Keller, R., Luder, R., Pastore, G., & Kunz, A. (2021). Satisfaction with the collaboration between families and schools—The parent's view. Frontiers in Education, 6, Article 646878. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.646878

Rahmadani, A., & Kurniawati, F. (2021). Teacher engagement mediates self-efficacy and classroom management: Focus on Indonesian primary schools. Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology, 19(53), 75–92. https://doi.org/10.25115/ejrep.v19i53.3444

Rapisa, D. R., Hermanto, & Suparno. (2026). Teacher competency in practicing inclusive education: A systematic review. Journal of Teaching and Learning, 20(2), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.22329/jtl.v19i3.9373

Sharma, U., Loreman, T., & Forlin, C. (2012). Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices. Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 12(1), 12–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2011.01200.x

Sharma, U., & Sokal, L. (2023). Can teachers' self-efficacy, concerns, and attitudes toward inclusion be improved through professional learning? Teacher Development, 27(3), 322–340. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2023.2181234

Sheridan, S. M., Smith, T. E., Moorman Kim, E., Beretvas, S. N., & Park, S. (2019). A meta-analysis of family–school interventions and children's social-emotional functioning: Moderators and components of efficacy. Review of Educational Research, 89(2), 296–332. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318825437

Sito, L. R. (2020). Teachers' preparedness for inclusive education. Mountain Journal of Science and Interdisciplinary Research, 80(2), 7–21. https://doi.org/10.70884/mjsir.v80i2.270

Suprihatiningrum, J., Listiawati, N., Wirda, Y., Sabon, S. S., Siswantari, & Nuraini, B. (2025). Core competencies for inclusive early childhood educators: A systematic review. IAFOR Journal of Education, 13(3), 525–553. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.13.3.21

Szép, A., Dantchev, S., Zemp, M., Schwinger, M., Chavanon, M.-L., & Christiansen, H. (2021). Facilitators and barriers of teachers' use of effective classroom management strategies for students with ADHD: A model analysis based on teachers' perspectives. Sustainability, 13(22), Article 12843. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212843

Tan, R., Devarakonda, C., & Rothe, A. (2025). How is inclusion defined on the early childhood level in China, Germany and the UK: A systematic literature review. International Journal of Early Years Education, 33(4), 704–723. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2024.2368041

Tsibidaki, A., & Vrachna, A. (2025). Collaboration as a soft skill in special education teachers: A systematic literature review. Revija za Elementarno Izobraževanje, 18(2), 197–218. https://doi.org/10.18690/rei.4853

Ufermann, L., Domsch, H., & Urton, K. (2025). Perspectives of learning and support assistants on cooperation with teachers in inclusive education: A systematic literature review. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 40(5), 943–959. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2024.2445407

UNESCO. (2020). Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718

Wray, E., Sharma, U., & Subban, P. (2022). Factors influencing teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education: A systematic literature review. Teaching and Teacher Education, 117, Article 103800. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103800

Zee, M., de Bree, E., Hakvoort, B., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2021). Exploring relationships among teachers' emotional support, classroom management, and students' social, emotional, and behavioral functioning in inclusive elementary classrooms. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 36(5), 769–785. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1837704

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.