

# Teachers' and School Administrators' Preparedness and Practices in Inclusive Education

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**Abstract:** The transformation of the education system from exclusive to inclusive education necessitates a significant shift in thinking as well as a process of systemic reform and coordinated effort at multiple levels among education's key movers the teachers and school administrators. This study sought to ascertain teachers' and school administrators' preparedness and practices in inclusive education. The descriptive-correlation analysis utilizing the survey technique was used. Through random sampling a survey questionnaire was administered to 357 teachers and 27 administrators in the public schools in the division of Agusan del Norte. Findings have shown that as to the level of preparedness for inclusive education of teachers and administrators in terms of school leadership, school climate, curriculum instruction, individual student support, and teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes, individual student support got the highest mean (4.05). As to the extent of inclusive education practices among teachers and administrators, the overall mean is 3.94 which implies that there is a positive inclusive education implementation. Moreover, data reveal that there is a significant relationship between the participants' level of preparedness in the implementation of inclusive education and their practices. Thus, the result of this study can pave the path for more meaningful inclusive education implementation in all the schools in Agusan del Norte Division.

**Keywords:** *Inclusive education, preparedness, practices*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education for All (EFA) is a policy anchored in the International Mandate promulgated by the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education which requires governments to promote the approach of Inclusive Education enabling schools, both public and private learning institutions to serve children at all levels, particularly those with special educational needs.

However, numerous challenges are encountered in the implementation of inclusive education (Echeita Sarrionandia, 2022). Some of these challenges are inadequate human resources, lack of budget, and minimal level of awareness (Shiwakoti, 2022). Walton et al. (2022) also mentioned the problem of lack of material resources and trained teachers. Additional challenge in the Philippine inclusive education is the current remote learning modalities implemented by DepEd (Cahapay, 2022; Garcia, 2022). Cortes et al. (2022) stated that learning is high inside a friendly and dynamic classroom, but, during the pandemic, students' performance is declining. Whereas teachers teaching indigenous learners with disabilities needs much more support, because these learners have double discrimination (Tejano, 2022). Tejano (2022) also added that the K to 12 Curriculum policies is not presently applicable to the present conditions of indigenous learners with disabilities. Cahapay (2020) also raised the concern that learners from indigenous groups could be further disadvantaged after the pandemic.

All these recent research developments internationally and locally provide this research solid grounding on the importance of exploring the topic on inclusive education. The exploration of inclusive education especially within the context of Caraga Region would provide relevant insights to education stakeholders on the real situation of the teaching and learning within inclusive classrooms of the region. This would in turn give the national government relevant data that would be useful in DepEd inclusive education policy formulation. Moreover, the result of this study can help DepEd Agusan del Norte Division in formulating relevant and localized policies regarding inclusive education where the main goal is to ultimately help in educating all learners regardless of diversities.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the social-constructionist theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966). Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021) suggested the use of social-constructionist theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966) to frame inclusive education. Berger and Luckmann (1966) defined institutionalization as 'the social construction of reality' and claimed that people socially construct institutions through daily communication with each other. Social-constructionism explains how inclusion theories and principles relate to early childhood education Jamero, (2019) as cited by Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021) and defined the conceptual

framework of inclusion in the United States (Dudley-Marling and Burns 2014).

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the level of preparedness, and practices, in inclusive education among teachers and school administrators in the Division of Agusan del Norte. Specifically, this study aimed to:

1. Assess the level of preparedness for inclusive education of teachers and administrators, terms of: school leadership; school climate; curriculum instruction; individual student support; and teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes.
2. Find out the extent of the inclusive education practice among teachers and administrators.
3. Investigate the significant relationship between the participants' level of preparedness in the implementation of inclusive education and their practices.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study determined the level of preparedness, practices and challenges in inclusive education among 357 teachers and 27 school administrators in the Division of Agusan del Norte. The descriptive-correlation analysis utilizing the survey technique was used. There were three experts in the field of Inclusive Education examine the content and construct validity of the questionnaire where it was tried out to teachers and administrators within the DepEd Agusan del Norte Division. Moreover mean, was used to determine the level of preparedness, practices, and challenges encountered in implementing Inclusive Education and Pearson Product Moment Correlation, was used to determine the significant relationship between the level of preparedness and the teachers and administrators' practices.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the summary of the areas where the level of preparedness for inclusive education of teachers and administrators in terms of school leadership, school climate, curriculum instruction, individual student support, and teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes where assessed.

**Table 1. Summary of the areas on the level of preparedness for inclusive education of teachers and administrators**

	Mean	Description
1. School Leadership	3.68	Frequently
2. School Climate	3.79	Frequently
3. Curriculum Instruction	3.67	Frequently
4. Individual Student Support	4.05	Frequently

5. Teachers' Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes.	3.95	Frequently
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.83</b>
		<b>Frequently</b>

*Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always; 3.50 – 4.49 – Frequently; 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 – Seldom; 1.00 – 1.49 – Never*

It can be gleaned that among the five areas, individual student support got the highest mean (4.05). This is where collaboration with parents and guardians to ensure that all kids are really integrated, respected, and become productive members of the classroom community. Thurlow et al. (2022) confirm this, stating that working with parents and guardians enhances their beliefs, attitudes, and values about inclusive education. On the other hand, the area of curriculum and instruction got the lowest mean (3.67), this implies that teachers need to modify curricular goals and classroom instruction to adapt to the needs of students with special needs. Pocaan (2022) emphasized curriculum customization and adaptation toward holistic and context-based teaching methodologies to fulfill the needs of all types of learners.

Table 2 presents the mean distribution of the extent of inclusive education practices among teachers and administrators.

**Table 2. Mean Distribution of the extent of inclusive education practices**

Inclusive Education Practices	Mean	Description
1. The school establishes an environment that allow all students to move freely.	4.30	Frequently
2. Teachers create a safe, reinforcing, and warm environment.	4.35	Frequently
3. Teachers show consistency in structure and routine.	4.18	Frequently
4. Teachers modify curricular goals and classroom instruction to adapt to the needs of students with special needs.	3.99	Frequently
5. The school provides all students with access to flexible learning choices and effective paths for achieving educational goals in spaces where they	4.05	Frequently
6. Teachers develop specific support and interventions for needs that can be both supportive for individuals with these needs and for all learners at the same time	4.02	Frequently

7. Teachers employ strategies for diverse students to always display more appropriate behavior in all places.	4.07	Frequently	19. Learners with special needs interact with their peers in the inclusion during break and entry time.	3.78	Frequently
8. Teachers incorporate visual, tactile, and kinesthetic materials and activities to meet a variety of learners needs.	4.00	Frequently	20. Teachers expose learners with special needs to a wide variety of challenging tasks that would keep them attentive and engaged throughout the lessons.	3.78	Frequently
9. Teachers use class-wide routines and procedures to support classroom management and learning of all students.	4.09	Frequently	21. Teachers adopt individualized instruction.	3.88	Frequently
10. The school employs differentiated instruction and provided reading materials based on their reading level and/or interests.	4.09	Frequently	22. Teachers develop lesson plans that include multiple perspectives and are designed with diversity, equity, and inclusion in mind.	3.87	Frequently
11. Assessment of students with special needs is done in similar ways as with regular students.	3.68	Frequently			
12. Students with special needs feel comfortable with the assessment methodology of teachers.	3.80	Frequently			
13. The school offers a variety of assessment formats that are inclusive of student cultural diversity and learning needs and include opportunities for group, peer, and self-assessment.	3.74	Frequently			
14. Teachers collaborate with parents/guardians to ensure that all students are truly integrated, valued, and become effective members of the classroom community.	4.13	Frequently			
15. General Education Teachers collaborate with SPED Teachers and other experts to enact inclusive pedagogies in their classrooms.	3.32	Sometimes			
16. Teachers help learners with special needs with social integration in the school environment.	3.85	Frequently			
17. Teachers incorporate teaching about diversity _ race, class, ethnicity, and ability.	3.99	Frequently			
18. Learners with special needs participate in the different activities of the school.	3.76	Frequently			
				<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.94</b>
					<b>Frequently</b>

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always; 3.50 – 4.49 – Frequently; 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 – Seldom; 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

As to the extent of inclusive education practices among teachers and administrators the over-all mean is 3.94 which implies that there is a positive inclusive education implementation, that educators are actively integrating inclusive education to instructional methods and managerial approaches. Where the study can also boast on the indicator on teachers create a safe, reinforcing, and warm environment which have the highest mean of 4.35. This is also supported by Abubakar et al. (2023), that creating a safe, affirming, and warm environment improves children' social and emotional learning in inclusive classrooms.

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between the participants' level of preparedness in the implementation of inclusive education and their practices.

**Table 3. Significant relationship between the level of preparedness for inclusive education and the teachers and school administrators' practices**

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Practices in inclusive education and				
Level of inclusive education preparedness				

▪ School leadership	.730	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
▪ School climate	.747	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
▪ Curriculum instruction	.823	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
▪ Individual student support	.822	.000	Significant	Reject Ho
▪ Teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes	.872	.000	Significant	Reject Ho

*Level of significance at 0.05*

Table 3 demonstrates the considerable association between the level of preparedness for inclusive education and the practices of teachers and school administrators. In terms of school leadership, inclusive education practices were significantly connected to inclusive education preparedness ( $r = 0.730$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Several studies also advocated for inclusive education readiness through school leadership (Rasmitadila, Megan Asri, & Reza, 2022).

In terms of school atmosphere, inclusive education practices were significantly connected to inclusive education preparedness ( $r = 0.747$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Wray, Sharma, and Subban (2022) discovered that school atmosphere was substantially associated to teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education.

Furthermore, inclusive education practices were found to be significantly related to inclusive education preparedness in terms of curriculum and instruction ( $r = 0.823$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Implementing instructional strategies in the classroom helps teachers prepare for inclusive education (Dioso et al., 2022).

In terms of individual student support, inclusive education practices were also substantially connected to inclusive education preparedness ( $r = 0.822$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Fung et al. (2022) believe that individual student support is important in inclusive education since it helps to address student diversity.

Finally, in terms of teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, inclusive education practices were significantly related to inclusive education preparedness ( $r = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Chua and Bong (2022), Bahdanovich Hanssen and Erina (2022), studies have all highlighted the importance of teachers' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in inclusive education achievement.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The level of preparedness for inclusive education of teachers and administrators in terms of school Climate, individual student support, and teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes for inclusive education was frequently practiced, they have good preparation. Moreover, teachers' and school administrators' practices in inclusive education are frequently demonstrated in almost all areas, where general education teachers collaborate with SPED teachers and other experts to enact inclusive pedagogies in their classrooms. Thus, the result of this study can pave the path for more meaningful inclusive education implementation in all the schools, especially in Agusan del Norte Division, Caraga Region, Philippines.

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