

EMPOWERING TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION: AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES AND COMPETENCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has become a foundational principle of global and national education systems, yet its implementation relies heavily on teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy, and competence. This study examined the attitudes and competence of Grade 7 teachers toward inclusive education in two public secondary schools in the Division of Carcar City, Philippines. Grounded in the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework, Social Cognitive Theory, Competency-Based Education Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the research utilized a descriptive–correlational design involving 30 teachers. Data were gathered using adapted and validated versions of the Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES) and the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale. Findings revealed that teachers had moderately positive attitudes toward inclusion ($M = 3.12\text{--}3.25$) and moderate to high competence levels across three domains: knowledge of inclusive practices ($M = 3.43\text{--}3.44$), instructional skills ($M = 3.16\text{--}3.20$), and classroom management/assessment strategies ($M = 3.06$). However, a weak negative correlation was found between attitudes and competence ($r \approx -0.28$), indicating that positive attitudes were not necessarily matched by stronger technical skills. Teachers reported challenges related to limited training, insufficient resources, and managing students with severe disabilities. Findings suggest that inclusion is widely accepted in principle but difficult to operationalize without systemic support. The study proposes a Strategic Intervention Plan focusing on capacity-building, peer mentoring, collaboration with specialists, and provision of contextualized teaching resources. Strengthening both attitudes and competence is essential to bridge the gap between inclusive policy and classroom practice, ultimately contributing to more equitable learning environments.

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher attitudes, teacher competence, Philippine secondary education, TEIP, MATIES