

## **Preparedness of Regular Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in the Philippines: A Meta-synthesis**

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### **Abstract**

*The readiness of regular teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in the Philippines was meta-synthesized from the 15 selected studies out of 2005 researches from 2017–2022. The Publish and Perish software was used to collect data. The selected studies underwent screening using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for systematic review. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow program was also utilized to organize the selected studies. Professional Readiness and Psychological Readiness were identified as meta-themes using thematic analysis. As a result, six sub-themes emerged from the meta-themes, namely, proper training in handling students with special needs (SWANs), perception of inclusive education, typical experience of regular teachers in teaching inclusive education, level of preparation of regular teachers, teacher's competency, and collaboration among professional colleagues. In conclusion, regular teachers are unprepared to teach inclusive education because they lack the necessary resources, education and training to educate students with disabilities. It is recommended that regular teachers be supplied with hands-on training and programs that provide them with psychological and professional assistance for the successful inclusion and implementation of educational activities of children with specific educational needs in the general classroom setting.*

**Keywords:** Preparedness, Regular Teachers, Inclusive Education, Meta-synthesis, Philippines

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### **I. Introduction**

As Education is the utmost important to every Filipino, this makes anyone that wants to learn to be able to go to school regardless of sex, age, religion, creed, socioeconomic status, social or ethnic origin, political and other affiliation, and physical or mental condition (Philippine Const, Article XIV, 1987). Since many decades ago, the word "inclusion" has been used frequently in relation to education. Prewitt (2019) stated that in 1975, schools began establishing special schools and separate classrooms for pupils with impairments. When the Education for All Handicapped Children Act stipulated that all special needs children should attend school in their least restrictive environment (LRE) with their peers who are illiterate.

In 2016, Muego noted that there is still a pressing need in the Philippines for the adoption of Inclusive Education. At the time, only limited information regarding the practice of Inclusive Education in the Philippines is available. Muego and Echavia (2011) revealed that certain schools do not have adequate numbers of instructors to administer inclusive education in their investigation. According to Booth and Ainscow (2011), inclusive education is the practice of putting inclusive ideals into action and decreasing exclusion, bias, and barriers to learning in ways that treat everyone equally. According to their research, inclusive education is the provision of educational opportunities to all school-age children, including the provision of a space to study with other students in the class, for the benefit of all children in education.

Regular teachers are regarded as vital in the mainstreaming process since they contribute significantly to the appropriateness of inclusive education. The education department of the Philippines seeks to enroll more children, regardless of their needs, and is working with educators, students, parents, and the community to achieve this goal. Ecoben (2019) added that the "Magna Carta for Disabled Persons" assures that those who are less fortunate should have equal access to high-quality education and adequate opportunities to advance their abilities. Government-subsidized teachers in the education department are recognized to be necessary for the implementation of inclusive education.

On the readiness of teachers to undertake inclusive education, several research have been done. But no one has done a meta-synthesis of the preparation of teachers for inclusive education. Therefore, the goal of this study is to combine information on how prepared teachers are to handle inclusive education in the Philippine environment. Hopefully, the meta-synthesis will result in enhancing training programs for teachers to better prepare them to include those kids who have unique needs in the general classroom environment.

## II. Methodology

### Research Design:

The meta-synthesis research approach was utilized in this study to perform a systematic review and re-interpret data across inter-related studies (S. Atkins et al 2008) on the competency of regular teachers on acquisition of an all inclusive system of education in the Philippines.

### Search Strategy:

To extract accurate results relevant to the Preparedness of Regular Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education, the researchers utilize the Google Scholar database and Publish Perish software to accumulate variables required for the meta-synthesis. The related studies appeared with the help of keywords such as regular teachers, preparedness, inclusive education, meta-synthesis and Philippines. All of the studies relevant to the Preparedness of Regular Teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education published from 2017 to 2022 were read, downloaded, and analyzed.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

The chosen studies in this review were based on these criteria: peer-reviewed, published in the Philippines, involves inclusive education, focused on regular teachers, year of publication must be from 2017-2022 studies. In terms of data inclusion, research syntheses and reports that achieved the inclusion criteria that includes journal articles, dissertations and theses, and web-based reports.

### Data Analysis:

In evaluating qualitative data, thematic analysis was utilized, which comprises searching throughout a data collection to locate, interpret, and report on repeating patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006). While selecting codes, interpretation was also required.

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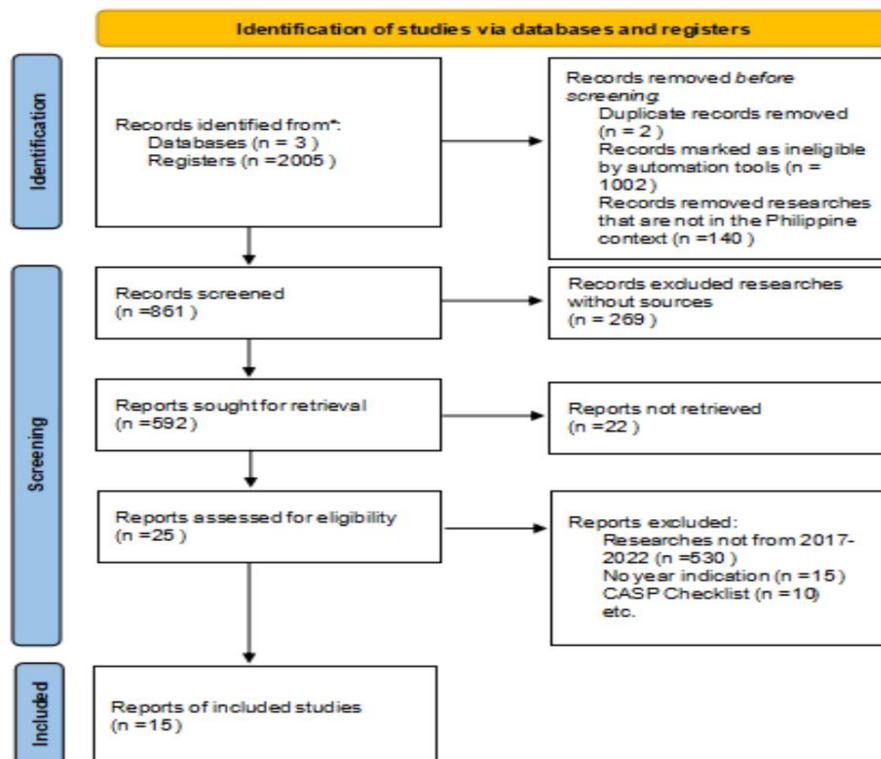


Figure 1. Identification of studies via databases and registers using PRISMA Diagram

The PRISMA Flow Diagram was used to select research papers in three (3) steps. Identification, screening, and inclusion are the three (3) phases. There were 996 studies registered in Google Scholar, 1001 studies registered in Crossref, and 8 studies registered in Scopus Database for the first step, Identification, with a total of 2,055 studies utilizing the Publish or Perish Application Database. Due to the duplication of studies in Google Scholar and Crossref, two (2) were deleted, and one thousand one hundred forty-two (1142) studies were removed because they were unrelated to the study, resulting in eight hundred sixty-two (862) studies for the Identification phase. The Screening phase is divided into three (3) sub-phases. Due to a lack of sources, two hundred sixty-nine (269) research were excluded from the first phase, leaving five hundred ninety-two (592) studies. In the second phase, 545 papers were deleted because they did not match one of the inclusion requirements in the year of publication, and another 22 studies were omitted because the abstract did not meet the researcher's prerequisites, resulting in 25 studies. Ten (10) studies were removed from the third phase because they did not match the standards of the CASP Checklist. There are fifteen (15) included studies in the final step, which is the Included.

Table 1 presents the fifteen studies concentrating on the preparation of Regular Teachers in Inclusive Education that were included in the data collection framework for our meta-synthesis. The majority of the papers gathered are publications published between 2017 and 2021 and employ a quantitative, qualitative and mixed method research approach.

**Table 1. Studies focusing on the preparedness of Regular Teachers in Inclusive Education**

| No. | Author/s                                | Year | Publication Type | Design       | Preparedness of Regular Teachers  |
|-----|---|------|------------------|--------------|---|
| S1  | Roxainned, M., Nunez, O. & Rosales S.S  | 2021 | Research         | Qualitative  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers found out to have inadequate training regarding the inclusive education that they remain to have favorable perceptions, views, understanding and attitudes towards it.</li> <li>● Teachers have poor training to teach and are not well-equipped enough to handle students with Special educational needs (SEN).</li> </ul>   |
| S2  | Sito, L.R                               | 2020 | Article          | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers are not so familiar with both principles but they were remarkably knowledgeable on the concepts related to shareholder's active involvement.</li> <li>● Teachers are moderately productive in promoting learning, classroom management, and establishing relationships to the students. .</li> <li>● Teachers' cooperation towards self-improvement is notably greater than the attitudes towards mainstreamed class set-up.</li> </ul> |
| S3  | Baguisa, L.R. & Manaig A.               | 2019 | Article          | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers must prioritize teaching learners with disabilities especially when the school is practicing inclusive education.</li> <li>● General Education Teachers must be provided more training in inclusive education who teaches learners with disabilities.</li> </ul>  |
| S4  | Dela Fuente, J.A                        | 2021 | Article          | Qualitative  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers are challenged in teaching learners with disabilities they tend to become pressured on their teaching styles on handling students with special needs.</li> </ul>  |
| S5  | Pedroso, J.E, Alcalde, D.R & Sudario T. | 2020 | Article          | Qualitative  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers were challenged in instruction, preparation and strategies. They dealt with these difficulties they encountered by using their own coping techniques because it is really challenging and stressful especially during the pandemic.</li> </ul>  |

|     |   |      |                       |              |   |
|-----|---|------|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| S6  | Ecoben, M.E.  | 2019 | Article               | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The necessity for updated special education training that would prepare teachers to deal with students' conduct and give them teaching skills for delivering lessons to students in mainstream classes was becoming more and more apparent to teachers.</li> <li>• Training, seminars, and workshops should be made available to teachers.</li> <li>• Collaboration between teachers and special education teachers was challenging because the latter did not track or assess the development of the regular students.</li> <li>• Teachers are willing and ready to work with kids who have impairments.</li> <li>• The program was not fully adopted by teachers.</li> </ul> |
| S7  | Colendrino, M.C   | 2019 | Article               | Mixed        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Education teachers must understand the extent of their responsibilities in the inclusive educational system.</li> <li>• For acculturation purposes, regular education teachers would require intensive training on the nature and characteristics of disabilities, as well as intensive training on the teaching and learning process in Inclusive education</li> </ul>  |
| S8  | Zagona, A. L., Kurth, J. A., & MacFarland, S. Z. C.                 | 2017 | Article               | Mixed        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a correlation among teachers' readiness for inclusive instruction and whether they had received specialized training or university-level courses on the subject..</li> </ul>   |
| S9  | Juanito N. Infante Jr.  | 2018 | Research              | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although teachers are thought to be informed about the DEPED's current inclusive education program, they do not have the necessary training to hone their abilities to manage kids with special needs.</li> <li>• It is important to provide teachers with adequate training in inclusive education so they can effectively meet the needs of the program and the students.</li> </ul>   |
| S10 | Faragher, R., Chen, M., Miranda, L., Poon, K., Chang, F., & Chen H. | 2021 | Journal               | Mixed        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although teachers appear eager to accommodate children who require additional learning support, they still seem underprepared, and insufficient resources will limit successful inclusive practices.</li> </ul>  |
| S11 | Zarla, P., Raguindin Z., Custodio U., & Bulasan F.B                 | 2021 | Grounded Theory Study | Qualitative  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers should be given the tools they need to adopt inclusive ideas and use inclusive strategies for creating learning communities.</li> </ul>   |
| S12 | Pagurigan, E.M  | 2020 | Research              | Qualitative  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' thoughts and comprehension of inclusion are essential since these attitudes are among the best indicators of the success of inclusion projects.</li> <li>• Implies that in order for instructors to get the material and acquire the skills they need to manage inclusive classes, they must attend an inclusive education seminar and training.</li> </ul>  |

|     |  |      |         |              |   |
|-----|--|------|---------|--------------|---|
| S13 | Pascua, J & Marzo M. A.                | 2019 | Article | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers with larger classes were privileged to have kids with unique needs in their classrooms and be able to educate them.</li> <li>• Teachers who were new to inclusion were wary about inclusive education, most likely because they had not been taught or had the breadth of expertise necessary to teach students with disabilities.</li> </ul>   |
| S14 | Carmona, R.                            | 2019 | Article | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers have a favourable attitude toward inclusive education.</li> <li>• Teachers were hesitant to embrace Inclusive Education.</li> <li>• Regular teachers should work together with Special Education teachers to ensure that Inclusive Education is implemented effectively.</li> <li>• Teachers lack experience and knowledge in dealing with pupils with unique educational needs.</li> </ul> |
| S15 | Mohamed, A., Moosa, V., & Shareefa, M. | 2021 | Article | Quantitative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers must comprehend inclusive education principles and practices.</li> <li>• Teachers must have the necessary skills and abilities in order to improve inclusive educational opportunities for kids with special needs.</li> </ul>  |

As shown in the table, the primary codes on the preparedness of regular teachers in inclusive education were generated to seek themes. The generated themes resulted into 7 sub-themes and 2 meta-themes, these are the following: (1) proper training and skills in handling swans, (2) perception in inclusive education, (3) typical experiences of regular teachers in teaching inclusive education, (4) level of preparation of regular teachers, (5) teacher's competency, (6) collaboration among professional colleagues. The (1) professional readiness and (2) psychological readiness meta-themes are to be discussed below.

### **Sub-theme 1. Proper Training and Skills in Handling SWANS**

Regular teachers are vital in the successful execution of inclusive education since they are crucial when integrating learners with exceptionalities into regular classes. According to Aksu Ataç and Taşç (2020), because students with SEN are different from others; it is imperative that they be taught by a teacher who is well-versed in inclusive education. Today more than ever, there is a significant need for teachers who have the knowledge and expertise required to assist learners who require special education.

### **Sub-theme 2. Perception in Inclusive Education**

Inclusive Education is a divisive subject in the field of education. One deviation to this instability is the study on teachers' opinions of an inclusive strategy for students in special education. There is agreement on the subject of inclusion and teacher attitudes. Muega stated that although teachers accept the idea and practice of inclusion, many believe they are not receiving enough instruction or assistance in its application. The teaching-learning process can be improved by teachers' attitudes toward inclusiveness. According to Avramidis and Norwich, Understanding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion is crucial since such attitudes are among the best indicators of the effectiveness of inclusion policies. Burke and Sutherland also found a strong correlation between Teachers' positive views toward inclusion and their understanding of and prior experience with pupils who have exceptionalities.

### **Sub-theme 3. Typical Experiences of Regular Teachers in Teaching Inclusive Education**

Regular teachers are dealing with the different episodes in teaching inclusive education. By the scenarios that they uphold, they have mentioned that they are not well-equipped in handling the students with additional needs and have not gained the breadth of experience required to teach children with disabilities. According to Forlin

and Sin (2017), “most of the regions on the Pacific appeared that regular teachers and fresh graduates educators from training are not well prepared for managing inclusive classrooms as well as managing diverse learners”. There is a lot to cope-up when regular teachers switch their roles as one of the inclusive education teachers. Moreover, even though teachers are well-equipped and eager to teach learners with disabilities, teachers had struggles in adopting the program fully. As a result, regular teachers’ experiences can have a great impact on their overall teaching career and involvement in inclusive education.

#### **Sub-theme 4. Level of Preparation of Regular Teachers**

Various levels of preparedness are acquired by regular teachers in terms of teaching inclusive education. In previous years, teachers were somewhat productive in promoting learning, classroom management, and establishing relationships wherein it entails the fact that they are not fully prepared for inclusive education. According to UNICEF (2018), developing countries including the Philippines are suffering from poor quality teacher training and inadequate classroom facilities. Given the distance learning, it adds a level of difficulty to the preparedness of regular teachers in handling inclusive education. Teachers were challenged and encountered complexity in teaching. In addition to this, schools and SPED centers are ill-equipped to practice inclusive education, and it will be difficult for the students as well as the regular teachers.

#### **Sub-theme 5. Teacher's Competency**

The ability of a teacher to organize, direct, and promote classroom engagement that is appropriate for the activity and takes into account the various needs and skills of the students is known as teacher competency. The inclusive education initiative will increase community awareness as teachers become more assured and skilled. In view of education for all, this would result in more disabled or differently abled youngsters enrolling in school, working, and contributing to the development of society (Kusuma and Ramadevi, 2013). Teachers who were new to inclusion exhibited reluctance toward inclusive education, presumably as a result of their lack of education, which prevented them from being ready to embrace as their capacity for dealing with SWANs pupils was insufficient.

#### **Sub-theme 6. Collaboration Among Professional Colleagues**

Collaboration enables individuals in charge of the student's learning and wellbeing to share their diverse viewpoints and areas of expertise on the student. In order to plan and carry out education and services, collaborators can make better use of the more thorough awareness of each student's needs that is made possible by this unified expertise. Effective teacher collaboration needs a common purpose and aim, open communication, a monitoring mechanism, enough resources, and regular evaluations of student outcomes in order to be sustained. The ability to work together as a team was essential to fostering productive professional interdependence (Mann, 2018). It is evident from this that professional cooperation is essential to being properly equipped for inclusive education.

#### **Meta-themes**

Synthesizing the six (6) sub-themes, it resulted in two (2) meta-themes, namely: professional readiness and psychological readiness which provides regular teachers the opportunity to successfully handle students with special needs (SWANs) in the general education classroom.

#### **Professional Readiness**

The preparedness of the regular teachers when it comes to inclusive education must be given consideration. Professional readiness pertains to the knowledge readiness of teachers in teaching and handling inclusive education, have enough knowledge on the appropriate application of technologies in classroom settings, possess a core understanding of psychological and correctional pedagogy, have knowledge on the differences of individual and also their diverse needs, teacher's readiness to formulate engaging lesson for students with diverse needs, employ diversity in the learning process, understanding the specific features or characteristics of children with varied impairment and the preparation of teachers to engage in training and other professional interactions (Persina et al. 2018). Every regular teacher must be prepared with essential information and abilities in handling inclusive education since they must master the usual classroom curriculum while also addressing the requirements of students with special needs (SWANs). According to the study conducted by Ecoben, M. E. (2019), regular teachers that have been employed by the Department of Education for more than ten (10) years are professionally prepared to become an inclusive education teacher, but this study

revealed that the majority of the regular teachers were new to the inclusion of students with additional needs in general education. Regular instructors and special education teachers must collaborate to establish an effective learning environment for kids with special needs in the inclusion classroom to ensure the efficacy of inclusive education. (Hallahan 2012). Furthermore, regular teachers felt the need to enhance their training in the inclusion of students with special needs (SWANs). It has been advised that regular teachers must receive in-service training from teacher trainers (UNESCO, 1996).

### **Psychological Readiness**

Emotional acceptance of children with various forms of developmental abnormalities; willingness to integrate children with all types of violations in instructional activities; and satisfaction with one's own pedagogical activity are all examples of psychological preparation (Pershina et. al. 2018). Regular teachers were fully aware of the need of having enough special education understanding and background, as well as how special education training would assist them. Furthermore, they recognize and appreciate their expertise of inclusive education, particularly when it comes to addressing the obstacles and concerns of kids with special needs (Ecoben, M. E 2019). Regular educators, in accordance with this, are also highly trained in terms of personal traits such as empathy, patience, and a passion for teaching children with special needs (CWANs). This implies that regular teachers were dedicated and enthusiastic about managing inclusive education. Research found that children with special needs assisted regular educators in being more sensitive, adaptive, adaptable, and, ultimately, learner-centered (Macbeath et al. 2013). It encourages regular teachers to try out new ideas and tactics in the classroom in order to be the greatest teacher possible.

### **III. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Due to a lack of required resources, knowledge, and training to educate children with disabilities, regular teachers in the inclusion of learners with special needs are unprepared. As a result, regular teachers should be provided with hands-on training and programs which can provide them with psychological and professional assistance for the successful inclusion and integration of educational activities for children with specific educational needs in the general classroom setting.

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