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**TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND EFFECTIVENESS ON INCLUSIVE  
EDUCATION IN CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
OF MATALAM, COTABATO**

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## 2. ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigated the level of teachers' inclusive education practices and the effectiveness of inclusive education implementation, and tested their significant relationship and influence in the Central Elementary Schools of four districts in Matalam, Cotabato, Philippines for School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-correlational design with complete enumeration, 90 elementary teachers from Matalam Central, North, South, and West Districts served as respondents. Inclusive education practices were assessed across curriculum adaptations (WM = 4.10, Practiced), teacher attitudes and competence (WM = 4.06, Practiced), and capacity building (WM = 3.97, Practiced), with an overall weighted mean of 4.06 (Practiced). Implementation effectiveness was rated Effective overall (WM = 3.69), with social inclusion and interaction highest (WM = 4.02, Effective), followed by resource allocation (WM = 3.69, Effective) and administrative and policy support (WM = 3.47, Effective). A significant moderate positive relationship was found between inclusive practices and implementation effectiveness ( $r = 0.47, p < .001$ ). Correlation analysis revealed that teacher attitudes and competence significantly correlated with all three effectiveness dimensions, while curriculum adaptations and capacity building were significantly related to social inclusion and resource allocation but not to administrative support. Multiple regression confirmed significant predictors of implementation effectiveness: curriculum adaptations ( $\beta = 0.508, p = .001$ ) and teacher attitudes and competence ( $\beta = 0.357, p = .003$ ) positively and significantly predicted effectiveness, while capacity building showed a significant negative influence ( $\beta = -0.321, p = .024$ ). The model explained 22% of the variance in effectiveness

( $R^2 = 0.22$ ,  $F = 24.693$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings affirm curriculum adaptation and teacher attitudes as the twin pillars of effective inclusive education, while identifying current capacity building programs as requiring fundamental restructuring.

**3. KEYWORDS:** *Inclusive education; teachers' practices; curriculum adaptations; capacity building; teacher attitudes; implementation effectiveness; social inclusion; Matalam Cotabato.*

#### 4. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education promotes equal access to quality learning for all students regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, yet its effective implementation remains a complex challenge in diverse public school classrooms. Teachers' attitudes, competence, and preparedness directly influence inclusive classroom practices and student outcomes. Despite global commitments to equitable education, many obstacles persist: systemic inequities, insufficient teacher preparation, cultural biases, limited resources, and gaps between policy and practice (Sharma & Loreman, 2018; Ainscow, 2020).

In the Philippines, shortages of trained teachers and insufficient classroom infrastructure limit inclusive education effectiveness. Schools often lack assistive devices, differentiated materials, and manageable class sizes essential for meeting individual learning needs (Garwood & Van Loan, 2019). While RA 11650 mandates learner support services and capacity-building programs, challenges of limited specialized personnel, uneven resource distribution, and insufficient training continue to affect implementation (DepEd, 2022). This study examines teachers' inclusive education practices and their relationship to and influence on implementation effectiveness in Matalam's central elementary schools, grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism and Luhmann's Social Systems Theory.

#### 5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Design.** A descriptive-correlational design was employed to describe current levels of inclusive education practices and implementation effectiveness, and to test their significant relationships and predictive influence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Locale and Respondents.** The study was conducted in the Central Elementary Schools of Matalam Central District ( $n = 20$ ), Matalam North District ( $n = 20$ ), Matalam South District ( $n = 40$ ), and Matalam West District ( $n = 10$ ). Through complete enumeration, all 90 qualifying elementary teachers who are actively involved in classroom instruction and implementation of inclusive education served as respondents.

**Instruments.** A researcher-made, validated questionnaire measured: (1) inclusive education practices across curriculum adaptations, capacity building, and teacher attitudes and competence using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Least Practiced to 5 = Highly Practiced); and (2) implementation effectiveness across administrative and policy support, social inclusion and interaction, and resource allocation using a parallel scale (1 = Least Effective to 5 = Very Effective).

**Statistical Analysis.** Weighted means described variable levels. Pearson correlation determined significant relationships between practices and effectiveness dimensions. Multiple linear regression identified the predictive influence of inclusive education practice dimensions on each effectiveness indicator at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Inclusive Education Practices of Teachers

All three inclusive education practice dimensions were rated Practiced. Curriculum Adaptations registered the highest mean (WM = 4.10), with implementing curriculum that promotes equal participation and achievement receiving the highest individual item rating (M = 4.24, Highly Practiced). Other key items included using differentiated instruction (M = 4.20) and adjusting lesson content for students with special needs (M = 4.20). Teacher Attitudes and Competence was second (WM = 4.06), with adapting teaching methods for diverse learners highest (M = 4.39, Highly Practiced) and believing in the benefits of inclusive education (M = 4.32, Highly Practiced). Collaboration with special education staff received the lowest individual rating (M = 3.48). Capacity Building was third (WM = 3.97), strongest in collaboration between general and special educators (M = 4.17) and leadership support (M = 4.10), and lowest in mentoring (M = 3.80). These findings are consistent with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2018) and Smith and Tyler (2020), who emphasized curriculum flexibility and regular adaptation as best practices for inclusive education.

**Table 1. Overall Level of Inclusive Education Practices of Teachers.**

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Description
Curriculum Adaptations	4.10	Practiced
Teachers' Attitudes and Competence	4.06	Practiced
Capacity Building	3.97	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	4.06	Practiced

### Implementation Effectiveness of Inclusive Education

All three implementation effectiveness dimensions were rated Effective, with an overall weighted mean of 3.69. Social Inclusion and Interaction was highest (WM = 4.02), with equal participation opportunities in group work and discussions (M = 4.33) and modeling respect and empathy for diverse peers (M = 4.32) both rating Effective. Resource Allocation was second (WM = 3.69), with adequate provision of materials (M = 3.98) highest and deployment of trained special education staff lowest (M = 3.27). Administrative and Policy Support was third (WM = 3.47), with school leader monitoring and feedback highest (M = 3.84) and multidisciplinary professional support strikingly lowest of all 18 effectiveness items (M = 1.98, Less Effective). These findings are consistent with UNESCO (2020), which established that inclusive systems require operational guidelines, fiscal commitments, and monitoring mechanisms, and with De Boer et al. (2014), who emphasized strong administrative leadership and clear policy as facilitators of inclusive education.

**Table 2. Overall Level of Implementation Effectiveness.**

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Description
Social Inclusion and Interaction	4.02	Effective
Resource Allocation	3.69	Effective
Administrative and Policy Support	3.47	Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.69	Effective

### Relationship Between Inclusive Practices and Implementation Effectiveness

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant moderate positive overall relationship between teachers' inclusive education practices and implementation effectiveness ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ), rejecting the null hypothesis. At the dimension level, Teacher Attitudes and Competence showed significant positive correlations with all three effectiveness dimensions: administrative support ( $r = 0.308$ ,  $p = .003$ ), social inclusion ( $r = 0.575$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and resource allocation ( $r = 0.301$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Curriculum Adaptations showed significant correlations with social inclusion ( $r = 0.581$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and resource allocation ( $r = 0.390$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but not with administrative support ( $r = 0.171$ ,  $p = .107$ ). Capacity Building showed significant correlations only with social inclusion ( $r = 0.310$ ,  $p = .003$ ) and resource allocation ( $r = 0.265$ ,  $p = .012$ ). Teacher attitudes and competence emerged as the most broadly significant practice dimension, and curriculum adaptation demonstrated the strongest individual correlation in the study ( $r = 0.581$  with social inclusion).

**Table 3. Correlation Matrix: Inclusive Practices and Implementation Effectiveness.**

Practice Dimension	Admin. & Policy Support	Social Inclusion & Interaction	Resource Allocation
Curriculum Adaptations	r = 0.171, p = .107 (NS)	r = 0.581**, p < .001	r = 0.390**, p < .001
Capacity Building	r = 0.063, p = .558 (NS)	r = 0.310**, p = .003	r = 0.265*, p = .012
Teacher Attitudes & Competence	r = 0.308**, p = .003	r = 0.575**, p < .001	r = 0.301**, p = .004

\*\*p < .01; \*p < .05; NS = Not Significant

### **Influence of Inclusive Practices on Implementation Effectiveness**

Multiple regression analysis confirmed that inclusive education practices collectively and significantly predict implementation effectiveness ( $R^2 = 0.22$ ,  $F = 24.693$ ,  $p < .001$ ), explaining 22% of the variance. Curriculum adaptations ( $\beta = 0.508$ ,  $t = 3.427$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and teacher attitudes and competence ( $\beta = 0.357$ ,  $t = 3.076$ ,  $p = .003$ ) were significant positive predictors, while capacity building demonstrated a significant negative influence ( $\beta = -0.321$ ,  $t = -2.304$ ,  $p = .024$ ). Dimension-level regression confirmed these patterns: teacher attitudes and competence was the sole significant predictor of administrative support ( $\beta = .372$ ,  $p = .007$ ;  $R^2 = 0.12$ ), curriculum adaptations ( $\beta = .642$ ) and teacher attitudes ( $\beta = .402$ ) positively predicted social inclusion while capacity building was a significant negative predictor ( $\beta = -.415$ ;  $R^2 = 0.48$ ), and curriculum adaptations alone significantly predicted resource allocation ( $\beta = .408$ ,  $p = .017$ ;  $R^2 = 0.16$ ). The negative capacity building coefficient is a critical finding: training that increases awareness of inclusive demands without providing practical implementation support and protected planning time may paradoxically increase teacher burden without enhancing effectiveness.

**Table 4. Summary Regression: Inclusive Practices on Overall Implementation Effectiveness.**

Practice Predictor	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Significance
Curriculum Adaptations	0.508	3.427	0.001	Significant
Capacity Building	-0.321	-2.304	0.024	Significant (Negative)
Teacher Attitudes & Competence	0.357	3.076	0.003	Significant
$R^2 = 0.22$ ; $F = 24.693$ ; $p < .001$				

## 7. CONCLUSION

Inclusive education practices in the central elementary schools of Matalam, Cotabato are generally well Practiced overall (WM = 4.06), with curriculum adaptations as the strongest dimension. Implementation effectiveness is Effective overall (WM = 3.69), with social inclusion and interaction as the strongest area and multidisciplinary professional support strikingly the weakest (M = 1.98, Less Effective). A significant moderate positive relationship exists between inclusive practices and effectiveness ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Regression analysis establishes that curriculum adaptations and teacher attitudes and competence are the twin positive predictors of effective inclusive education implementation, while the negative coefficient for capacity building signals that current professional development programs require fundamental restructuring toward sustained, practice-embedded, mentorship-driven models rather than episodic general orientation seminars. Schools and district offices should prioritize differentiated instruction training, teacher attitude cultivation, structured SPED collaboration, deployment of multidisciplinary specialist support, and authentic curriculum adaptation frameworks to move inclusive education from Practiced to Highly Practiced and from Effective to Very Effective across all dimensions.

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