

Addressing Learner Diversity: Strategies for Inclusive Education in MATATAG Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the inclusive teaching strategies employed and the level of teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026, serving as the basis for an Action Plan. Specifically, it aimed to describe the profile of teacher-respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, length of service, and teaching position; identify the inclusive strategies commonly used; assess teacher preparedness in applying these strategies; examine the relationship between inclusive strategies and preparedness; and develop an Action Training Plan informed by the findings. Thirty teachers participated, and data were collected through survey questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used for analysis, while Pearson's correlation tested the relationship between variables. Results showed that most respondents were female, aged 40–49 and 50 and above, with long-term teaching experience, and had master's degrees or master's units. Teachers consistently applied inclusive strategies, particularly using culturally responsive materials, providing tasks with varied difficulty levels, and promoting active participation, although strategies requiring individualized adjustments were less frequent. Teacher preparedness was generally rated as Prepared, especially in fostering a positive learning climate and identifying learners needing support, though gaps were noted in knowledge of learning disabilities and specialized training. Correlation analysis indicated a negligible positive and not statistically significant relationship between inclusive strategies and preparedness. The study concluded that while teachers regularly employ inclusive strategies and perceive themselves as prepared, targeted professional development is necessary to strengthen technical competencies. Consequently, an Action Training Plan is recommended to enhance teachers' capacity for inclusive education.

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

An important part of the MATATAG Curriculum is inclusivity, such that all learners at Barili Central Elementary School staff receive meaningful and equitable access learning opportunities. This encompasses all learners of the school such as the marginalized learners with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and Muslim communities. This is part of supports of DepEd's systems level strengthening diverse education systems initiatives (Walton, 2025).

Unlike optional features, inclusive education is engrained into the foundations of MATATAG Curriculum. Teacher readiness and school internal support systems scaffolding are the other more contextual factors critical for inclusive education. More inclusive schools are more effective, and successfully promote school wide active leadership and teaching to remove barriers to learning opportunities. Other effective strategies include

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KEYWORDS: *Special Education, Descriptive Correlational, Inclusive Education, Teacher Preparedness, Inclusive Teaching Strategies.*

differentiated and culturally responsive teaching, with a primary focus on students with disabilities or from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds (Herrera, 2025; Kilag et al., 2025). Together with the above, local contextualized practical resource materials support teacher centering inclusive strategies.

For example, a case study from Cebu showed how the use of assistive technologies and adaptive learning plans helped students with disabilities to become more engaged and perform academically better. DepEd 2024 highlighted the use of assistive technologies before and noted the importance of inclusive education as a core value of MATATAG to be integrated with SPED, Madrasah programs for Muslim learners, IPEd, and the programs for gifted learners. These initiatives promote the importance of Barili Central Elementary principles of equity and responsiveness.

Barili Central Elementary teachers are not sufficiently trained and oriented. There are also not enough instructional materials, unsatisfactory infrastructure, and poor lesson and curriculum integration to implement the integrated adaptive learning materials. There is a gap between what is expected to be accomplished and what is achieved within the classroom (Mkrtichian et al., 2025).

Global research highlights the significance of teacher capacity. UNESCO (2020) reported that in low- and middle-income countries, initiatives for inclusive education do not succeed because teachers are not adequately prepared. Waitoller and Thorius (2020) emphasized the importance of culturally sustaining, locally relevant pedagogies, and Walton (2025) called for an ecological approach that meets the needs of all learners. Locally, research also describes similar contexts: Cabansag (2020) noted the absence of teacher readiness in inclusive policies in Northern Luzon, Mkrtichian et al. (2025) described the difficulties in urban schools with differentiated instruction, and Torres et al. (2024) described insufficient assistance for rural Senior High School SPED programs in the integrated curricula. These contexts underscore the need for policymakers to equip teachers in implementing the intended curriculum.

In conclusion, this research analyzes the extent to which teachers at Barili Central Elementary are prepared to execute inclusive teaching strategies during the 2025–2026 school year under the MATATAG Curriculum. Its objectives aims to inform an action training plan that will develop the school's inclusive practice. This study aims to effective and practical inclusive education in the school instead of leaving it as a policy.

Theoretical Background

Fundamentally, the MATATAG Curriculum was developed with the philosophy of inclusive education, which involved understanding learner differences, recognizing the need for inclusive teaching, and applying inclusive practices. This study utilized the frameworks of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018), Differentiated Instruction (Tomlinson, 2017), and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Together, these argued for an approach to teaching that acknowledged the culture and identity of learners, the different dimensions of their educational needs, and the broader social context in which teaching and learning occur. These further stems from Republic Acts 10533 and 7277, along with DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024 which was inspired by, and endorsed inclusive education in the Philippines,

Differentiated Instruction (DI), articulated by Tomlinson (2017), offered a solid framework for implementing inclusive pedagogy, especially within the learner-centered and the context-sensitive framework of the MATATAG Curriculum. Because of the diverse range of variation among learners in readiness, learning styles, ability levels, and differences in culture, DI permitted teachers to customize instructional content, processes, products and the learning environments to individual needs. With the broader scope of inclusivity offered within the MATATAG Curriculum, this went further than simply providing access and equity to the promotion of social justice by ensuring active participation of all learners, even those who are marginalized and those who are involuntarily excluded.

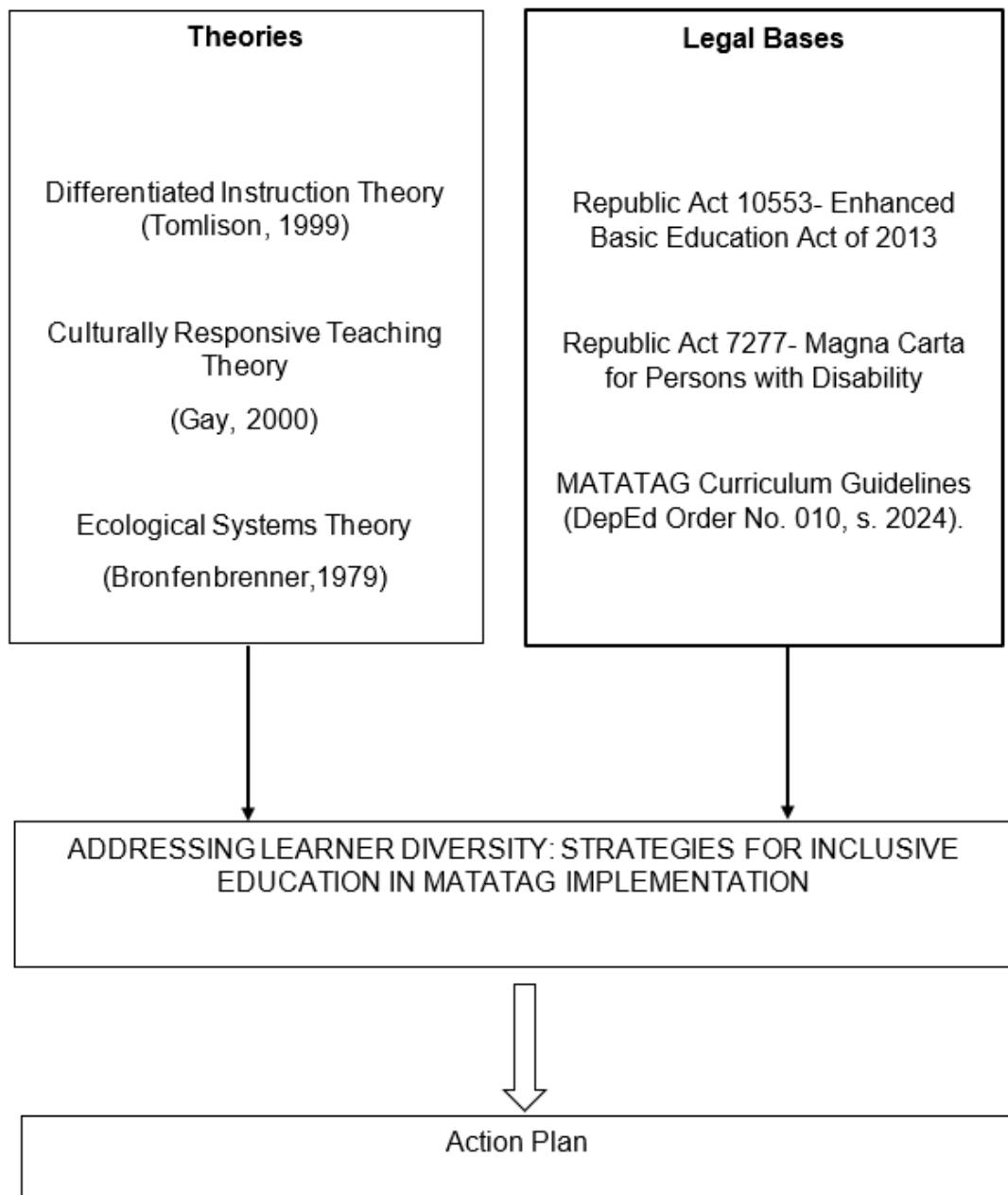


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Differentiated Instruction (DI) and inclusive education are foundational for the successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Preparing teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for inclusive education is important for developing classrooms where all learners thrive. Teacher preparation involves understanding inclusion along with the practical enactment of frameworks for diverse learning. Subban et al. (2022) showed that teachers who employed strategies that targeted varying cognitive, social, and emotional demands in inclusive classrooms enhanced students' experiences. These results highlight the need for contextually responsive teaching, where the lesson is adjusted in response to the learning environment and learners, and is critical for the realization of meaningful inclusion.

In correlation to the enhancement of teacher capacity, the importance of professional development is noted.

Donath et al. (2023) exemplified this when stating that professional learning programs in a structured manner improve teachers' skills in the implementation of inclusive practices, suggesting that policy initiatives by themselves, such as MATATAG, are not enough. Teachers' attitudes are of great importance as noted by Boyle et al. (2020) when stating that positive attitudes towards inclusion foster a greater motivation to adopt differentiated instruction, suggesting that ambivalence or negative attitudes are a hindrance. Thus, the provision of knowledge and the cultivation positive attitudes are a necessity in the implementation of inclusive education and is most likely to take effect at the classroom level.

Teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy have a direct impact the the quality of differentiated instruction. Woodcock and Anderson (2025) state that teachers who have a extensive knowledge of inclusive

education are more skillful at incorporating adaptive practices, scaffolding, and differentiated learning tasks. This is supported by Woodcock et al. (2023) when stating that teacher confidence mediates the successful inclusive strategy application and flexible lesson design in relation to student readiness, interest, and learning profiles. Wray et al. (2022) affirm that inclusive practices are sustained when self-efficacy is bolstered by support from the institution, mentoring, collaborative planning, and provision of other relevant resources.

The impact of DI also includes student engagement and student outcomes. Supportive school cultures and staff perceptions are important influences on inclusive practices (Poon et al., 2019), as are preservice teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy regarding DI and inclusive environments (Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2023). Dignath et al. (2022) pointed out that teachers' beliefs concerning inclusion directly inform the instructional pathways, which calls for calibrated and systematic professional development in belief and pedagogy alignment.

Sustainability and systemic support are equally vital. Research indicates that schools which establish systemic structures for teachers and students, inclusive of learners with special needs, attain more reliable inclusive results (Shutaleva et al., 2023). Inclusive routines in the classroom can be supported through practical tools like checklists (Villa & Thousand, 2021). Inclusive education means that Leijen et al. (2021) is correct in saying that systemic commitment and properly configured resources, along with aligned policy and practice, are critical to ensuring inclusion for the benefit of all learners, not just a select few.

International studies confirm these conclusions. Teachers' perceptions, knowledge, preparation, and attitudes have a considerable impact on putting inclusion into practice (White & Fletcher, 2025; Almalky & Alwahbi, 2023; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). All these works suggest that teacher preparedness, knowledge, and self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion, as well as professional development, interdependently influence the success of inclusive education initiatives like MATATAG.

With respect to the MATATAG Curriculum, these conclusions suggest that teacher preparation, positive attitudes, and ongoing professional assistance are vital to successful DI and inclusion. Teachers who are well equipped will design equitable, learner-centered classrooms where all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, and learning needs, participate meaningfully and accomplish learning outcomes. This confirms that successful inclusion depends on the

coherence of policy, school leadership, teacher capacity, and classroom practice, which provide unified pedagogical and systemic supports for enduring equity in education.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a teaching approach which aims to make all learning regions inclusive and equitable by recognizing students' culture and utilizing them as teaching tools for learning (Ardenlid, Lundqvist, & Sund, 2025; Gheyssens, Griful-Freixenet, & Struyven, 2023). Active and effective teaching through CRT considers some pedagogy for considering the learners' culture for the teaching and learning processes, linking some instructional and interactive practices to the students' cultures, and strategically supporting the students where they are for effective learning. Teaching through CRT emphasizes the need to have some culture competence, transforming teaching some culture, learning the cultural narratives of the students, and self reflection on the biases and assumptions a teacher holds. Culture-based educational philosophies and frameworks are integrated and aligned to the MATATAG Curriculum, as it incorporates culture-based education and frameworks. By applying the principles of CRT, teachers maintain that every student understands that they are respected, appreciated, and understood.

In the MATATAG initiative, the localization and inclusion elements focus on the curriculum. Integrating learners' languages, cultural viewpoints, and lived experiences into teaching illustrates the principles of CRT, which validates student identity, increasing student engagement, understanding, and drive (D'Intino & Wang, 2021; Pozas & Letzel-Alt, 2023). CRT advocates for teaching strategies that are not contextually irrelevant and imposed for Culturally diverse and multilingual classrooms like those in Cebu. CRT encourages and helps teachers to source for culturally relevant materials, examples and discussion questions. When learners connect to the content, they develop critical thinking, empathy, and global awareness, which are all inclusive education essentials.

There is a lot of proof that using culturally responsive methods helps disengaged and marginalized learners (Wang & Tian, 2023; Pasira, 2022). Participation in lessons and motivation is gained at higher levels when lessons are based on learners' cultural context. When learners are assigned performance tasks and project-based assessments, they are acknowledged for their knowledge and strengths, and not just standardized measures (Kupers, de Boer, Bakker, de Jong, & Minnaert, 2024). CRT fosters and increases the sense of belonging to a school, and decreases

dropout rates while inclusion in diverse classrooms is maintained (Gheyssens, Consuegra, Engels, & Struyven, 2021; Malisiova, Kougioumtzis, Tsitsas, Koundourou, & Mitraras, 2023).

CRT also encourages participation in traditionally underrepresented disciplines such as STEM and mathematics (Dema, Klibthong, & Srisurakul, 2022; Mogale, 2025; Pozas, Letzel, Lindner, & Schwab, 2021). Culturally responsive pedagogy promotes cooperative learning, allowing students to learn from their classmates as their cultural experiences provide a basis for knowledge. Pairing CRT with enduring professional development helps teachers prepare and enact plans that effectively respond to diverse cultural needs.

Based on the principles of culturally responsive and inclusive teaching, the MATATAG Curriculum promotes learner-centered pedagogy that attends to different cultural and educational needs and priorities (Mambetakunov, 2025; Onyishi, 2022; Dzaldov & Mandelker, 2023). Sufficient training and support help teachers implement CRT in ways that respond to their policies and institutional frameworks. Along with differentiated instruction and the ecological systems theory, CRT greatly advances the holistic development, academic success, and overall social and emotional well-being of learners. Most importantly, the MATATAG framework helps CRT advance cross-cultural understanding and societal inclusivity at the communal level while also promoting individual learner achievement.

The fundamental framework of Ecological Systems Theory (EST) illustrated by Bronfenbrenner (1979) focuses on different levels of the environment that learners encounter. It elucidates the development and education of individuals from different contexts. Based on the interplay of different systems, chronosystem (timing and historical context), macrosystem (culture and society), exosystem (community, local policies, and media), mesosystem (connections between different microsystems), and microsystem (parents, peers, and school) simultaneously influence children's development (Amali et al., 2023; Sadownik, 2023). Within the MATATAG Curriculum, EST helps examine learners' cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic contexts along with instructional processes and guides the development of inclusive learning environments that encapsulate the experiences of the whole child.

The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on localization and inclusivity recognizes the home, school, and community interconnectedness that culminates in the resource availability and engagement of learners and their achievement (Tong

& An, 2024; Antony, 2022). Teachers are prompted to employ classroom practices that activate mesosystem linkages by using family, community, and culture. These practices draw on the lived experiences of learners. The incorporation of local narratives that honor Indigenous Peoples and Muslim cultural practices are motivational. Teachers are able to respond to cultural and contextual demands through the formulation of appropriate practices (Li & Cheong, 2022a; Li & Cheong, 2022b).

Research shows that focusing on more than one environmental layer improves academic results and socio-emotional development (Nolan & Owen, 2024; Akbayrak & Douglas, 2022). Considering elements of the microsystem and exosystem, such as family, the community and school policies, allows educators to remove and resolve inequitable learning barriers. For instance, the educators within schools and programs of the communities that interact with the family are able to help with inequitable learning barriers faced by marginalized, conflict-affected, and minority cultural students (Kern, 2022; Trang Thu, Thi Thu Thuy, Blackburn, & Puttick, 2022). Adopting such an ecological approach roots instructional methods in the particular context and makes them relevant.

While EST, discussion of the chronosystem and macrosystem is centered on social norms, policies, and history (Marić, 2022; Doughty & Moore, 2021). For instance, in the Philippines, the MATATAG's IPED and Madrasah programs illustrate the way policymakers consider cultural and religious elements of a community and frame policies to influence classroom practices. Educators who understand EST adapt lessons to multiple layers and elements and, therefore, create opportunities that are equitable and accessible (Stepanova, Kurmanbai, & Lyskova, 2023; Muhayani, 2024). Culturally responsive teaching and the socio-ecological model's integration strengthens inclusive practices by situating learner development in the broader socioecological context.

In addition, EST highlights the significance of whole-school and community activities in promoting inclusive practices (Walker, 2023; Mbelu & Maguvhe, 2024). Schools can assess the socioecological classroom to obtain insights on the interactions of peers, teaching methods, and the learning consequences of the institutional frameworks. Likewise, educational institutions can utilize EST in the construction of psychosocial support services directed towards students with disabilities and consider the support measures focused on the individual, as well as the system (Akoto, Nketsia, Opoku, Fordjour, & Opoku, 2022). It is also important to provide culturally congruent resources,

instructional materials, and professional development to realize EST-developed inclusive practices.

In summary, the MATATAG Curriculum has Ecological Systems Theory espoused as one of its inclusivity pillars. Educators can engage in reflective practices that appreciate the interplay of and within multiple environments. Considering the interrelations between different systems of a learner's ecosystem, alongside a culturally responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction, translates to inclusive practices. The addition of EST provides teaching with the necessary attention to the various ecosystem layers, community, culture, policy, and family in order to enhance learner engagement, achievement, and overall emotional health, particularly in diverse environments such as Cebu.

Following theoretical work on learner-centered pedagogy, culturally responsive, and contextually relevant pedagogy, assessing the legal underpinnings of these principles in the Philippine education system is equally important. While Culturally Responsive Teaching, Differentiated Instruction, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provide a foundation for instructional design and pedagogy, the appropriate alignment of these strategies and approaches depends on the availability of appropriate structural supports grounded in national legislation and policies. Laws like RA 10533, RA 7277, and DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024, uniquely articulate specific expectations of schools and teachers, the creation of inclusive and equitable learning ecosystems, and equitable access to resources, professional development, and supports for learners of various needs, thereby operationalizing pedagogy and instructional design. The convergence of legal and theoretical foundations contributes to the development of a robust framework essential for the adequate preparation of teachers and strategies for inclusive teaching and learning. Republic Act 10533 - The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. RA 10533 lays the foundation for the K to 12 reform, and advocates a learner-centered, inclusive, and competency-based curriculum. For Guibuangan Central Elementary, it serves as a basis for the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies which respond to learners in their cultural, linguistic, and social realities. RA 10533's focus on localization and contextualization permits teachers to create lessons for IPs, Muslim learners, and other marginalized groups of learners. The lessons may draw on the principles of culturally responsive teaching and restricted commitment to differentiated instruction. The provisions on teacher preparedness within RA 10533 are important, as they stipulate that teachers

must be trained on the application of differentiation, the adjustment of materials for learning, and the modification of assessments to accommodate varying needs, so that education can be equitable. Keeping instruction equitable responsive and fostering social inclusion requires education professional development, mentoring, and resources readily available to the teacher.

Republic Act 7277, Amended by RA 9442 – Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. RA 7277 protects the rights of learners with disabilities to obtain inclusive, education, and education with no barriers. Inclusive education taught at Guibuangan Central Elementary, teaches the PWD's legislation. This law defines inclusiveness by providing specialized, adjustable instruction, assistive teaching technologies, Adaptive instructional materials, and teaching methods, and inclusive classroom environment. Instructional strategies in inclusive education and RA 7277 compliance aids learners with disabilities to completely integrate into mainstream education and education complements MATATAG's SPED programs. Teachers are the most important facilitators. The teachers must possess a particular set of skills and competencies to identify the learners instruction exactly fits their needs. Instruction should always be followed by the required adjustments and thoughtful deliberate omissions should be practiced. The overstretch of theory should be accompanied by ample institutional support, access to the required resources, and training which strengthens the foundation of support and the conceived theory of instructional equity. This must be done with PWD's education to allow social integration.

DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024, which focuses on the Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. This order officially launches the MATATAG Curriculum, framing policies on inclusive education. Guibuangan Central Elementary supports SPED, IPED, and Madrasah programs, and also focuses on content decongestion, mastery of foundational skills, and culturally, religiously, and socially responsive adjustments in instruction. The order reinforces the values of inclusive education and responsive differentiated instruction as primary considerations in everyday teaching. To assist teachers in coping with the diverse needs of their learners, the order places a strong focus on the provision of professional support, mentoring, and the necessary teaching resources to facilitate the implementation of policy.

To sum up, RA 10533, RA 7277, and DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024, taken together with the rest of the documents reviewed, highlight the value of including

flexible and adaptive teaching methodologies. In addition, the legal documents still highlight the importance of teacher preparedness in relation to the MATATAG Curriculum. Along with the mandates, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Ecological Systems Theory, Differentiated Instruction, and Empirical Systems Theory will enable and facilitate the legal mandates which seek to contextualize and localize the instruction to learners' particular cultural and localized conditions. This encapsulated the broader social, community, familial, and school dimensions of influences. This sense of integration should drive teachers at Guibuangan Central Elementary to build inclusive adapted classrooms. The Guibuangan Central Elementary teachers should differentiate and design supportive learning experiences that enable all learners to engage and participate, thereby realizing the vision of the MATATAG Curriculum. The ME is inclusive of responsive Culturally inclusive and grounded education.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

This research evaluated the inclusive teaching strategies used and the level of teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in Barili Central Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for an Action Training Plan to support inclusive education practices.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What was the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age and gender;
 - 1.2. educational attainment;
 - 1.3. length of service;
 - 1.4. teaching position?
2. What inclusive teaching strategies were utilized by teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum?
3. What was the level of teacher preparedness in implementing inclusive teaching strategies under the MATATAG Curriculum?
4. Was there a significant relationship between the inclusive teaching strategies used and the level of teacher preparedness?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what action Training Plan can be proposed to enhance inclusive teaching practices?

Statement of the Null Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypothesis will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the inclusive teaching strategies used and the level of teacher preparedness in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

Significance of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how inclusive teaching strategies are implemented and to assess the preparedness of teachers in applying the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School. Understanding the current status of inclusive education in this local context provides meaningful insights and benefits to several stakeholders:

Department of Education. This study offers the Department of Education empirical evidence regarding the actual implementation of inclusive teaching strategies in Barili Central Elementary School under the MATATAG Curriculum. By evaluating how prepared teachers are to apply these practices, the research identifies gaps in training, instructional materials, and support systems. These findings can inform policy improvements, guide professional development initiatives, and ensure that inclusive education goals within the MATATAG Curriculum-equity, access, and quality learning-are consistently achieved.

Teachers. The findings provide Barili Central Elementary teachers with a clear understanding of how inclusive strategies are currently applied and highlight areas requiring further development. This awareness enables educators to refine their classroom practices, better address the diverse needs of learners, and advocate for in-service training, adequate resources, and supportive policies. Consequently, teachers become more equipped both theoretically and practically to implement inclusive strategies aligned with the MATATAG framework.

Learners. Students at Barili Central Elementary, particularly those with learning difficulties, disabilities, or other special educational needs, benefit when teachers are well-prepared to apply inclusive practices. The study promotes an educational environment where all learners feel included, motivated, and supported. Such an environment encourages academic achievement, builds confidence, and enhances overall well-being, reflecting the MATATAG Curriculum's commitment to equitable and meaningful education.

School. School administrators at Barili Central Elementary gain valuable insights into the readiness and competencies of their teaching staff in delivering inclusive education. This information enables targeted capacity-building initiatives, strategic resource

allocation, and the implementation of monitoring and mentoring programs to ensure the consistent and effective application of inclusive teaching strategies across all grade levels.

Researcher. The study enhances the researcher's understanding of inclusive education within the Philippine and Cebuano context. It contributes to expertise in curriculum analysis, educational research, and inclusive teaching frameworks, allowing the researcher to develop practical solutions that promote equity and quality learning.

Future Researchers. This study serves as a foundation for future research on inclusive education, teacher preparedness, and curriculum implementation at Barili Central Elementary or similar schools. Subsequent studies may focus on student outcomes, policy impact, regional comparisons, or the effectiveness of professional development programs, thereby extending and refining the knowledge base on inclusive education practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used in the study. It describes the overall research process and tools applied to answer the research questions and achieve the study's objectives. The chapter includes the Research Design, which explains the type of study conducted; the Flow of the Study, which outlines the input-process-output (IPO) model; the Research Environment, where the study was carried out; the Respondents/Participants, detailing the selection of individuals involved; the Instruments used to gather data; the Data Gathering Procedure, which describes how data was collected; the Treatment of Data, explaining the statistical methods used; and the Scoring Procedure, which shows how responses were interpreted.

Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School for the 2025–2026 academic year. The descriptive aspect focused on identifying and characterizing the inclusive practices currently applied by teachers, as well as assessing their perceived readiness to deliver the curriculum. Specifically, it aimed to provide a clear understanding of how educators address learner diversity, implement differentiated instruction, and adopt inclusive strategies consistent with the objectives of the MATATAG framework.

The correlational aspect examined whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the

inclusive strategies employed and teachers' self-reported preparedness. According to Creswell and Creswell (2022), descriptive-correlational designs are particularly suitable for educational research where experimental control is limited, allowing researchers to describe existing practices and explore relationships between variables in real-world contexts. In this study, the design enabled a comprehensive examination of the current state of inclusive teaching at Barili Central Elementary and how teacher readiness potentially influences the effective implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, providing valuable insights for improving instructional practices, professional development, and policy guidance.

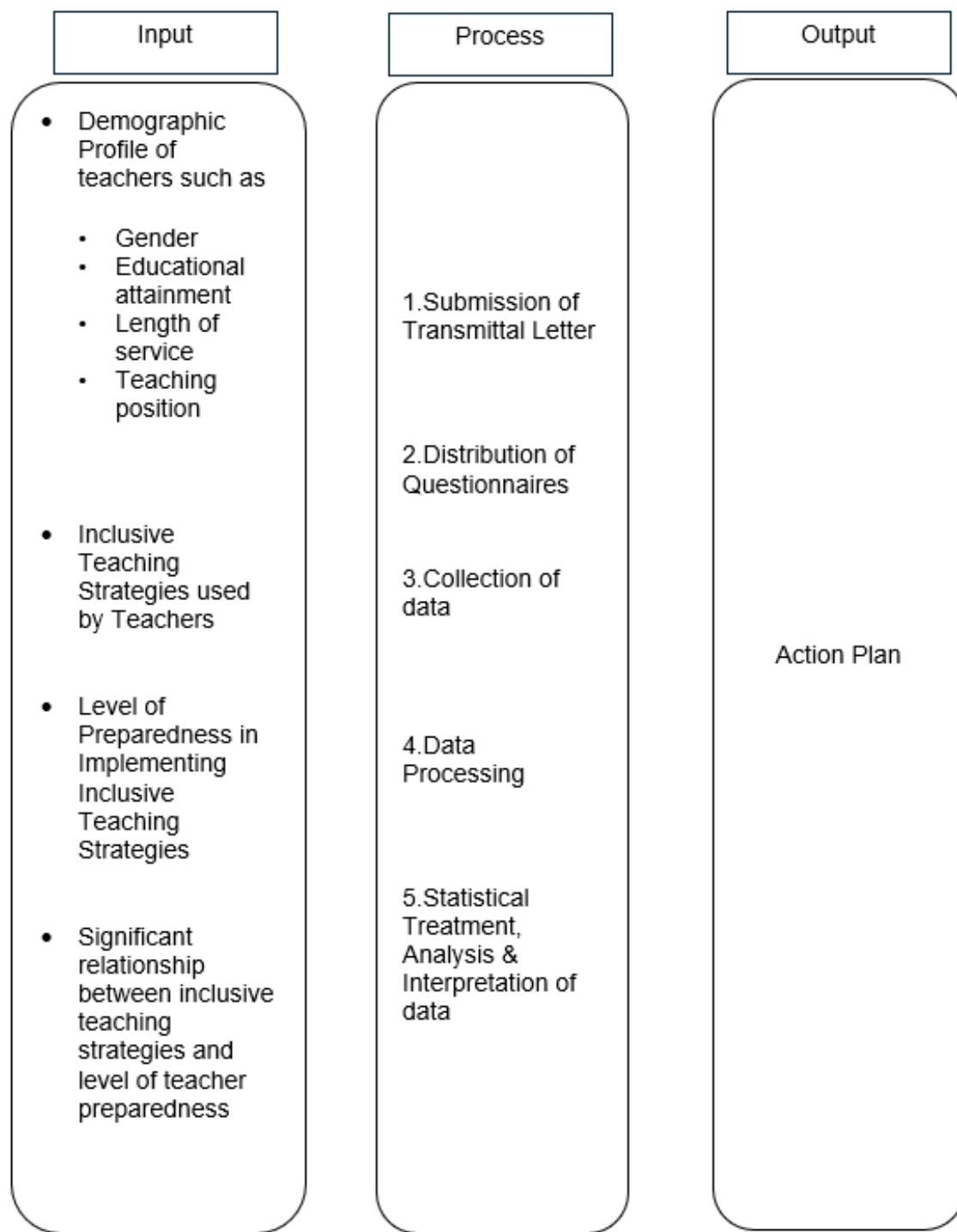
Flow of the Study

This study employed the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to systematically organize the research flow and present a clear, stepwise methodology.

In the Input phase, the study identified the central variables derived from the research problem: the extent to which teachers employed inclusive teaching strategies, the level of teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, and the relationship between these two factors. These variables formed the basis for developing the research instruments and guided the study's direction. Focusing on these elements ensured alignment with the principles of inclusive education as emphasized in the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly in addressing the diverse learning needs of students at Barili Central Elementary School.

The Process phase involved the systematic steps taken to conduct the study. A structured survey questionnaire, grounded in validated sources and inclusive education frameworks, was developed and underwent expert review and pilot testing to ensure reliability and accuracy. After securing approval from school authorities and adhering to ethical research standards, the final instrument was administered to the selected teacher-respondents. Collected data were checked, encoded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, to describe teachers' inclusive practices and preparedness. Pearson correlation was applied to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the variables.

In the Output phase, the study presented quantitative findings on teachers' inclusive teaching strategies, their preparedness to implement the MATATAG Curriculum, and the correlation between these variables, providing insights into how effectively the curriculum was operationalized in the classrooms of Barili Central Elementary School.

**Figure 2. Flow of the Study**

Environment

Barili Central Elementary School, located in the municipality of Barili, Cebu, is a rural public school that caters to a diverse student population drawn from multiple barangays, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and learners from remote or underserved communities. Many students face socioeconomic challenges, limited access to learning resources at home, and language barriers, which make differentiated and culturally responsive teaching essential. The school's infrastructure and access to advanced educational technologies are limited, with few computers, minimal internet connectivity, and a shortage of updated instructional materials. Despite these constraints, teachers actively contextualize lessons to align with local culture, traditions, and community practices, integrating examples and activities that reflect students' lived experiences. The school emphasizes inclusivity by promoting collaborative learning, respecting diverse cultural identities, and ensuring that all learners—regardless of ability, background, or social context—have opportunities to participate meaningfully in classroom activities. With the introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum, Barili Central Elementary has intensified its focus on learner-centered approaches, adopting strategies that support differentiated instruction, foster equitable participation, and enhance engagement among students with varied learning needs.



Figure 3. Location Map of the Study

Instrument

The primary research instrument employed in this study was a structured survey questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data on the inclusive teaching strategies utilized by teachers and their level of preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the profile of respondents, the inclusive teaching strategies applied, and teacher preparedness for inclusive instruction within the MATATAG framework.

Part I focused on the profile of the teacher-respondents, capturing demographic and professional variables such as age, gender, educational attainment,

teaching experience, and current teaching position. These details were critical in providing context to the respondents' background and allowed the study to identify patterns or trends in inclusive practices based on personal and professional factors.

Part II assessed the inclusive teaching strategies employed by educators. This section included 10 indicators adapted from Booth and Ainscow's *Index for Inclusion* (2011) and UNESCO's *Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education* (2017). Teachers rated each item on a four-point Likert scale: 4 – Always, 3 – Often, 2 – Sometimes, and 1 – Never. The indicators measured the frequency and consistency of inclusive practices such as

differentiated instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, learner engagement, cooperative learning, and varied assessment approaches tailored to diverse student needs.

Part III examined teacher preparedness for implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in the context of inclusive education. This section also contained 10 items derived from validated instruments by Forlin and Sin (2010), Sharma et al. (2012), and aligned with DepEd Order No. 44, s. 2023. The indicators evaluated preparedness in lesson adaptation, identification of diverse learner needs, collaboration with stakeholders, knowledge of inclusive policies, and confidence in applying inclusive strategies. Respondents rated each item on a four-point scale: 4 – Very Prepared, 3 – Prepared, 2 – Slightly Prepared, and 1 – Not Prepared.

Respondents

The research respondents for this study consisted of 30 public school teachers from Barili Central Elementary School. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that identifies individuals based on their direct relevance to the study objectives. The focus was on educators actively implementing the MATATAG Curriculum and engaging with diverse learners, including students with disabilities, Indigenous learners, and children from marginalized or underserved communities. Their professional experiences and insights were considered vital for providing accurate data on the use of inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness in applying inclusive practices.

The inclusion criteria required that respondents be current faculty members of Barili Central Elementary School and actively involved in teaching under the MATATAG Curriculum. Teachers also needed to work with learners requiring differentiated or culturally responsive instruction. These criteria ensured that participants possessed firsthand experience in implementing inclusive strategies, making their responses highly pertinent to the study.

Exclusion criteria omitted teachers who were newly assigned to the school and had not yet taught under the MATATAG Curriculum, as well as those whose teaching assignments did not involve diverse learners. By excluding these individuals, the study concentrated on respondents capable of providing informed and practical perspectives on inclusive education implementation. This approach ensured that the findings accurately reflected the level of teacher preparedness and the operationalization of the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	f	%
Male	3	10.00
Female	27	90.00
Total	30	100.00

Data Gathering Procedure

Preliminary Stage. The researcher commenced the study by securing formal approval from the principal of Barili Central Elementary School through a transmittal letter. Once consent was granted, coordination was conducted with designated school staff to identify qualified teacher-respondents who were actively implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. The purpose and objectives of the study were thoroughly explained to all participants, and confidentiality of responses was assured. Each respondent provided informed consent by signing a consent form prior to participation.

Data Gathering. The primary instrument for collecting data was a printed survey questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic profile, indicators of inclusive teaching strategies, and teacher preparedness in applying the MATATAG Curriculum. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires, providing clear instructions and allowing teachers to complete them during non-instructional hours to avoid disruption of classroom duties. This ensured consistent and accurate responses while respecting teachers' work schedules.

Post Data Gathering. Upon completion, all questionnaires were checked for completeness and validity. Valid responses were encoded and systematically prepared for statistical analysis. The entire data gathering procedure was carried out according to a predetermined timeline to ensure consistency, reliability, and adherence to ethical standards throughout the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Frequency and Percentage were used to describe the distribution of categorical data, such as teacher demographic characteristics (age, gender, educational attainment, years of service, and teaching position). Frequency indicated the number of teachers falling into each category, while percentage reflected their proportion relative to the total sample. At Barili Central Elementary School, these measures provided insights into the profile of teachers implementing the MATATAG Curriculum and highlighted patterns that may influence the adoption of inclusive teaching strategies.

Weighted Mean measured the average level of inclusive teaching strategies applied by teachers and their preparedness in implementing the MATATAG

Curriculum. By assigning weights to each survey item based on importance, the weighted mean offered a precise representation of teacher practices and readiness, identifying frequently applied strategies as well as areas requiring additional support or training.

Standard Deviation assessed variability in responses, indicating whether teachers exhibited similar levels of preparedness and use of inclusive strategies or whether significant differences existed. A smaller standard deviation suggested consistency, while a larger value highlighted areas needing targeted interventions.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient examined the relationship between the use of inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness. This inferential analysis determined the strength and direction of the relationship, revealing whether teachers with higher preparedness consistently applied inclusive practices.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical standards to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of all participants. Data collection commenced only after securing formal approval from the school head of Barili Central Elementary School through a transmittal letter. Upon approval, the researcher thoroughly briefed participants on the study's objectives, rationale, methodology, and scope.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents signed an informed consent form that clearly stated they could withdraw at any time without any repercussions. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, identification codes were used in place of names, and all responses were strictly for scholarly purposes. Collected data were securely stored, with no access granted to third parties. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that participation posed no risk of physical or emotional harm. By upholding these ethical principles, the study safeguarded the dignity and rights of teacher-respondents while enabling reliable and responsible data collection on inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness under the MATATAG Curriculum.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined operationally in this study.

Action Training Plan. A structured program of development activities proposed at the end of the study. It aims to improve teachers' preparedness and ability to apply inclusive teaching strategies within the MATATAG Curriculum.

Age. Refers to the chronological number of years the teacher-respondents have lived. This is used to categorize their stage in the teaching profession for profiling purposes.

Educational Attainment. The highest academic level or degree completed by the respondents such as bachelor's, master's, or doctorate. This may influence their understanding and application of inclusive practices.

Gender. The respondents' self-identified sex (male, female, or prefer not to say), used for demographic profiling in the study.

Inclusive Teaching Strategies. The methods, approaches, and classroom practices used by teachers to address the varied learning needs of students. These include adjustments in content, instruction, and assessment to promote participation and equity for all learners.

Length of Service. The total number of years a teacher has been engaged in formal teaching. This variable helps determine teaching experience and its relation to preparedness in implementing inclusive strategies.

MATATAG Curriculum. A restructured version of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum implemented through DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024. It focuses on decongesting learning content, strengthening foundational skills, and promoting inclusive and learner-centered education.

Teacher Preparedness. The level of readiness, knowledge, and confidence a teacher possesses in applying inclusive strategies effectively within the classroom. This includes their training, skills, and awareness of inclusive practices under the MATATAG framework.

Teaching Position. The current official designation or rank of the teacher in the Department of Education. This includes positions such as Teacher I, Teacher II, Teacher III, and Master Teacher, which reflect professional level and responsibilities.

2. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the data collected from the respondents of Barili Central Elementary School. It encompasses their demographic profile, which includes age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of service, and current teaching position. The chapter further highlights the inclusive teaching strategies they employ, as well as their level of preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. Moreover, the relationship between the inclusive teaching strategies and the teachers'

preparedness is systematically illustrated through tabular presentations.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The succeeding tables present the data gathered from the respondents of Barili Central Elementary School in line with the objectives of this study. The presentation begins with the respondents' demographic profile, which includes age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of service, and current teaching position. Establishing this profile is vital as it provides the necessary background on the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers, serving as a foundation for the analysis of the study variables. Furthermore, the demographic profile offers valuable context for understanding the composition of the teaching force and their potential impact on the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. Such insights also serve as a basis for formulating an Action Training Plan aimed at strengthening inclusive education practices within the school.

Age and Gender of the Respondents

Table 2 presented the distribution of respondents according to their age and gender. This demographic information provided a clearer view of the participants' composition, which helped in understanding the diversity of perspectives represented in the study. The data showed the varying age groups and gender distribution that contributed to the overall reliability of the research findings.

Table 2 Age of the Respondents

Age (in years)	F	%
50 and above	10	33.33
40-49	10	33.33
30-39	8	26.67
20-29	2	6.67
Total	30	100.00

Gender of the Respondents		
	Male	Female
Male	3	10.00
Female	27	90.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 2 depicted the age distribution for the thirty respondents of Barili Central Elementary School. Given the results, 33.33% of the teachers are aged 50 and above, and another 33.33% are within 40–49. These two groups combined represent two-thirds of the teaching staff, clearly signifying that the school has a predominance of mid to late career educators. Meanwhile, 26.67% of the teachers are aged 30–39, which are younger, yet still a considerable age for a teaching career, and only 6.67% fall within the 20–29 range, signifying that this age group is the smallest in the teaching staff. Thus, the analysis indicates that

most teachers within this school have a considerable amount of teaching experience and professional maturity in the school system, contrasted with a very small amount of teachers to represent the younger generation.

Having an older teaching staff brings both benefits and difficulties. In the positive sense, senior educators are usually better at maintaining classroom order, have a firmer grasp of the content, and are loyal to the institution, all of which aid in the stability and consistency of curriculum reform implementation. In addition, their lengthy service records qualify them to mentor younger teachers in pedagogy and the broader teaching profession. However, the absence of younger educators may result in a teaching and learning culture that lacks innovation, particularly in the use of technology, which younger teachers tend to dominate. Moreover, the small number of younger teachers raises succession planning concerns, as the older teaching workforce may result in a future depletion of working educators if not strategically managed.

Age distributions have implications within the context of inclusive education alongside the enactment of the MATATAG Curriculum. The implication of sustained professional development that prioritizes inclusive approaches to teaching and learning within a framework of continuing education becomes imperative, as the majority of the faculty are older educators. Continuous education is justified by the necessity to remain current and adaptable, inclusive flexible teaching approaches within the new curriculum and inclusive practices. The limited number of younger educators are assumed to possess energy as well as innovative teaching strategies and contemporary approaches, provided that the institutional structures, resources and curriculum are supportive and they are able to work laterally, across the curriculum, with older educators. Hussin and Salleh (2020) remark that preparation for inclusive teaching is dependent not only on years of service but on systemic and comprehensive professional development training that prepares teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.

In the same vein, Shareefa (2020) notes the significance of both institutional readiness and teacher preparedness for the effective implementation of inclusive education. Even when teachers show willingness, the lack of training and support from the institution also constitutes a barrier. Referring back to findings in Table 1, the predominance of experienced teachers is a positive factor, but without revisiting training and system support, their expertise will not be fully effective in inclusive scenarios. This goes to show the need for fully integrated teacher support and

development programs to be synchronized with institution level frameworks so that inclusive education as well as changes in curriculum and pedagogy sustain both experienced and novice teachers equally.

Regarding the gender distribution of the thirty respondents from Barili Central Elementary School, the data revealed that 27 (90.00%) teachers were female and only 3 were male, 3 or 10.00 % of the total. This scenario points to excess women in the school's teaching staff as is typical for elementary education. This imbalance highlights the inequality that exists in the the gender in teaching staff, where women dominate the field and men are a small percentage

The extent of this distribution illuminates the pivotal contributions of female educators in teaching and overseeing the educational development of younger students. Their overwhelming numbers speaks to the prevalence of nurturing and caregiving characteristics closely affiliated with primary education and the fundamental stabilization of classroom activities. Nevertheless, the fewer male educators points to a lack of gender balance which might restrict the contrasting teaching approaches as well as the diversity of role models for students. This situation, with more women and fewer men in teaching primary grades, also reflects the socio-cultural phenomena that view teaching in elementary school as a women's occupation, which, in turn, has led to a sustained lack of male presence in the profession.

Concerning inclusiveness and the enactment of the curriculum, the implications of this distribution of teacher gender clearly relate to the presence and absence of male educators. While a predominance of female instructors can effectively facilitate a sense of continuity and compassion in the learning environment, having fewer male instructors reduces the opportunities available to students, particularly boys, for the exposure of diverse adult role models. Overall, this imbalance speaks to the specific socio-cultural issues relating to teaching and school that require addressing the propensity for more men to become educators in primary schools. In order to enact these policies a positive social balance in the educational context, retention and recruitment measures must focus on the purposeful and strategic integration of men to teaching.

As noted by De Los Reyes et al. (2025), addressing demographic gaps in the teachers-including gender disparities- is necessary for fully achieving the objectives of inclusive education. Similarly, research conducted by Bermudo et al. (2025) indicates that institutional support and professional training

significantly influence the preparedness of Filipino teachers for inclusive education, but a more diverse teaching staff increases the inclusiveness of classroom practices.

Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Table 3 presented the distribution of respondents according to their highest educational attainment. This information provided insight into the respondents' academic backgrounds, which helped in understanding their level of qualification and preparedness relevant to the study. The data showed the varying educational levels that contributed to the overall profile of the participants.

Table 3 Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Highest Educational Attainment	F	%
Doctorate Degree	1	3.33
Master's Degree	7	46.67
With Master's Units	16	30.00
Bachelor's Degree	6	20.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 3 showed the highest educational attainment of the thirty respondents from the Barili Central Elementary School. As stated, 46.67 % of the teachers have a master's degree, 30.00 % have incomplete units of a master's degree, 20.00 % Hold a bachelor's degree, and the smallest proportion of 3.33 % have a doctorate degree. The data shows that most school teachers are master's degree holders or are actively pursuing graduate education (i.e., 30.00 %). This is a positive sign concerning the teachers' professional growth and progress. On the other hand, the attainment of only a small number of doctorate degrees, and the presence of bachelor's degree holders reflect the need to place more emphasis on higher educational attainment.

Analyzing the data highlights the importance of higher education on the quality of teaching. Since almost three-quarters of the teachers have graduate-level education, the school likely has a faculty that possesses significant teaching and educational research, and broader perspectives on teaching and learning. However, the 20.00 % with only a bachelor's degree may struggle with the complexities of modern curriculum enactment, especially inclusive teaching. Even though the overall faculty has strong academic credentials, there is a gap that, despite the referred challenges, needs to be addressed. In this case, the bachelor's degree teachers need to be encouraged to pursue advanced degrees to better meet the demands of contemporary teaching.

Educational profile implications relate to the execution of the MATATAG Curriculum. It is anticipated that teachers who hold advanced degrees have a higher command of differentiated instruction and mastery of the adaptation of curricula and inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of learners. Nevertheless, teachers who hold only undergraduate qualifications might need some degree of professional growth to advance their readiness to the intricacies of the curriculum. Thus, this underscores the necessity of institutional support, whether through scholarships, training, and other resource allocation, to guarantee that teachers attain a standard of educational qualifications commensurate with the anticipated demands of inclusive and competency-based pedagogy.

According to PO (2025), teachers' academic qualifications and preparedness affect the successful enactment and impact of the MATATAG Curriculum, as poorly addressed gaps in preparedness negatively affect curriculum delivery and student outcomes. Similarly, Resuello et al. (2025) pointed out the necessity of advanced studies and training for teachers to acquire the high competence needed to deliver differentiated instructions within the MATATAG Curriculum. When applied to Table 3, the dominance of holders of master's degrees at Barili Central Elementary School is undoubtedly a strength. However, the continued presence of teachers with only bachelor's degrees still calls for the need for sustained and scalable efforts in academic and professional training to achieve uniform and comprehensive efficacy in curriculum delivery.

Length of Service of the Respondents

Table 4 presented the distribution of respondents according to their length of service. This data provided an overview of the respondents' years of experience in their respective fields, which helped in assessing their level of professional exposure and stability. The varying lengths of service reflected the diversity of experience among the participants.

Table 4 Length of Service of the Respondents

Length of Service (in years)	F	%
16 and above	15	50.00
11-15	6	20.00
6-10	6	20.00
1-5	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 4 showed the years of service of the 30 respondents from Barili Central Elementary School. The results show that among the staff members, 50.00% have served for 16 years and above which implies that half of the faculty members are veteran

educators. 20.00% served 11-15 years, and another 20.00% served 6-10 years, which are considered mid-career teachers with considerable experience. Only 10.00% of the respondents had 1-5 years of teaching experience, which makes novice teachers the smallest group in the school. This distribution shows that the teaching staff is mainly made up of veteran teachers, with a relatively small number of younger teachers coming into the profession.

The school benefits from the extensive experience and professionalism of the long-serving teachers. It appears that the school draws educators with the strengths of classroom control, command of diverse teaching methodologies, and settled knowledge of the educational milieu, since 50.00% of the respondents have 16 or more years of teaching service. Mid-career educators, 40.00% of the respondents, further add to workforce stability with experience and adaptability. In contrast, the small percentage of new teachers, 10.00%, signifies the absence of a generational balance which, in the long run, may represent a risk to innovation and the school's teaching sustainability.

This distribution has implications for the execution of the MATATAG Curriculum. Senior teachers have the most experience and can lead the reform of their curricula. Because they can mentor newer teachers, senior teachers can help stabilise instructional continuity. The length of an individual teacher's service, however, should prompt schools to review their upskilling policies and provide more training opportunities. The small number of novice teachers within the teaching workforce points to the need to improve both recruitment and retention of younger teachers, providing an age range in the workforce and a pipeline of new teaching approaches.

According to Yunting et al. (2025), the experienced teachers' insights as well as training and support gaps can lead to problem perception of the MATATAG Curriculum implementation. Moreover, Toledo (2025) underscored the importance of school heads in resource management to balance support to teachers of varying years in service to curriculum. Relating these to Table 4, the presence of majority long-serving teachers in Barili Central Elementary School provides stability and is thus a strength. However, strategic support and relevant prior preparation is also necessary to support these teachers in assuming additional responsibilities, thus, mentoring less experienced teachers in inclusive education.

Current Teaching Position of the Respondents

Table 5 displayed the distribution of respondents according to their current teaching position. This information provided an overview of the respondents' professional ranks and roles within their respective

institutions. The data reflected the diversity of teaching positions, indicating the range of responsibilities and experiences among the respondents.

Table 5 Current Teaching Position of the Respondents

Current Teaching Position	F	%
Master Teacher	4	13.33
Teacher III	8	26.67
Teacher II	9	30.00
Teacher I	9	30.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 5 illustrates the current assignments of the thirty respondents from Barili Central Elementary School. The findings indicate that 30.00% of the educators hold the rank of Teacher I and an equal proportion also occupies the rank of Teacher II, establishing these as the most prevalent positions among the respondents. Positions of Teacher III comprise a little more than a quarter, accounting for 26.67%, whereas only 13.33% of respondents have ascended to the rank of Master Teacher. This distribution shows the teaching staff's concentration primarily within the lower to mid-level positions, and only a small fraction has progressed to the peak positions of the teaching career ladder.

The analysis indicates that most teachers continue to advance in their careers. Most teachers are Teacher I and Teacher II and suggests that several teachers are still new to the field or have not yet fully satisfied the criteria for advancement. Teacher III teachers do show that a fraction of responding teachers has some experience and has qualified for the advancement to

Teacher III. Still, the small representation of even fewer Master Teachers at 13.33% suggests that our educational community has even fewer opportunities in professional leadership mentoring as the mentorship and leadership Master Teacher role is vital in the professional development of novice and mid-career teachers in adaptation of the curriculum.

The predominance of teachers in entry and mid-level rank positions is of concern in relation to professional development, the MATATAG Curriculum, and the school's implementation. This suggests that our educational community has even fewer opportunities in professional leadership mentoring.

Abenes and Esperancilla (2025) posited that under the MATATAG Curriculum, educators are tasked with ensuring that the alignment of practice with more profound educational goals is followed, referring to Biesta and the curriculum's educational 'telos' that involves educators's competence and leadership.' Motel (2025) argues the teacher's rank and professional advancement are correlated to the preparedness the teacher and how effectively the content is delivered, where confident implementation of the curriculum changes is noted among those with a higher rank.

Inclusive teaching strategies are utilized by teachers in the

Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

The table presented the Inclusive teaching strategies are utilized by teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. The data is presented in tabular form

Table 6 Inclusive teaching strategies are utilized by teachers in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I provide learning tasks with varying levels of difficulty	3.80	0.41	Always
2	I integrate inclusive values such as respect and empathy into lessons.	3.47	0.57	Always
3	I accommodate learners' interests and learning styles	3.50	0.73	Always
4	I assign peer tutors or learning buddies to assist struggling students	2.97	0.76	Often
5	I allow learners to respond in different formats (oral, written, visuals).	3.00	0.83	Often
6	I make use of culturally responsive teaching materials.	3.87	0.35	Always
7	I promote active participation of all learners in discussions and tasks.	3.73	0.45	Always
8	I adjust lesson pace to suit the needs of diverse learners.	2.70	0.70	Often
9	I ensure classroom instructions are clear and simple.	3.30	0.79	Always
10	I design group activities that promote cooperation among diverse learners.	3.63	0.56	Always
	Aggregate Mean	3.40		Always
	Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.62	

Legend:3.25-4.00- Always; 2.50-3.24-Often; 1.75-2.49- Sometimes ;1.00-1.74- Never

Table 6 displays the inclusive teaching strategies used by Barili Central Elementary School teachers. The general mean of "3.40" with a standard deviation of 0.62 means that teachers "Always" use inclusive teaching strategies as a whole. The most pronounced indicators include "I use culturally responsive teaching materials" obtaining the highest weighted mean of 3.87 categorized as "Always" and "I provide learning tasks with varying levels of difficulty" having mean of 3.80 also categorized as "Always." Another illustrative indicator is "I facilitate all learners' active participation in discussions and tasks" which recorded a mean of 3.73 interpreted as "Always." These results show that teachers validate inclusivity by lesson designing culturally responsive teaching materials that reflect varying learner needs and promote active participation. In contrast strategies such as "I adjust lesson pace to suit the needs of diverse learners" with mean of 2.70 and "I assign peer tutors or learning buddies to assist struggling students" with mean of 2.97 which were rated lower as "Often" show that these are practiced but not consistently.

Analyzing the findings, it becomes evident that teachers prioritize cultural appreciation, differentiated tasks, and cooperative learning strategies, largely due to their feasibility and extensive applicability across various classroom environments. Relative to the lower means on lesson pacing and peer tutoring, these strategies may reveal contextual obstacles that teachers face, such as too many students for the time allowed, too few resources, and support systems that are missing or weak. This makes it difficult for teachers to regulate the lesson pacing to meet individual learner needs or to coordinate peer tutoring effectively. These findings capture the larger story of committed teachers striving to be inclusive; however, strategies that are more individualized or that need more structural change are the ones that seem to be more erratic.

As for the MATATAG Curriculum, the findings illustrate that teachers need to unpack professional learning on individualized instruction. While findings show that teachers can craft inclusive classrooms using culture and participation, the findings illustrate the need to deepen professional learning on individualized instruction as teachers are missing that component. Sustained mentoring and administrative support will be essential to deepen the inclusivity that currently exists. Integrating the findings into practice will enable the school leaders to prioritize professional development initiatives that will support the inclusivity to manifest as a sustained culture in the school system.

In the context of the MATATAG Curriculum, the impact of varying styles of leadership influences teacher and student performance (Cerna, 2025). Supportive leadership, for example, aids teachers in the more consistent application of inclusive strategies. Similarly, Loza (2024) found that teachers' views regarding curriculum change impact their adoption and the perpetuation of novel teaching methods. The willingness to pivot is largely governed by the training received and support provided by the institution. The aforementioned works align with the results in Table 6 demonstrating that inclusive strategies are being effectively adopted. However, the constancy of application, particularly regarding individualized methods, is contingent on support civic leadership and structural reinforcement.

Teacher Preparedness in Implementing MATATAG Curriculum

The table presented the Teacher Preparedness in Implementing MATATAG Curriculum. The data is presented in tabular form.

Table 7 Teacher Preparedness in Implementing MATATAG Curriculum

S/N	Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
1	I feel prepared to adapt lessons according to the diverse needs of my learners.	3.03	0.56	Prepared
2	I am prepared to identify learners who require additional academic or behavioral support.	3.07	0.64	Prepared
3	I am prepared to design inclusive lesson plans that are aligned with the curriculum.	2.93	0.64	Prepared
4	I am prepared through the relevant training I have attended on inclusive education.	2.70	0.79	Prepared
5	I feel prepared to establish and sustain a positive learning climate for all students.	3.17	0.53	Prepared
6	I am prepared to collaborate with parents, colleagues, and stakeholders to support learner needs..	3.03	0.61	Prepared

7	I am prepared to address and manage behavioral challenges in an inclusive classroom setting.	2.93	0.74	Prepared
8	I am prepared with knowledge of government policies related to inclusive education.	2.87	0.78	Prepared
9	I am prepared with sufficient knowledge of various learning disabilities and appropriate interventions.	2.67	0.76	Prepared
10	I feel prepared to apply inclusive teaching strategies within the MATATAG framework.	2.97	0.67	Prepared
Aggregate Mean		2.94		Prepared
Aggregate Standard Deviation			0.67	

Legend: 3.25-4.00- Very Prepared; 2.50-3.24- Prepared; 1.75-2.49- Slightly Prepared ;1.00-1.74- Not Prepared

Table 7 illustrates the preparedness of teachers in executing the MATATAG Curriculum. The mean of 2.94 with a standard deviation of 0.67 indicates that teachers feel "Prepared" to implement inclusive practices within the curriculum framework to some extent. Inclusive practice framework in the curriculum. In terms of "I feel prepared to establish and sustain a positive learning climate for all students" this item resulted in the highest weighted mean of 3.17, teachers feel most confident to establish and maintain supportive learning environments. Other statements that contributed to this range of mean values are "I am prepared to identify learners who require additional academic or behavioral support" with a mean of 3.07 and "I feel prepared to adapt lessons according to the diverse needs of my learners" with a mean value of 3.03. In contrast, the lowest mean values were "I am prepared with sufficient knowledge of various learning disabilities and appropriate interventions" with a mean of 2.67 and "I am prepared through the relevant training I have attended on inclusive education" with a mean of 2.70, highlighting that the knowledge required of interventions for learning disabilities and inclusive education training is less developed compared to other areas.

With respect to teachers' self-assessment of their teaching competencies, they exhibit confidence regarding general aspects of teaching: sustaining a healthy classroom climate, spotting learners who require assistance, and adjusting lessons for different learners. These competencies may originate from their teaching experience and familiarity with customary classroom practices. However, the comparatively lower perceived competence regarding training in inclusive education and the knowledge of learning disabilities points to potential areas for which teachers may lack competence. This lack of perceived knowledge may stem from a scarcity of targeted professional training on inclusive practices and specific adaptations and instructional strategies relevant to learners with disabilities. Hence, teachers may regard themselves as adequately prepared on the whole, but their confidence, and self-assessed competence, is primarily on general inclusivity, rather than the specialized areas of the curriculum.

The importance of these findings for bolstering inclusive education under the MATATAG Curriculum cannot be understated. Teacher preparedness across the board indicates a strong basis for implementation. However, the weaker areas indicate that without strategic efforts, inclusivity may not be fully achieved. This reinforces the need for professional development programs, workshops, and institutional support that focus specifically on differentiated instruction, general disability awareness, and various inclusive teaching techniques.

Ubias (2024) highlighted that the implementation readiness of the MATATAG Curriculum must simultaneously close the existing gaps while projecting strengthened opportunities through strategic interventional planning. This is akin to the position argued by Batonghinog and Chavez (2025), where they stated that professional development training and academic support strongly predict teachers' confidence during curriculum shifts, primarily because preparedness is proportionate to the opportunities provided to teachers through continuous training and relevant materials.

Test of Relationship Between Inclusive Teaching Strategies Used and the Level of Teacher Preparedness in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum

The table presented the Test of Relationship Between Inclusive Teaching Strategies Used and the Level of Teacher Preparedness in Implementing the MATATAG Curriculum. The data was presented in tabular form.

Table 8 Test of relationship between inclusive teaching strategies used and the level of teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Inclusive Teaching Strategies and Level of Teacher Preparedness	0.099	Negligible Positive	0.786	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 8 summarized the correlation between inclusive teaching strategies used by educators and their level of preparedness within the MATATAG Curriculum. An r-value of 0.099 corresponds to minor positive correlation and values of $p=0.786$ exceed the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the p value does exceed the threshold, and the null hypothesis stands, meaning there is no correlation between the two variables. Hence, this does indicate that there is a relationship that teachers use inclusive teaching practices framed within the curriculum, but does not indicate the preparedness to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. For example, curriculum inclusivity defined by task differentiation and cultural responsiveness, as well as participation of the learners, does not imply that a sense of competency, knowledge, and qualification is gained to meet the inclusive curriculum. The correlation, as weak as it is, indicates more about the 0.8 value gap that exists between professional practice, as teachers implement strategies that are not systemic or refined, but trained.

The results suggest that teachers may be using their experiences in the classroom and starting to implement inclusive practices but may still be underprepared due to limited professional growth and poorly designed training courses and gaps in training resources. Implementing a curriculum means more than just using a particular approach. It involves self-conviction and the competence to implement educational interventions for learners with disabilities and a mastery of the relevant educational policies. So, it may be visible that some strategies are being used, but their dispersion illustrates the likely absence of a foundational professional and institutional support. Such findings may be symptomatic of the larger picture in Philippine education, where teachers require more curriculum-relevant knowledge and are underprepared for the newly implemented MATATAG Curriculum.

These findings suggest that institutions should not assume that inclusive strategies imply a readiness to fulfill inclusive educational goals. While instructional staff may integrate inclusive practices in their lessons, overall instructional readiness needs to be complemented with purposefully designed and sequenced professional development, mentoring, and resource support to adequately respond to curriculum demands. Unsustained and uncoordinated support will lead to the implementation of practices that are 'cosmetic' and will not respond to the complex and multifaceted needs of learners. This also means that institutional strategies, such as the continuous professional development coupled with aligned adaptive leadership and the provision of teaching-learning resources for inclusive education proposed under the MATATAG framework, may be the key initiatives to fully exploit the potential of segmented inclusive education practices in meeting the needs of diverse learners.

This study's findings align with the observations of Pacatang and Gallardo (2025) about teachers moving from K to 12 to the MATATAG Curriculum, who noted the necessity of stronger training and institutional support to manage the changes brought about by curriculum adjustments. Gonzaga, Plan, and Aguipo (2024) also pointed out the challenges general education teachers face, even when they implement some inclusive education, as the readiness gaps which inhibit its effective implementation. On the other hand, Gumilao and Langam (2025) pointed out the importance of MATATAG Curriculum training, which helps educators as their knowledge and skills improve, validating that the preparedness of educators increases with training and skills supports. Moreover, Garcia, Apostol, Baluyot, Hernandez, and Ngales (2024) underscored the importance of schools using appropriate learning materials as a pivotal foundation to enhance the quality of teaching, which suggests resource access and willingness to use them are also vital in ensuring preparedness.

3. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the study, outlines the major findings based on the analyzed results, formulates the conclusions drawn from these findings, and provides recommendations intended to inform future actions and enhance educational practice.

Summary

This study evaluated the inclusive teaching strategies employed by teachers and their level of preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum in Barili Central Elementary School for School Year 2025–2026. The results served as the basis for formulating an Action Training Plan aimed at strengthening inclusive education practices. Specifically, it sought

to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of service, and current teaching position; to identify the inclusive teaching strategies commonly utilized by teachers; to evaluate their level of preparedness in applying these strategies within the MATATAG framework; to determine whether a significant relationship exists between inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness; and to develop an Action Training Plan anchored on the findings to enhance inclusivity in curriculum implementation. Data were gathered from 30 teacher-respondents through survey questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation. Moreover, Pearson's correlation was employed to test the relationship between inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness. The findings of the study provided the empirical foundation for crafting an Action Training Plan that seeks to improve inclusive education practices in the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School.

Findings

The findings of the study revealed that most of the respondents were within the age groups of 50 and above and 40–49, each accounting for 33.33%, while 26.67% were in the age group of 30–39 and only 6.67% belonged to the youngest group aged 20–29. In terms of gender, the respondents were predominantly female at 90%, with only 10% male. With regard to educational attainment, the highest proportion of respondents had earned master's units at 30.00% or had completed a master's degree at 46.67%, while 20.00% held a bachelor's degree and only 3.33% had attained a doctorate degree. As to length of service, the largest group had been in teaching for 16 years and above at 50.00%, followed by those with 11–15 years and 6–10 years of service, both at 20.00%, while the smallest group were those with 1–5 years of service at 10.00%, indicating that the teaching force was largely composed of veteran educators. In terms of position, 30.00% of the respondents were Teacher I and another 30.00% were Teacher II, while 26.67% were Teacher III, and only 13.33% had reached the level of Master Teacher.

The findings on inclusive teaching strategies revealed that teachers consistently applied practices that support inclusivity, with an aggregate mean of 3.40 described as Always. The most highly rated strategies were "I make use of culturally responsive teaching materials" with a weighted mean of 3.87, "I provide learning tasks with varying levels of difficulty" with a weighted mean of 3.80, and "I promote active

participation of all learners in discussions and tasks" with a weighted mean of 3.73, all described as Always. Other strategies such as "I design group activities that promote cooperation among diverse learners" obtained a weighted mean of 3.63, while "I integrate inclusive values such as respect and empathy into lessons" had a mean of 3.47, both also described as Always. On the other hand, strategies that were practiced less consistently included "I adjust lesson pace to suit the needs of diverse learners" with a mean of 2.70, "I assign peer tutors or learning buddies to assist struggling students" with a mean of 2.97, and "I allow learners to respond in different formats" with a mean of 3.00, all described as Often. These results indicate that inclusivity was consistently embedded in the teachers' classroom practices, though certain strategies requiring more individualized adjustments were less frequently implemented.

The findings on teacher preparedness in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum yielded an aggregate mean of 2.94 described as Prepared. The highest levels of preparedness were reported in "I feel prepared to establish and sustain a positive learning climate for all students," which had a weighted mean of 3.17, and "I am prepared to identify learners who require additional academic or behavioral support," which had a mean of 3.07, both described as Prepared. Teachers also indicated readiness in "I feel prepared to adapt lessons according to the diverse needs of my learners" and "I am prepared to collaborate with parents, colleagues, and stakeholders to support learner needs," both with means of 3.03 described as Prepared. However, lower preparedness ratings were recorded in "I am prepared with sufficient knowledge of various learning disabilities and appropriate interventions" with a mean of 2.67, and "I am prepared through the relevant training I have attended on inclusive education" with a mean of 2.70, both described as Prepared but reflecting weaker areas. These findings suggest that while teachers generally perceive themselves as prepared, there is still a need for further capacity-building in technical areas such as handling learners with disabilities and strengthening inclusive-focused training.

Finally, the test of relationship between inclusive teaching strategies and teacher preparedness showed a negligible positive correlation with an r-value of 0.099. The computed p-value of 0.786 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the decision not to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there was no statistically significant relationship between the two variables, implying that

although teachers consistently used inclusive strategies and considered themselves prepared, these two constructs did not significantly influence one another within the scope of this study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers at Barili Central Elementary School consistently practiced inclusive strategies and felt generally prepared to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. However, strategies requiring individualized adjustments and deeper knowledge of learners with disabilities were less evident, highlighting the need for targeted capacity-building to strengthen specialized competencies and ensure more comprehensive readiness for inclusive education.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Barili Central Elementary School adopt an Action Training Plan focused on strengthening teachers' capacity for inclusive education. The plan should prioritize professional development on differentiated instruction, managing diverse learning needs, and interventions for learners with disabilities. It should also include workshops, mentoring, and collaborative activities that enhance teachers' skills in individualized adjustments and the consistent application of inclusive strategies. By implementing this plan, teachers' preparedness can be reinforced, ensuring more effective and comprehensive delivery of the MATATAG Curriculum.

OUTPUT OF THE STUDY

Rationale

Inclusive education has become a cornerstone of modern curriculum reforms, ensuring that all learners, regardless of background or ability, are given equal opportunities to succeed. With the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, teachers are expected to adopt approaches that not only enhance learning outcomes but also promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in classrooms. For these goals to be realized, teachers must be adequately equipped with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to respond to the varying needs of their learners.

The findings of the study revealed that while teachers at Barili Central Elementary School consistently applied inclusive strategies such as using culturally responsive materials and encouraging active participation, they demonstrated weaker practices in areas that required individualized adjustments, such as pacing lessons for diverse learners or supporting struggling students through peer tutoring. This gap suggests that teachers are capable of embedding inclusivity in general terms but may need more targeted training to handle complex classroom realities effectively.

In terms of preparedness, teachers expressed confidence in fostering a positive classroom climate and identifying learners who require additional support. However, their preparedness was lower when it came to knowledge of learning disabilities, interventions for students with special needs, and training on inclusive education. This indicates that while teachers are moderately ready to implement the MATATAG Curriculum, they require further professional development to strengthen specialized competencies crucial for inclusivity.

Given these findings, the formulation of an Action Training Plan serves as a practical and responsive intervention. The plan aims to provide structured training sessions, workshops, mentoring opportunities, and collaborative practices designed to enhance teachers' capacity in specific areas of need. By directly addressing the gaps identified in the study, the Action Plan will bridge the disparity between general inclusivity practices and the specialized knowledge and skills required for comprehensive preparedness.

Ultimately, the Action Training Plan is not just a product of this research but also a strategic tool to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School. Through continuous professional development and systematic support, teachers will be better prepared to handle diverse learner needs, apply inclusive strategies consistently, and create classrooms that embody the values of inclusivity and equity. This will not only benefit teachers in their professional growth but also foster improved learning outcomes for all students.

Objectives

1. At the end of the training, teachers will be able to design differentiated lesson plans that address the diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles of students under the MATATAG Curriculum;
2. After participating in workshops, teachers will be able to apply inclusive teaching strategies such as peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and culturally responsive materials in their daily classroom practice;
3. By the end of the program, teachers will be able to demonstrate effective classroom management techniques that sustain a positive learning climate and address behavioral challenges in inclusive settings;
4. After completing training sessions, teachers will be able to collaborate with parents, colleagues, and stakeholders in developing interventions that support learners with special needs;

5. Upon completion of the Action Training Plan, teachers will be able to utilize knowledge of government policies and guidelines on inclusive education to align their teaching practices with the goals of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Scheme of Implementation

Inclusive education is a primary focus of curriculum reform so that all learners can succeed, regardless of their background or ability. Educators are expected to take steps to improve learning outcomes and apply approaches that cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion within the classroom. For these aims to be achieved, teachers need to be sufficiently prepared and have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and strategies to address their learners' different needs.

Research conducted by the study indicates that Barili Central Elementary School teachers regularly practiced integration of the use inclusive strategies and integration of culturally responsive teaching materials and active participation, but, on the contrary, less adjustment for individual needs was demonstrated, for instance, they did not fix the pace of lessons for different learner and, for struggling students, they did not provide the support of peer tutoring. This suggests that teachers have a more general understanding of classroom inclusivity but may need more support in training to address the more intricate aspects of classroom management.

Regarding preparedness, teachers showed some confidence in establishing a positive classroom environment and recognizing learners needing extra help. However, there was a notable lack of

preparedness in the areas of understanding learning disabilities, developing interventions for students with special needs, and receiving training in inclusive education. This suggests that teachers, while moderately ready to apply the MATATAG Curriculum, need further professional training to build the specialized skills that are important for inclusive teaching.

In light of the findings, the development of an Action Training Plan is appropriate and proactive. This approach intends to systematically address teachers' specific needs through organized training, workshops, mentoring, and collaborative opportunities. By targeting the needs documented in the study, the Action Plan will help close the gap lending in the spectrum of inclusivity toward generalized practices to the specialized expertise that is necessary for fully adequate preparedness.

The Action Plan, being a by-product of this research, incorporates the first of the recommendations put forth. Having a plan is a strategy to guarantee the sustainable and effective commitment to the proper execution of the MATATAG Curriculum at Barili Central Elementary School. Having a plan is first of the recommendations put forth. Continuous professional development and sustaining support will prepare teachers to manage the varied needs of learners, engage with the principles of inclusion, and construct inclusive and equitable environments. The positive effect of this development will be appreciable by all learners and will be of increased value to teachers professionally.

ACTION PLAN ON INCLUSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES USED AND THE LEVEL OF TEACHER PREPAREDNESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE MATATAG CURRICULUM IN BARILI CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Strategies	Persons Involved	Budget	Source of Budget	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Actual Accomplishment	Remarks
Limited knowledge of learning disabilities and interventions	Equip teachers with practical knowledge and skills in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities	Conduct seminars on special education, provide resource speakers, and distribute reference guides on interventions	School Head, SPED Teachers, External Experts	3,000	MOOE	Twice a Year	Teachers apply appropriate interventions for learners with disabilities		

Insufficient training on inclusive education	Strengthen teacher preparedness through capacity-building initiatives on inclusivity	Organize in-service training, professional development sessions, and exposure visits to model inclusive schools	Teachers, Master Teachers, Education Program Specialists	2,500	MOOE	Annually	Teachers gain confidence and competence in inclusive practices	
Difficulty in adjusting lesson pace for diverse learners	Improve teacher ability to scaffold instruction based on learners' readiness and abilities	Demonstrate flexible pacing techniques, provide peer coaching, and integrate scaffolding strategies in lesson plans	Master Teachers, LAC Coordinators, General Education Teachers	1,500	MOOE/PTA	Quarterly	Lessons delivered at a pace suited to learners' varying needs	
Weak classroom management in inclusive settings	Develop teachers' competence in handling behavioral challenges in diverse classrooms	Conduct workshops on positive discipline, simulate classroom scenarios, and share behavior management strategies	Guidance Counselor, Teachers, Master Teachers	2,000	PTA Funds	Every Semester	Improved classroom climate conducive to learning for all learners	
Low integration of technology in inclusive practices	Enhance teacher skills in using ICT tools to support differentiated and inclusive instruction	Provide ICT training, introduce assistive technology applications, and create digital learning resources	ICT Coordinator, Teachers, School Head	3,000	MOOE/Donations	Annually	Increased use of ICT and assistive tools in classroom instruction	

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