Professional Growth in Inclusive Education: The Case of Filipino Teachers in Rayong, Thailand

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Abstract — This research evaluated the competence of Filipino teachers in inclusive education in Rayong, Thailand, in terms of professional development. The study responded to the increasing demand for inclusive classrooms in multicultural settings through the quantification of the teachers' competence in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A quantitative descriptive-correlational study was employed, with a researcher-made questionnaire distributed to 100 Filipino teachers from five schools with inclusive education. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank correlation, and point-biserial correlation. Results encompassed high competencies in the use of assistive technology and use of differentiated instruction. Gaps were found in formal training and knowledge of related policies. There were significant correlations between certain demographic variables like sex and years of experience and particular competencies. The research led to the creation of a model of professional development and a specific design of training to improve the competence of Filipino teachers in inclusive education in Thailand.

Keywords — Inclusive Education, Professional Development, Filipino Teachers, Multicultural Classrooms, Competencies, Assistive Technology, Differentiated Instruction, Thailand

I. Introduction

Background of the Study

Inclusive education has emerged as an international education agenda, seeking to enable learners of all abilities, backgrounds, and identities to have equal opportunity to access quality learning in mainstream education environments. The practice has been promoted by Sustainable Development Goal 4, which guarantees inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for everyone (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). Thailand, as a signatory to global inclusive education conventions, has developed national policies on promoting inclusive practices. These encompass the promotion of inclusive schools by the Ministry of Education and the passing into law of the Education Provision for Persons with Disabilities Act of 2008. Notwithstanding this, there remain considerable challenges in teacher training and professional development (Chareonsri et al., 2022).

Filipino educators are a valuable addition to Thailand's educator workforce because of their English skills, flexibility, and teaching experience (Ulla & Perales, 2021). They are more likely to be hired by private and international schools, where they mostly work in classrooms comprising students with varied learning requirements. While good in many ways, most of these educators have had very limited exposure to local inclusive education policy and limited opportunities for organized professional development in inclusive teaching (Dela Cruz & Buchanan, 2021).

Although Filipino educators are generally culturally responsive and flexible in their classrooms, effective inclusive education necessitates particular pedagogical content knowledge, instructional differentiation ability, and inclusive attitudes. Educators need to have competencies in assistive technology usage, curriculum modification, and teaching strategies dovetailing with frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (Al-Azawei et al., 2019). Their absence can compromise the quality of inclusion, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement.

Rationale of the Study

Despite policy efforts and ample opportunities to learn from skilled expatriate instructors, inclusive education in Thailand remains faced with deeply ingrained barriers at the classroom level. Such barriers include inconsistent application of inclusive pedagogies, insufficient professional development activities, and insufficient professional support mechanisms for teachers who are not Thai (Chareonsri et al., 2022). Filipino teachers, in particular, are likely to be instructed outside national teacher development schemata, and their particular professional development needs are not typically addressed. While current research has actually documented the positive contributions of Filipino teachers in Thai classroom settings, little empirical research has been initiated to review their competences in inclusive education (Ulla & Perales, 2021; Dela Cruz & Buchanan, 2021).

This study fills that gap with systematic examination of Filipino teacher professional development competencies in Thailand's Rayong Province through a competency-based framework, with assessment of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The findings are to be applied in development of a needs-responsive and condition-specific training programme for inclusive education in Thailand.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the literature and professional discourse in inclusive education and foreign teacher integration by generating practical and policy-focused findings that can inform education reforms and practice. For the Filipino teachers, the study delineates areas of strength and areas of improvement for their inclusive education competencies. These data can facilitate their focused professional development by making clear the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be enhanced in order to better teach diverse learners. The findings are also helpful for school administrators. The findings can guide professional development programming, budgeting, and provision of supportive settings for inclusive classroom instruction by teachers.

In addition, the research is extremely important to students with disabilities because it seeks to prepare teachers to better handle different styles of learning and respond to the individual needs of every student. By focusing on teacher competencies, the research supports practices that can make learning more effective for those students who need more attention. Policymakers and teacher education institutions in Thailand and the Philippines can utilize the findings of research by availing themselves of the uses for informing teacher induction reforms, in-service teacher training, and inclusive education policy-making. Finally, the research offers a replicable model of assessment and intervention design for competencies that can be utilized as a basis for undertaking prospective research on teacher development within multicultural educational settings.

Aim of the Study

The study aims to assess the professional development competencies of Filipino teachers in inclusive education in Rayong, Thailand, and to develop a competency-based model and training program to enhance their effectiveness in inclusive teaching.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the profile of Filipino teachers and their schools in Rayong, Thailand.

2. To assess the extent of professional development competencies in inclusive education in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

3. To determine the significant relationships between teachers' profiles and their competencies in inclusive education.

4. To design a competency-based model that addresses gaps in the professional development of Filipino teachers in inclusive educational settings.

5. To develop a training program tailored to enhance the inclusive education competencies of Filipino teachers in Thailand.

Hypothesis of the Study

Null Hypothesis (H$_0$):

There is no significant relationship between the profile variables of Filipino teachers and their professional development competencies on inclusive education.

Decision on the Hypothesis:

The null hypothesis was **rejected** in the domains of **skills** and **attitudes**, where significant relationships with variables such as teaching experience and gender were found. However, the null hypothesis was **accepted** in the domain of **knowledge**, where no statistically significant associations emerged.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis for this study integrates three significant theoretical perspectives that together direct its assessment and development strategy for the Filipino teachers' inclusive education professional development competencies. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory posits that teacher professional development is socially mediated and stimulated by scaffolding and collaboration. The theory underpins building professional knowledge communities with scaffolding structures that facilitate sharings, discussions, and co-construction by Filipino teachers of inclusive curriculum practices sensitive to student varied needs (Fernández et al., 2020). These are environments that allow for mutual support and building of shared meanings required for inclusive education.

In addition, Knowles' Andragogy Theory guides scholarship and establishes that adults learn best through independent, experiential learning experiences. Andragogical theory guides the development of individualized, practical, and directly transferable professional development tasks for teachers. Andragogical principles that focus on practical knowledge of educators facilitate reflective investigation and critical examination of inclusive strategies and allow for ease of generalizing and applying such strategies within classrooms (Chan, 2021). This is complemented by the need to make professional development experiences relevant and meaningful to inclusive and multicultural classroom conditions.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory also directs the study to explain how teachers' beliefs in their capacity to implement inclusive practices influence their motivation, performance, and persistence. Teachers who are high in self-efficacy are more likely to participate in professional development activities, experiment with new pedagogies, and implement inclusion in class. Low self-efficacy, however, can serve as a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive practices and undermine professional development intervention impacts. Having recognized the impactful presence of self-efficacy, the study seeks to develop interventions that not only build expertise and knowledge but also teachers' confidence in establishing inclusive learning environments (Wang et al., 2020).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

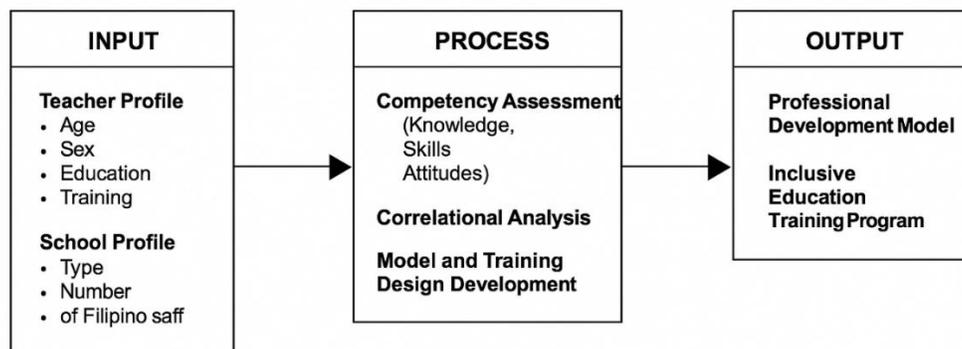| INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
Teacher Profile • Age • Sex • Education • Training **School Profile** • Type • Number • of Filipino saff	**Competency Assessment** (Knowledge, Skills Attitudes) **Correlational Analysis** **Model and Training Design Development**	**Professional Development Model** **Inclusive Education Training Program**

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Based on the Input–Process–Output Model

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework of the study, structured through an Input–Process–Output model. The conceptual framework offers a systematic presentation of how the study was conceptualized to evaluate and improve Filipino inclusive education competencies of professional development for teachers. The input includes respondents' profile variables. They are teacher profile, e.g., age, sex, educational level, and prior training, and school profile, e.g., school type, number of enrolled students, and number of Filipino personnel. These are the most important baseline data to investigate factors that influence inclusive education competencies of teachers.

Process component captures the analysis phase of research. It initiates systematic assessment of teacher competencies across the three knowledge, skills, and attitudes domains. A correlational study that explores relationships amongst and between input variables and existing competencies supports it. The study findings guide the development of a professional development model based on competencies and tailored train design that modifies to suit Filipino teacher needs.

The framework output is the proposed outcomes of the study. The framework is a model of professional growth and inclusive education training program used to develop the efficacy and self-efficacy of Filipino teachers for inclusive classroom instruction. The framework establishes a rational and evidence-based procedure for achieving the study's goal of enhancing inclusive education practice through systematic, context-relevant capacity-building interventions.

Literature Review

Filipino instructors in Thailand are playing a significant role in achieving education inclusion due to their English language competence and their proven track record of employing differentiated instruction strategies in multicultural schools. These skills are helping them to offer quality inputs in multicultural schools in Thailand (Ramos & Uy, 2021; Ulla & Perales, 2021). Their capacity to teach differently able students makes them effective agents of inclusive education. Nevertheless, despite such skills, there are significant gaps in systematic professional development programs for such teachers, more specifically inclusive pedagogy, assistive technologies, and understanding inclusive support structures (Al-Azawei et al., 2019; Chareonsri et al., 2022).

Inclusive education as envisioned by models such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) requires teachers to pre-emptively design instruction to reach and include all students regardless of ability, language, or learning style. UDL requires offering multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to enable diverse learners to access, engage with, and progress through the curriculum (Al-Azawei et al., 2019; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). This vision is also echoed in Sustainable Development Goal 4, which drives inclusive and equitable quality education for all in all countries (UNESCO, 2020). For inclusive practices to be effective, teachers need to have competencies that enable them to adapt content, apply differentiated instruction, and employ assistive technologies that remove learning barriers.

Such theories also explain the importance of focused support in ensuring teacher effectiveness in inclusive settings. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory explains that professional development and professional knowledge are social mediation processes supported by collaboration, scaffolding, and changing within professional communities (Fernández et al., 2020). Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory explains teacher self-efficacy with regard to their professional capacity as a direct driver of their motivation, resilience, and effectiveness in practicing inclusive pedagogy (Wang et al., 2020). Knowles' Theory of Andragogy also provides explanatory value in explaining professional development for adult learners such as educators by being facilitated through experiential, self-directed, and applied to professional conduct (Chan, 2021). These theories collectively form the basis of professional development programs that are collaborative, reflective, and sensitive to the unique needs of Filipino educators in inclusive school settings.

II. Methodology

This study employed the use of a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design in assessing the professional development competencies of Filipino teachers in inclusive education schools in Rayong, Thailand. The 100 Filipino teachers, selected through proportional stratified random sampling from five inclusive education schools, were the respondents. A researcher-created survey questionnaire was used in the collection of data for the purposes of gathering data on the teachers' demographic profile and their competencies in knowledge, skills, and attitudes in inclusive education. The instrument was subjected to validation by six experts in the field for purposes of content validity. The use of a five-point Likert scale was applied in determining teachers' perceived level of competence in areas assessed.

Ethical approvals and clearances were obtained from responsible bodies, and informed consent was obtained from all the respondents prior to collecting data. The questionnaire was personally administered in order to ensure ease in administering instructions and responding. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were utilized to portray the respondents' profiles and competency levels. Inferential statistics of Spearman's rank correlation and point-biserial correlation were employed to ascertain the correlation between respondents' profile variables and professional development competencies. Implications of these analyses guided the development of a professional development model and a suggested training program for filling gaps and expanding inclusive education practices among Filipino teachers.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Profile of Filipino Teachers in Rayong, Thailand

Profile Category	Most Common Response	Frequency (%)
Age	22–40 years	74%
Sex	Female	77%
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	73%
Years of Teaching Experience	6–10 years	40%
Monthly Income	25,000–40,000 THB	95%
Inclusive Education Training	No formal training	53%

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were young to mid-career female educators with undergraduate qualifications. While most had substantial teaching experience and moderate-income levels, over half lacked formal training in inclusive education—highlighting a critical area for professional development intervention.

Table 2. School Profile of Filipino Teachers in Rayong, Thailand

School Profile Category	Most Common Response	Frequency (%)
Type of School	Private	60%
Number of Filipino Teachers Employed	More than 10	60%
Number of Learners	More than 1,000	60%

Table 2 shows that most Filipino teachers worked in private schools with large student populations and faculty teams. A majority of the schools employed more than ten Filipino teachers and had over 1,000 learners, indicating the need for coordinated and well-supported inclusive education practices in relatively large educational settings.

Table 3. Extent of Professional Development Competencies of Filipino Teachers in Inclusive Education (Knowledge Domain)

Knowledge Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Use of assistive technologies (e.g., text-to-speech tools, visual aids)	3.99	High
Identification of learning barriers and proposing solutions	3.81	High
Differentiation of instruction across subjects based on learner needs	3.79	High

Table 3 reveals that Filipino teachers reported **high levels of knowledge** in key inclusive education areas. They were especially confident in using assistive technologies and recognizing learning barriers. These findings suggest that while their foundational understanding is strong, continued training can enhance their application of inclusive strategies.

Table 4. Extent of Professional Development Competencies of Filipino Teachers in Inclusive Education (Skills Domain)

Skills Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Adapting teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learner needs	4.02	High
Using inclusive classroom management techniques	3.88	High
Designing instructional materials for students with special needs	3.75	High

As shown in Table 4, Filipino teachers demonstrated high levels of skill in implementing inclusive education practices. They reported the strongest skills in adapting teaching strategies and managing inclusive classrooms. However, designing instructional materials for diverse learners received slightly lower scores, indicating a potential area for targeted skill enhancement.

Table 5. Extent of Professional Development Competencies of Filipino Teachers in Inclusive Education (Attitudes Domain)

Attitudes Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Belief in the importance of inclusive education for all learners	4.35	High
Willingness to accommodate students with special needs in the classroom	4.28	High
Commitment to continuous learning and improvement in inclusive teaching	4.38	High

Table 5 shows that Filipino teachers held highly positive attitudes toward inclusive education. They strongly agreed with its value and showed openness to ongoing professional development. These attitudes form a solid foundation for capacity-building efforts in inclusive practices.

Table 6. Correlations Between Profile Variables and Professional Development Competencies

Profile Variable	Competency Domain	Correlation Result	Interpretation
Gender	Attitudes	Significant	Female teachers showed more positive attitudes toward inclusion.
Teaching Experience	Skills	Significant	More experienced teachers demonstrated stronger inclusive teaching skills.
Training Attended	Knowledge	Significant	Teachers with prior training had higher knowledge in inclusive education.

Table 6 indicates significant correlations between certain teacher profile variables and their professional development competencies. Gender was linked to attitudes, suggesting that female teachers had more favorable views on inclusion. Teaching experience was positively associated with skill development, while training attendance was strongly related to knowledge levels—underscoring the importance of formal professional development in shaping teacher readiness for inclusive education.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a clear picture of the inclusive education competencies of Filipino teachers in Rayong, Thailand. The majority of the respondents had good levels of knowledge, skill, and attitude, and these align with existing literature that describes Filipino teachers as learner-centered and adaptive in approach (Ulla & Perales, 2021). Although the strengths of the respondents are emphasized in these findings, the study also revealed critical gaps, particularly in formal training in inclusive education and the creation of teaching materials for students with different needs. Over half of the respondents (53%) reported no formal training in inclusive education, and this limited their capacity to employ evidence-based inclusive practices in their daily teaching (Smith & Tyler, 2021).

Areas of knowledge, skill, and attitude being evaluated through such research are generally recognized to be important aspects of successful inclusive practice (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2021). The participants felt capable for applying assistive technologies and for differentiating instruction, yet not so for creating individualized instructional materials. This is a significant finding because inclusive education is not only about having a basic knowledge of inclusive principles but also about possessing the ability to translate such knowledge into instructional strategies and materials to address individual students' varying needs (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Encouragingly, the study confirmed that respondents had extremely positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Outcomes showed high willingness to teach students with disabilities and high commitment to professional learning. This is notable, as inclusive education is as dependent on attitudes towards diversity and equity as it is on technical skills (Wang et al., 2020). Correlational analysis also confirmed this, showing a high correlation with gender, as female teachers showed more positive attitudes. Years of experience were also highly correlated with skill levels, suggesting years of experience are useful to create competence in inclusive classroom management—in support of Dela Cruz and Buchanan's (2021) study.

Research also found that in-service training was associated with higher levels of knowledge and reaffirmed once more the importance of formal professional development. Teachers who had received in-service training had better knowledge of inclusive practices. The outcome reaffirmed once more applicability for principles of andragogy for adults with reflection, relevance, and practicality of learning being important for successful professional development (Chan, 2021). The findings are also consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, emphasizing that teacher

learning is socially mediated, affirming the importance of peer mentoring and collaborative professional communities for sustaining inclusive practices (Fernández et al., 2020).

In conclusion, Filipino teachers in Thailand benefit from a strong base of inclusive education but require more systematic as well as context-aware professional development. A competency framework, coupled with customized design for training, would fill gaps and provide not only foundational content knowledge but also applied competencies and collaborative platforms for strengthening inclusive pedagogy. Effective interventions must take into consideration variation in experience, past training, and organizational conditions. Capacity-building strategies in future must prioritize inclusive lesson planning resources, mentoring programs, and collaborative professional learning communities to strengthen sustainable inclusive education cultures in Thailand's schools.

IV. Conclusion

This study determined Filipino teachers in Rayong, Thailand, generally possess high professional development capacities in inclusive education. Specifically, they have high knowledge of assistive technology, capacity to adapt teaching methods, and attitude towards inclusive education practices. Of these strengths, the study determined wide gaps, namely in formal training in inclusive education and developing specialized instructional materials to accommodate learners with diverse needs. The study also determined high correlations between gender and attitude, teaching experience and aptitude, and participation in training and knowledge. These correlations indicate demographic and experiential variables affecting the level of competency among teachers.

The recommendations highlight the necessity of professional development programs that are sustainable and focused, both to improve existing areas of competence for teachers and to provide them with the competencies, strategies, and resources necessary to perform inclusive practices. Initiatives for inclusive education in Thailand should therefore incorporate highly organized support systems for foreign teachers, such as Filipino instructors, in recognition of their key role in achieving equity and diversity in multicultural environments. Improvement in such a support framework will be important to roll-out and sustainability of inclusive education in Thailand.

V. Recommendations

Cr Based on the available proof, it is proposed that professional development programs, carefully crafted and institutionalized by Thai school leaders and policymakers, should be designed to cater specifically to foreign instructors for inclusive education. These programs should focus on practice-based professional development in instructional material development, UDL implementation strategies, and usage of differentiated instruction strategies. These should be

accompanied by peer collaboration, mentoring, and reflective practice experiences to be included in programs for ensuring sustainable professional learning community establishment.

Collaborative arrangements between teacher education institutions in Thailand and in the Philippines are also necessary to professionalize inclusive education standards and practices in order for foreign educators to adequately respond to diverse learners. Establishing periodic needs assessment and monitoring processes to screen for relevance and effectiveness of professional development interventions are also necessary. These will ensure that professional development interventions remain relevant to emerging issues and prospects in inclusive education and thus lead to teacher effectiveness and student achievement in multicultural classroom contexts. For these reasons, then, this study proposes the following recommendations:

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