

Exploring Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) Constructs As Predictors of Teachers' Intention to Implement Inclusive Education: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education in the Philippines continues to face systemic barriers despite the enactment of Republic Act 11650, the Inclusive Education Act of 2022. This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of fifteen purposively selected junior high school teachers to explore how constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—shape their intention to implement inclusive practices. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis revealed that teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, grounded in moral responsibility and the observed benefits of diverse learners thriving together. Subjective norms, particularly peer collaboration and administrative encouragement, emerged as powerful motivators, while perceived behavioral control was influenced by access to training, resources, and institutional support. Teachers' motivation and practical experiences further reinforced their commitment, though persistent challenges such as large class sizes, limited materials, and inconsistent systemic backing constrained implementation. Motivation and practical experience, though not core TPB constructs, can be situated within perceived behavioral control and emerging extensions of TPB that integrate affective readiness. Findings highlight that while individual beliefs and intentions are crucial, sustainable inclusive education requires enabling conditions and institutional structures that empower teachers to act on their convictions. The study contributes to both theory and practice by extending TPB to account for experiential and emotional dimensions of teaching, situating intention within complex educational realities, though these remain exploratory and require further empirical triangulation. It underscores the need for responsive policies, professional development, and collaborative school cultures to bridge the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom practice. Ultimately, this research supports global and national efforts toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 by advocating for equitable, learner-centered environments that uphold the rights and potentials of all students.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Theory of Planned Behavior, Teacher attitudes, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control

INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Scope

Inclusive education, despite being recognized globally as a fundamental right of every learner, continues to face persistent challenges in actual implementation. There is often a noticeable gap between policy advocacy and the low intent to implement inclusive education effectively, particularly in resource-constrained and developing contexts. Mendoza and Heymann (2024) highlight that despite widespread policy support, the actual implementation of inclusive education remains limited, revealing a lack of genuine commitment and intentionality in many low- and lower-middle-income countries. Teachers, as the primary agents of instructional delivery, often exhibit uncertainties and inconsistencies in their acceptance and practice of inclusive education.

This concern is not confined to a single nation but is evident across various countries, where inclusive education policies are often met with low intent in actual implementation. In Germany, despite the ratification

of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education remains limited due to the continued operation of special schools and a dual education system that undermines full inclusion (Ahrbeck & Felder, 2020). In England, teachers express uncertainty about the purpose of inclusion and frustration with policy demands, revealing a disconnect between inclusive rhetoric and practical commitment (Williams-Brown & Hodgkinson, 2020). Similarly, in Spain, while teachers show interest in inclusive practices, structural limitations such as high student–teacher ratios, lack of resources, and insufficient support personnel hinder effective implementation, reflecting low institutional intent (Saiz-González et al., 2025). In the Philippines, the passage of Republic Act 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022 has intensified the demand for inclusive practices. However, studies reveal that despite policy advancements, low intent persists in implementation due to inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, and limited stakeholder engagement (Tagyamon et al., 2025; Lagura & Salapa, 2025). Alcosero, Carcueva, and Abasolo (2023) further emphasize that regular teachers often feel unprepared to teach inclusively, citing insufficient preparation, lack of administrative support, and external pressures from colleagues and parents. These factors significantly influence teachers’ beliefs and decisions in inclusive classrooms, making the success of inclusive education in the Philippines inconsistent, particularly in public schools where resource constraints are more visible.

The persistence of these barriers has significant consequences. When teachers fail to embrace inclusive practices, learners with or without disabilities or special educational needs risk marginalization, limited academic participation, and social exclusion (Chambers & Forlin, 2021; Schwab & Alnahdi, 2023). This failure not only undermines the intent of inclusive education policies but also perpetuates educational inequalities. Yet, while global and local studies acknowledge these issues there remains a significant research gap: few empirical studies have systematically examined the psychosocial determinants namely, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, that situates teachers’ intentions and behaviors toward inclusive education. Without understanding these underlying dynamics, interventions risk being misaligned or ineffective.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses the continuing gap between the ideals and the realities of inclusive education in the Philippines. Despite the passage of Republic Act No. 11650 or the Inclusive Education Act of 2022, many teachers still experience challenges in adopting inclusive pedagogies due to limited preparation, lack of resources, and insufficient institutional support. By examining teachers’ attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control toward inclusive education, this study provides empirical evidence on the psychological and contextual factors that influence teachers’ intent to implement inclusive practices. The findings will benefit several stakeholders: policymakers and educational leaders can use the results to design more responsive policies and professional development programs; school administrators can apply the insights to strengthen inclusive school cultures and collaborative support systems; teachers can reflect on their own beliefs and teaching practices to enhance inclusivity; and researchers can use the findings to expand the body of knowledge on inclusive education in the Philippine context.

Furthermore, this study aligns with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. By uncovering the factors that either promote or hinder teachers’ implementation of inclusive education, the study contributes to global and national efforts toward building equitable, accessible, and learner-centered education systems. Ultimately, it seeks to bridge the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom practice, supporting the creation of more responsive learning environments that uphold the rights and potentials of all learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive education has been extensively examined through the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), TPB posits that human actions are guided by three key determinants: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. An individual's behavior is predicted by their perceived behavioral control and intentions to perform the behavior. Attitudes towards the behavior are “the individual's global

positive or negative evaluations of performing a particular behavior,” while subjective norms refer to “perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior.” Perceived behavioral control is compatible with Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy in social cognitive theory: both denote an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific behavior under a particular set of circumstances (Ajzen, 2020). Intentions are regarded as “indications of a person's readiness to perform a behavior” (Ajzen, 2011). Furthermore, Ajzen (1991) theorizes that attitudes, subjective norms, and self-efficacy are interrelated and influence an individual's behavior mediated by their intentions.

In this study, TPB provides the analytical lens to examine how teachers engage with inclusive education practices. The construct of attitudes captures teachers' positive or negative evaluations of inclusive teaching strategies, while subjective norms reflect the perceived expectations from colleagues, administrators, and policy environments that influence their instructional decisions. Perceived behavioral control encompasses teachers' beliefs about their capacity to implement inclusive practices, shaped by access to training and resources (Ajzen, 1991; Urton et al., 2023). While TPB includes behavior as a final outcome, this study focuses specifically on the intention to implement inclusive education, rather than measuring actual teaching behavior. This decision aligns with the study's aim to examine the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control that influence teachers' intention to adopt inclusive practices. Intention, as defined by Ajzen (2011), serves as a reliable predictor of behavior and is appropriate for studies where direct observation of behavior is not feasible.

Recent scholarship strengthens this theoretical lens by situating TPB constructs within diverse educational contexts. Teachers' attitudes are consistently identified as foundational to inclusive practice. Gülsün et al. (2025) found that affective attitudes strongly predict teachers' intentions to adopt inclusive strategies, while Charitaki et al. (2024) confirmed that cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions collectively shape teachers' inclusive attitudes across national contexts. In the Philippines, David et al. (2025) revealed that rural teachers' moral and pedagogical motivations underpin their commitment to inclusion, despite gaps in professional development. This echoes earlier work by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), who emphasized that positive attitudes are necessary but insufficient without systemic support.

Social norms and peer collaboration also play a critical role. Yan and Sin (2014) demonstrated that perceived social pressure and school-wide support predict teachers' willingness to implement inclusion. A systematic review by Felső and Fehérvári (2024) highlighted that peer mentoring and tutoring programs enhance empathy, community engagement, and inclusive attitudes. In the Philippine context, Raguindin et al. (2025) stressed that engaging, affirming, and nurturing environments foster collaboration among teachers, parents, and learners, strengthening inclusive culture.

Confidence in implementing inclusive strategies is shaped by training and resources. Shani and Koss (2022) noted that institutional barriers undermine teacher confidence despite motivation. Vergara et al. (2025) found that Filipino teachers expressed moderate knowledge but high confidence in managing inclusive classrooms, though gaps in adaptive technologies and individualized education plans persist. Nissim and Shamma (2025) further argued that emotional concerns mediate the relationship between attitudes and self-efficacy, underscoring the importance of affective readiness.

Beyond individual constructs, scholars emphasize the importance of policy and institutional frameworks. Ainscow (2020) argued that inclusion must be embedded in school improvement strategies rather than treated as an add-on. In the Philippine setting, Republic Act 11650 provides a legal mandate, but Bernardo and Mendoza (2020) observed that gaps in implementation weaken teachers' confidence and limit practice. Globally, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) advanced the concept of inclusive pedagogy, encouraging teachers to view diversity as a resource rather than a barrier. Sharma and Loreman (2014) similarly found across multiple countries that teacher training and cultural context significantly shape attitudes and perceived control, reinforcing the need for systemic and cultural responsiveness.

Finally, emerging scholarship suggests that TPB may need expansion to fully capture the complexities of inclusive education. Kupers et al. (2024) proposed integrating emotional and experiential dimensions, while Nissim and Shamma (2025) highlighted affective readiness as a critical mediator. These perspectives position

TPB not only as a predictive framework but also as a dynamic lens that can evolve alongside the realities of inclusive practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore teachers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as predictors of their intention to implement inclusive education. Phenomenology was chosen because it allowed the researcher to focus on the lived experiences of individuals and uncover the meanings they ascribe to a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). By emphasizing subjective perspectives, phenomenology is particularly suited for examining how teachers interpret and respond to bureaucratic and institutional structures that shape their practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, phenomenological inquiry provides rich, contextual insights into participants' perceptions, which are essential for understanding complex educational realities beyond surface-level measurement (Creswell, 2013). While the study used TPB constructs as lens, the qualitative design focuses on exploring the perceptions and lived experiences rather than establishing predictive causality.

The study consisted of semi-structured interviews aimed at capturing in-depth insights and contextual understandings of teachers' experiences and perceptions. The dataset was analyzed using thematic techniques to identify patterns of meaning, complemented by appropriate statistical approaches to strengthen interpretation.

Sample and Sampling Technique

One of the most crucial tasks in this study was identifying participants who could offer rich and relevant insights aligned with the research objectives. Careful selection was necessary to ensure that the participants possessed the knowledge, experience, and perspectives essential for understanding the dynamics of inclusive education practices. Approximately fifteen (15) teachers were purposively selected who were receiving teachers, special education teachers, and special education coordinators. Invitations were extended to all identified participants, and only those who provided informed consent were included in the interview process.

The decision to include fifteen participants is consistent with methodological recommendations for phenomenological research. Creswell (2013) notes that phenomenological studies typically range from 5 to 25 participants, depending on the richness of the data and the depth of analysis required. This aligns with Bartholomew et al. (2021), who emphasize that sample sizes in phenomenological research should be sufficient to capture diverse voices while remaining small enough to allow for in-depth, nuanced analysis of lived experiences. Thus, a sample of fifteen participants was deemed appropriate to balance diversity of perspectives with analytic depth and manageability.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was utilized in this study to gather in-depth qualitative data. The guide contained a set of core questions that directed the flow of the interview, while allowing flexibility for follow-up queries and clarifications. To ensure content validity, relevance, and adherence to ethical standards, the instrument was reviewed and validated.

During the interviews, the researcher maintained a flexible and conversational approach to establish rapport and encourage open, spontaneous discussions, thereby facilitating the collection of rich and meaningful responses from participants. With the participants' informed consent, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data capture and serve as reference material during transcription and analysis. In addition, field notes were taken to document contextual details, nonverbal cues, and other observations that supported the interpretation of the qualitative data.

Data Collection

The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with purposively selected teachers. Interview schedules were arranged at times most convenient for the participants to avoid disruption of school activities. Before each interview, confidentiality agreements were secured and informed consent to record the conversation was obtained. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they balance consistency with flexibility, allowing the researcher to explore predetermined themes while also probing participants' unique perspectives. This method is widely recognized in qualitative research as effective for eliciting rich, nuanced accounts of lived experiences (Lopes et al., 2025). The interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes to capture contextual and nonverbal information that enriched data interpretation. Field notes are considered an essential complement to interview data, as they document researcher observations, environmental cues, and participants' non-verbal expressions, thereby strengthening the depth and trustworthiness of qualitative findings (Sholokhova, Bizzari, & Fuchs, 2022). Together, semi-structured interviews and field notes ensured that both verbal and contextual dimensions of teachers' experiences were systematically captured and analyzed.

Data Analysis

Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, definition, and interpretation. This approach was selected because thematic analysis provides a flexible yet rigorous framework for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data.

The process began with familiarization, where transcripts were read repeatedly to immerse the researcher in the data. Next, initial coding was conducted to systematically capture meaningful features across the dataset. These codes were then organized into candidate themes, which represented broader patterns of meaning. The reviewing stage involved refining themes by checking coherence within and across the dataset. Subsequently, themes were defined and named, ensuring clarity and distinctiveness. Interpretation and reporting connected the themes to theoretical constructs, in this case, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), to provide explanatory depth. Finally, trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation of field notes, reflexivity journals, and peer debriefing. Coding reliability was enhanced by independent review of transcripts and iterative theme refinement.

Braun and Clarke's framework has been widely adopted in educational and social science research because it balances methodological rigor with accessibility, making it particularly suitable for studies seeking to capture complex, lived experiences (Nowell et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2017). Supplementing TPB constructs with thematic analysis allowed the study to move beyond descriptive accounts toward a deeper understanding of how teachers' attitudes, norms, and perceived control shape their intentions to implement inclusive education.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was upheld throughout all phases of the research. All participants were informed of the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of their participation through written informed consent. Additional consent was sought for audio recording of interviews. Participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Unique identification codes were used in lieu of names to protect identities, and all data were stored securely in password-protected and encrypted digital files. Physical and digital records were disposed of responsibly after the completion of the study.

FINDINGS

The qualitative findings of this study offer a nuanced understanding of the psychological and contextual factors that shape teachers' intention to implement inclusive education. Drawing from in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the data reveal a dynamic interplay between personal attributes and external support systems, including peer collaboration and professional training. These elements converge to form core constructs aligned with the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Experiences of Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping inclusive education practices, and their perceptions significantly influence how these practices are implemented in the classroom. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), five key themes emerged: Belief in Inclusion, Social Influence, Confidence, Motivation, and Practical Experience. Each theme reflects a distinct construct, yet their influence is most evident when they interact.

Theme 1: Belief in Inclusion

Belief in inclusion refers to teachers' personal attitudes toward the value and importance of educating all students, regardless of ability or background. In the TPB framework, this aligns with the construct of attitude toward the behavior, which influences intention. Teachers who strongly believe in the moral and educational benefits of inclusion are more likely to commit to inclusive practices. Their conviction stems from a sense of fairness, empathy, and professional responsibility, forming a positive foundation for inclusive teaching. Importantly, this belief was often amplified when reinforced by supportive peers and administrators, showing how attitudes and social influence combine to strengthen teachers' confidence and commitment.

Theme 2: Social Influence

Social influence captures the impact of peers, administrators, and institutional culture on teachers' decisions and behaviors. This theme reflects the TPB construct of subjective norms, which refers to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. Teachers reported that encouragement from colleagues, collaborative environments, and leadership support enhanced their willingness to implement inclusive strategies. When inclusion was normalized and valued within the school community, teachers felt more confident and motivated to follow suit. In fact, collegial support not only shaped normative expectations but also bolstered teachers' confidence, demonstrating that perceived behavioral control is strengthened when social norms validate and resource teachers' efforts.

Theme 3: Confidence

Confidence relates to teachers' belief in their ability to successfully carry out inclusive education. This theme aligns with perceived behavioral control in TPB, which affects both intention and actual behavior. Teachers who feel well-equipped through training, experience, and access to resources are more likely to embrace inclusive methods. Conversely, those who feel underprepared or unsupported may hesitate, highlighting the importance of building teacher capacity to strengthen implementation. Confidence gained through training and institutional support also interacted with intrinsic motivation, enabling teachers to persist with inclusive practices even when systemic barriers threatened to erode their resolve.

Theme 4: Motivation

Motivation refers to the internal and external drivers that inspire teachers to pursue inclusive education. While not a direct TPB construct, motivation interacts with all three components—attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—to reinforce intention. Teachers described being motivated by personal fulfillment, student success, and recognition from peers and administrators. This sustained drive helps bridge the gap between intention and consistent practice, especially when challenges arise. Motivation was particularly sustained when practical experiences validated teachers' sense of efficacy, as witnessing student success in real classrooms reinforced perceived control and energized teachers to continue inclusive teaching despite challenges.

Theme 5: Practical Experiences

Practical experience involves the hands-on application of inclusive strategies in real classroom settings. It influences perceived behavioral control by shaping teachers' confidence and adaptability. Teachers who have successfully implemented inclusive practices reported greater ease and willingness to continue, while those facing barriers such as large class sizes or limited resources felt constrained. These experiences demonstrate

how enabling conditions can either strengthen or weaken the link between intention and behavior, a core insight of TPB. Hands-on success stories also deepened teachers' belief in inclusion, showing that attitudes are not only rooted in moral values but continually reaffirmed through lived classroom victories.

Taken together, the five themes interact dynamically rather than in isolation. Attitudes are reinforced by social support, confidence is sustained through motivation, and practical experiences continually validate teachers' belief in inclusion. This interplay highlights that intention is not simply the sum of TPB constructs but the product of their convergence within lived educational realities, underscoring the importance of institutional support and collaborative cultures in bridging the gap between intention and consistent inclusive practice.

DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings suggest that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a meaningful lens for understanding how teachers form intentions to implement inclusive education, though its explanatory reach should be considered with caution. Given the qualitative phenomenological design, the insights are best viewed as exploratory reflections on how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control intersect within lived classroom contexts, rather than as predictive claims about behavior. In this way, TPB emerges as adaptable and responsive to context, serving as a useful framework for dialogue and theoretical development while recognizing its limits in establishing causality.

Theoretical Contributions

The study's findings show that TPB helps situate teachers' intention to implement inclusive education within the interplay of psychosocial and institutional factors. Its constructs—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control—interact to influence intentions, though their explanatory strength remains provisional given the qualitative design and contextual constraints. Rather than making predictions, this study contributes to theoretical dialogue by illustrating how intention emerges from the convergence of belief, social influence, confidence, motivation, and practical experience.

Importantly, the themes of motivation and practical experience extend TPB beyond its traditional boundaries. Motivation sustains intention through commitment and moral responsibility, while practical experience validates perceived control by reinforcing teachers' confidence in real classrooms. These dimensions align with emerging scholarship that integrates emotional and experiential factors into TPB, suggesting possible pathways for expansion. However, such extensions remain exploratory and require further empirical testing before they can be generalized.

Thus, the contribution of this study lies not in asserting TPB as a definitive explanatory model, but in demonstrating its adaptability when applied to inclusive education in resource-constrained settings. By acknowledging both strengths and limitations, the study underscores the need for responsive support, professional development, and collaborative cultures that empower teachers to act on their convictions. TPB serves as a pragmatic lens for understanding intention, while the inclusion of motivation and practical experience points toward a more holistic framework for future research.

First, teachers' overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward inclusive education reveal its perceived role as a pathway to equity, empathy, and collaborative learning. These attitudes were shaped not only by moral conviction but also by observed classroom benefits, reinforcing inclusive education as both an ethical and practical commitment. This resonates with Gülsün et al. (2025), who found that affective attitudes strongly predict teachers' intentions to teach inclusively. Yet, as Lo et al. (2024) cautioned, favorable attitudes alone may be insufficient when systemic constraints such as workload and time pressures persist. The present study therefore underscores that while inclusion is often described as transformative for both teachers and students, its sustainability depends on aligning personal conviction with institutional support and practical conditions.

Second, social influence, particularly from colleagues and administrators, was found to strongly influence teachers' motivation to adopt inclusive practices. Peer collaboration and leadership support emerged as key enablers. This is consistent with Yan and Sin (2014), who found that perceived social pressure and school-

wide support significantly predict teachers' intention to implement inclusive education. However, inconsistent community expectations, such as parental skepticism, can create emotional tension and reduce normative influence.

Third, teachers' confidence in implementing inclusive education was shaped by both internal beliefs and external support systems. Many participants described how professional development and administrative encouragement enhanced their sense of capability and readiness to teach inclusively. Despite challenges such as large class sizes and limited instructional resources, teachers expressed a strong belief in their ability to adapt and respond to diverse learner needs

Fourth, findings are consistent with Shani and Koss (2022), who emphasized that institutional barriers can undermine teacher confidence, even when motivation is present. Similarly, Bernardo and Mendoza (2020) noted that inadequate resources and time pressures contribute to hesitation in adopting inclusive strategies. In contrast, professional development and administrative support have been shown to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and confidence in managing diverse classrooms (Urton et al., 2023; Tinnes-Vigne et al., 2025). Overall, the qualitative data suggest that confidence is not solely dependent on ideal conditions but is sustained through a mix of personal values, professional growth, and institutional encouragement. Teachers' belief in their ability to implement inclusive practices reflects a deep-seated commitment to equity and student success.

Fifth, teachers demonstrated strong motivation to continue inclusive teaching, driven by personal beliefs, professional values, and positive classroom outcomes. This motivation was evident in their willingness to adapt lessons, support diverse learners, and persist despite institutional challenges. These findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that intention is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). Further, this aligns with Urton, Wilbert, Krull, and Hennemann (2023), who observed that intention alone may not lead to behavior unless supported by enabling conditions. It also echoes findings by Shani and Koss (2022), who emphasized that motivation is strengthened when teachers feel supported by their institutions. In this study, motivation emerged as a key driver of intention, sustained by both personal conviction and the presence of supportive structures.

Lastly, teachers' practical experiences revealed that inclusive teaching is not merely a policy requirement but a deeply personal and evolving practice. Success stories, such as helping students with disabilities thrive, reinforced their commitment. These findings are consistent with Miña (2024), who found that teachers' lived experiences were shaped by empathy, adaptation, and continuous learning. The integration of inclusive practices into professional identity highlights the need to extend TPB to include experiential and emotional dimensions, as suggested by Kupers et al. (2024).

Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that teachers' positive attitudes, supportive social environments, and confidence in their teaching capacity collectively contributed to their intention to implement inclusive education. Teachers who felt supported through training, peer collaboration, and administrative guidance, demonstrated a greater willingness to adopt inclusive strategies. Their motivation was reinforced by both moral conviction and practical satisfaction derived from inclusive teaching experiences. However, the data also highlighted those institutional constraints, such as inadequate resources and large class sizes, can weaken the connection between intention and behavior. These findings underscore the importance of structural and policy-level support in sustaining inclusive education. In this context, TPB is clearly manifested: inclusive teaching behaviors are more likely to flourish when intention is reinforced by confidence, motivation, and enabling conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the Theory of Planned Behavior's constructs—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—shape teachers' intention to implement inclusive education in the Philippines. Through a phenomenological lens, the findings revealed that intention is not a simple sum of these constructs but emerges from their dynamic interplay with motivation and practical experience. Teachers' moral conviction in inclusion was reinforced by collegial support, confidence was sustained through training and institutional backing, and lived classroom successes continually validated their belief in inclusive practice.

By situating TPB within these lived realities, the study demonstrates its adaptability as an interpretive framework rather than a predictive model. The contribution lies in showing how psychosocial factors converge with institutional conditions to influence teachers' readiness for inclusive education. At the same time, the limitations of a qualitative design remind us that these insights are exploratory and require further empirical triangulation before generalization.

Practically, the findings underscore the need for responsive policies, sustained professional development, and collaborative school cultures that empower teachers to act on their convictions. Inclusive education cannot be achieved through individual belief alone; it requires enabling structures that transform intention into consistent practice. This research backs global and national efforts toward Sustainable Development Goal 4 by pushing for inclusive classrooms where every student's right and potential are respected. In doing so, it invites policymakers, administrators, and educators to view inclusion not as a static mandate but as a lived, evolving commitment that flourishes when belief, support, confidence, motivation, and experience converge in the classroom.

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