

Disability Rights Literacy as a Determinant of Inclusive Physical Education Practice Readiness among Bachelor of Physical Education Students of St. Paul University Surigao

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I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a fundamental human rights principle anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which affirms the right of persons with disabilities to participate fully in education, recreation, leisure, and sport (United Nations, 2006). In the Philippine context, disability rights are further institutionalized through Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) and Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act), mandating inclusive and equitable access to education, including Physical Education (PE) and sports.

Physical Education presents unique inclusion challenges due to its physical demands, performance-based assessment, and safety considerations. Thus, pre-service Physical Education teachers must possess not only pedagogical knowledge but also disability rights literacy—a comprehensive understanding of legal mandates, participation rights, reasonable accommodation, and non-discrimination principles.

While previous research has focused on teacher attitudes and efficacy toward inclusion, limited studies have examined disability rights literacy as a predictor of inclusive PE practice readiness among Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) students at St. Paul University Surigao. This study addresses this gap by investigating whether knowledge and understanding of disability rights influence readiness to implement inclusive PE practices.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Disability Rights Literacy and Inclusive Education

The rights of persons with disabilities have been globally recognized through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which emphasizes equal access to education, physical activity, and sports without discrimination (United Nations, 2006). Article 24 of the CRPD specifically calls for inclusive education at all levels, and Article 30 highlights the rights of persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport. Several researchers argue that

rights awareness is foundational to inclusive practices, as understanding legal and ethical mandates influences attitudes and behaviors toward inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

In the Philippine setting, legislation such as Republic Act No. 7277, or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, reinforces the rights framework by mandating accessible and non-discriminatory educational environments (Republic Act No. 7277, 1992). Similarly, Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) supports inclusive educational programs that accommodate learners with diverse needs. Studies conducted in the Philippine context emphasize the gap between policy and practice, noting that legislation alone does not guarantee inclusive implementation without adequate teacher preparation and rights-based training (Dizon, 2018; Rivera & Bernales, 2020).

Recent scholarship emphasizes that disability inclusion in education is grounded in a rights-based framework rather than a charity-based approach. Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), contemporary research underscores that teacher preparation programs must integrate disability rights literacy to ensure inclusive practice (UNESCO, 2020; United Nations, 2022). Disability rights literacy refers to the knowledge and understanding of legal mandates, inclusive principles, and ethical responsibilities toward persons with disabilities.

In the Philippine context, research highlights the importance of integrating Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities) and inclusive education mandates under the Enhanced Basic Education Act into teacher education curricula (DepEd, 2021). However, gaps remain in translating legal awareness into actual classroom competence.

Inclusive Physical Education and Teacher Readiness

Inclusive Physical Education (IPE) presents unique challenges due to its movement-based and performance-oriented nature. Recent studies emphasize that inclusive PE requires both pedagogical adaptation skills and positive

attitudes toward learners with disabilities (Haegele & Sutherland, 2020).

Haegele et al. (2021) found that PE teachers' self-efficacy significantly predicts their implementation of inclusive practices. Teachers with higher confidence levels in modifying activities, adapting equipment, and promoting peer support demonstrated more effective inclusion. Likewise, Sharma and Sokal (2020) reported that teacher efficacy for inclusive practices remains a strong determinant of classroom readiness across different subject areas, including physical education.

A systematic review by Qi and Ha (2022) revealed that PE teachers often feel underprepared to implement inclusive strategies, particularly in adapting competitive sports and assessment procedures. The review emphasized the need for stronger pre-service training focused on adapted physical activity.

More recent studies (Tindall et al., 2023) highlight that practical exposure to inclusive settings during teacher education significantly improves readiness and reduces anxiety when working with learners with disabilities. These findings support the argument that both knowledge (rights literacy) and applied competence contribute to inclusive practice readiness.

Relationship Between Disability Rights Literacy and Practice Readiness

Recent literature increasingly links knowledge of disability rights to inclusive teaching competence. Florian (2021) argued that understanding inclusion as a human right transforms teachers' instructional decisions and professional identity. Teachers who view inclusion through a rights-based lens are more likely to implement meaningful adaptations.

Similarly, Sharma et al. (2021) found that teacher candidates with stronger conceptual understanding of inclusion policies demonstrate higher self-efficacy in inclusive practices. This relationship suggests that disability rights literacy may function as a predictor of inclusive practice readiness.

However, current literature reveals a research gap in examining this relationship specifically within Physical Education programs, particularly among Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) students. While studies explore teacher readiness or inclusive attitudes independently, fewer studies directly examine disability rights literacy as a determinant of inclusive PE readiness.

Synthesis of the Review. The review of literature highlights the critical role of disability rights literacy in promoting inclusive educational practices, showing that pre-service teachers' awareness of legal mandates, inclusive policies, and ethical responsibilities significantly shapes their attitudes and readiness to implement inclusion (UNESCO, 2020; Forlin & Sin, 2020; DepEd, 2021). Teacher candidates who possess knowledge of disability rights demonstrate higher confidence in adapting instructional strategies, modifying activities, and fostering social inclusion for learners with disabilities (Sharma et al., 2021; Haegele et al., 2022; Tindall et al., 2023). In Physical Education (PE), inclusive practice extends beyond awareness to practical competencies such as instructional adaptation, equipment modification, environmental organization, assessment strategies, and social facilitation, with teachers' self-efficacy and exposure to inclusive settings

identified as strong predictors of readiness (Block et al., 2021; Grenier & Lieberman, 2021; Hutzler, 2020; Qi & Ha, 2022). Promoting peer support and addressing discriminatory behavior are also recognized as essential components of effective inclusive PE (Haegele et al., 2022). Despite these findings, limited localized research exists on Bachelor of Physical Education students in the Philippines, as most studies focus on general education or Western contexts, highlighting a gap in understanding how Philippine pre-service PE teachers acquire and apply disability rights knowledge in practice (Benitez et al., 2025; Gazali et al., 2025). Overall, the literature suggests that disability rights literacy is a key determinant of inclusive PE practice readiness, influencing both attitudes and practical instructional decisions, providing a rationale for investigating this relationship to inform teacher preparation and curriculum development in inclusive education.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

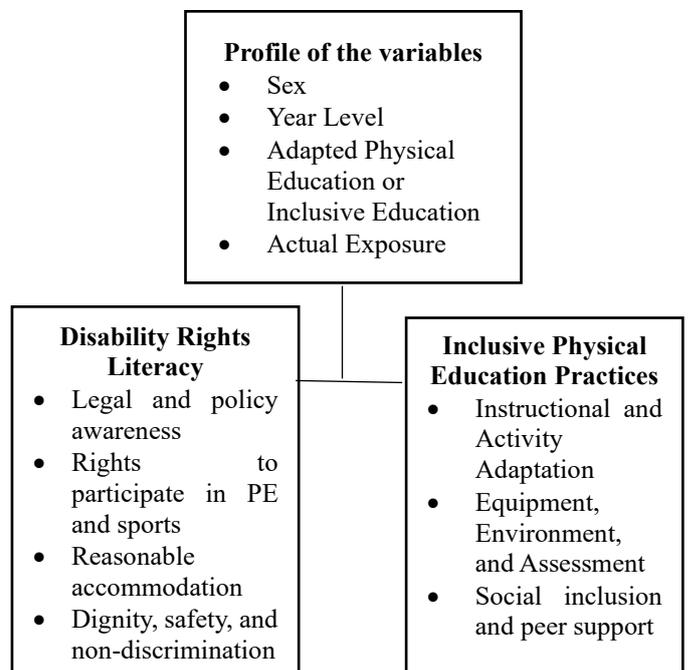
Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to determine the influence of disability rights literacy on inclusive physical education practice readiness among Bachelor of Physical Education students of St. Paul University Surigao. Correlational research allows examination of the strength and direction of relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

This study assumes that disability rights serve as a foundational cognitive factor influencing inclusive practice readiness among BPEd students of St. Paul University Surigao. According to the rights-based model (United Nations, 2006), knowledge of legal mandates and human rights principles shapes professional responsibility.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) emphasizes that inclusive practices emerge from disability rights of inclusive values and policies.



Statement of the Problem

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants in terms of:
 - 1.1. Sex;
 - 1.2. Year Level;
 - 1.3. Adapted Physical Education or Inclusive Education; and
 - 1.4. Actual Exposure?
2. What is the level of disability rights literacy among Bachelor of Physical Education students in terms of:
 - 2.1. Legal and policy awareness;
 - 2.2. Rights to participate in PE and sports;
 - 2.3. Reasonable accommodation; and
 - 2.4. Dignity, safety, and non-discrimination?
3. How ready are these students to implement inclusive physical education practices in terms of:
 - 3.1. Instructional and activity adaptation;
 - 3.2. Equipment, environment, and assessment; and
 - 3.3. Social inclusion and peer support?
4. Is there a significant relationship between disability rights literacy and inclusive physical education practice readiness when group according to their profile variables?

Statement of Hypothesis

H₀. There is no significant relationships between disability rights literacy and inclusive physical education practice readiness when group according to their profile variables.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to:

Students and Future Teachers. Help them understand the importance of disability rights in shaping inclusive teaching approaches.

Teacher Education Institutions. Provides insight into curriculum development, especially in methods and pedagogy courses that promote inclusive practices.

Policy Makers. Offers data to support teacher preparation standards and professional development programs on disability inclusion.

Persons with Disabilities and Advocates. Ensures that future PE teachers are aware of and prepared to uphold rights and equitable participation in physical education.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was developed and adapted from internationally recognized frameworks and validated instruments to ensure theoretical and empirical grounding. Specifically, the instrument drew from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which provided the foundational rights-based framework; the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2011), which informed the dimensions of inclusive educational practices; and the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale (Sharma et al., 2012), which guided the development of items related to inclusive teaching readiness. Additional constructs were informed by adapted physical activity literature (Hutzler & Sherrill, 2007) and relevant Philippine legislation, including Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons) and Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013). The instrument was carefully contextualized to align

with the experiences and professional preparation of Bachelor of Physical Education students, particularly in relation to inclusive Physical Education and sports settings.

Data Procedure

The researchers first secured approval from the University President of St. Paul University Surigao, followed by authorization from the Dean of the College of Education, Arts and Sciences. Upon approval, coordination with the BPEd Program Chair and instructors was conducted to schedule the administration of the questionnaire. Bachelor of Physical Education students were oriented towards the purpose of the study and were informed that consent was obtained prior to participation. The questionnaire was then administered either in printed or online format. After collection, responses were encoded, tallied, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The results were interpreted in accordance with the study’s objectives and theoretical framework.

Data Analysis

The data gathered will be analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution. This statistical technique provides a clear summary of how respondents are distributed across profile variables and allows for easier interpretation of group characteristics. Frequency and percentage distributions are particularly useful in presenting categorical data in tabular form, thereby offering a descriptive overview of the sample population.

Mean and Standard Deviation. These means will be used to determine the average level of disability rights literacy and inclusive Physical Education practice readiness among Bachelor of Physical Education students. It provides a central value that represents the overall tendency of respondents’ scores on each variable. Higher mean scores indicate higher levels of disability literacy and greater perceived readiness to implement inclusive PE practices.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). This means will be used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between disability rights literacy and inclusive Physical Education practice readiness. This statistical test measures the degree to which two continuous variables are linearly related. A positive correlation indicates that higher disability rights literacy is associated with higher inclusive practice readiness, while a negative correlation would indicate an inverse relationship. The significance of the relationship will be tested at a specified level of significance (e.g., $\alpha = .05$).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the data gathered in the study. The results are organized according to the Statement of the Problem.

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of sex, year level, completion of the Adapted Physical Education or Inclusive Education course, and actual exposure to persons with disabilities.

1.1 Sex

Out of the 26 respondents, 16 (61.5%) were female, and 10 (38.5%) were male. The findings indicate that the majority of the Bachelor of Physical Education students who participated in the study were female. This reflects a relatively higher female representation in the program during the time of data collection.

1.2 Year Level

In terms of year level, 11 (42.3%) were first-year students, 7 (26.9%) were second-year students, and 8 (30.8%) were third-year students. No fourth-year students participated in the study. The largest group of respondents came from the first-year level. This suggests that a substantial portion of the data reflects perspectives from students who are still in the early stages of professional preparation and may not yet have extensive practicum experience.

1.3 Completion of Adapted Physical Education or Inclusive Education

Fifteen (57.7%) of the respondents reported having taken a course in Adapted Physical Education or Inclusive Education, while 11 (42.3%) had not yet taken such a course. The majority, having completed a relevant course, may have positively influenced their level of disability rights literacy and perceived readiness for inclusive practice.

1.4 Actual Exposure to Persons with Disabilities

Only 7 respondents (26.9%) reported having actual exposure to persons with disabilities, while 19 (73.1%) indicated no direct exposure. This finding reveals that although more than half have completed relevant coursework, actual experiential interaction remains limited. The lack of exposure may have implications for the practical application and contextualization of inclusive strategies in real classroom settings.

2. Level of Disability Rights Literacy

The second problem sought to determine the level of disability rights literacy among Bachelor of Physical Education students in four domains: legal and policy awareness; rights to participate in physical education and sports; reasonable accommodation; and dignity, safety, and non-discrimination.

The overall mean for disability rights literacy was 3.56, which falls within the interval of 3.25–4.00 and is interpreted as Strongly Agree (SA) with a qualitative description of Very High Knowledge (VHK).

2.1 Legal and Policy Awareness

The mean score for legal and policy awareness was 3.57, interpreted as Strongly Agree (SA) with Very High Knowledge (VHK). This indicates that students demonstrate a strong understanding of laws, institutional policies, and guidelines that protect the rights of persons with disabilities in educational and sports contexts. The high rating suggests solid cognitive awareness of disability-related legal frameworks.

2.2 Rights to Participate in Physical Education and Sports

This domain obtained a mean of 3.50, which is also interpreted as Strongly Agree (SA) with Very High Knowledge (VHK). Although it was the lowest among the four domains, the result still reflects strong recognition of the right of learners with disabilities to actively participate in physical education and sports programs. However, the slightly lower mean may

suggest the need for deeper contextual reinforcement specific to PE environments.

2.3 Reasonable Accommodation

The mean score for reasonable accommodation was 3.57, interpreted as Strongly Agree (SA) with Very High Knowledge (VHK). The result indicates that respondents strongly acknowledge the necessity of modifying activities, adapting instructional strategies, and providing appropriate support to ensure equitable participation of learners with disabilities.

2.4 Dignity, Safety, and Non-Discrimination

This domain recorded the highest mean of 3.61, interpreted as Strongly Agree (SA) with Very High Knowledge (VHK). The finding suggests that students highly value respect, safety, and the prevention of discrimination in physical education settings. Ethical sensitivity and awareness appear to be strongly developed among the respondents.

Overall, the respondents demonstrated a Very High level of knowledge regarding disability rights. This suggests that the curriculum provides sufficient theoretical grounding on disability-related principles and inclusive policies. However, considering the limited actual exposure reported earlier, the literacy level may primarily reflect conceptual understanding rather than fully developed experiential competence. Strengthening applied learning experiences may further enhance practical literacy and contextual application.

3. Level of Inclusive Physical Education Practice Readiness

The third problem examined the readiness of students to implement inclusive physical education practices across four domains: instructional modification; activity and equipment adaptation; assessment fairness; and social inclusion and peer support.

The overall mean for inclusive physical education practice readiness was 3.55, which falls within the interval of 3.25–4.00 and is interpreted as Very Confident (VC) with a qualitative description of Very High Knowledge (VHK).

3.1 Instructional Modification

This domain obtained a mean of 3.53, interpreted as Very Confident (VC). Students generally perceive themselves as capable of adjusting lesson plans, modifying teaching strategies, and adapting content delivery to accommodate diverse learners. However, it recorded the lowest mean among the readiness domains, suggesting that practical skill development in instructional adaptation may still require further enhancement.

3.2 Activity and Equipment Adaptation

The mean score for this domain was 3.55, interpreted as Very Confident (VC). This indicates that students perceive themselves as well-prepared to modify sports activities and utilize adapted equipment to promote inclusive participation.

3.3 Social Inclusion and Peer Support

This domain also recorded a mean of 3.58, interpreted as Very Confident (VC). The finding indicates high readiness to foster positive peer relationships and create inclusive classroom climates in physical education settings.

The high overall readiness level indicates that students perceive themselves as highly capable of implementing inclusive physical education practices. The strongest areas

relate to assessment fairness and social inclusion, suggesting strong ethical and relational preparedness. However, instructional modification, although rated very confident, remains comparatively lower. This may be attributed to limited hands-on experience in inclusive settings. The absence of extensive exposure to learners with disabilities suggests that readiness may largely be perception-based and may benefit from further practicum reinforcement.

4. Relationship Between Disability Rights Literacy and Inclusive Physical Education Practice Readiness

To determine whether a significant relationship exists between disability rights literacy and inclusive physical education practice readiness, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed.

The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.673$ and $p = 0.00016$.

The p -value is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant relationship.

The correlation coefficient of 0.673 indicates a strong positive relationship between disability rights literacy and inclusive physical education practice readiness. This means that as students' knowledge of disability rights increases, their confidence in implementing inclusive practices also increases.

The strong and statistically significant relationship confirms that disability rights literacy is a substantial determinant of inclusive practice readiness. Students who demonstrate higher awareness of legal frameworks, participation rights, reasonable accommodations, and non-discrimination principles tend to report greater preparedness in instructional modification, adaptation strategies, fair assessment, and social inclusion practices.

The findings suggest that knowledge-based preparation significantly contributes to perceived teaching competence in inclusive physical education. However, while literacy strongly predicts readiness, the limited actual exposure among respondents highlights the need to bridge theory and practice. Structured field experiences, practicum placements in inclusive schools, and direct engagement with learners with disabilities may further strengthen both literacy and applied readiness.

V. FINDINGS

The findings revealed that respondents demonstrated a Very High level of disability rights literacy ($M = 3.56$) and a Very High level of inclusive Physical Education (PE) practice readiness ($M = 3.55$). Among the literacy domains, dignity, safety, and non-discrimination obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.61$), while participation rights recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.50$), although still within the very high range. In terms of readiness, assessment fairness and social inclusion emerged as the strongest domains ($M = 3.58$), and a strong positive significant relationship was found between disability rights literacy and inclusive PE readiness ($r = 0.673$, $p = 0.00016$), indicating that disability rights literacy significantly predicts inclusive PE practice readiness.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

Students and future Physical Education teachers may actively seek authentic inclusive experiences to strengthen the application of their disability rights literacy. Although the results indicate a very high level of knowledge and readiness, limited actual exposure to persons with disabilities suggests the need for experiential reinforcement. Engaging in direct interaction with learners with disabilities, participating in adapted sports programs, and volunteering in inclusive school or community settings may help transform conceptual understanding into applied competence. Such experiences may further enhance instructional modification skills, activity and equipment adaptation strategies, and inclusive classroom management practices.

Teacher education institutions may strengthen the integration of disability rights literacy across the Physical Education curriculum rather than limiting it to a single adapted or inclusive education course. Embedding rights-based pedagogy throughout professional PE subjects, expanding practicum placements in inclusive and special education settings, developing simulation-based adapted physical activity laboratories, and incorporating case-based learning on legal and ethical scenarios may help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. Since disability literacy significantly predicts inclusive PE readiness, institutions may intentionally align curricular frameworks to connect legal awareness with hands-on skill development.

Policy makers and educational leaders may utilize the findings of this study to enhance national teacher preparation standards related to inclusive physical education. Disability rights education may be explicitly integrated into teacher education standards for PE, while professional development initiatives may emphasize rights-based inclusive practices. Monitoring and accreditation systems may also include measurable inclusive readiness competencies in licensure and evaluation processes. Aligning policy mandates with structured teacher preparation outcomes may ensure that inclusive education progresses beyond compliance toward meaningful and sustained implementation.

Persons with disabilities and advocacy groups may collaborate more closely with teacher education institutions to strengthen authentic inclusive practices. Partnerships through community-based inclusive sports initiatives, joint workshops on disability rights awareness, and lived-experience dialogues between students and persons with disabilities may foster deeper understanding and empathy among future teachers. Such collaboration may promote dignity, equity, and meaningful participation within Physical Education settings.

Future researchers may expand this line of inquiry by utilizing larger and multi-institutional samples to increase generalizability and employing mixed method designs to capture experiential and contextual dimensions of inclusive education. Longitudinal studies may examine whether disability rights literacy predicts actual inclusive teaching performance during practicum or early professional practice. Researchers may also explore moderating variables such as

exposure, gender, or year level to better understand factors influencing inclusive readiness. Continued investigation may contribute to the development of stronger rights-based teacher education frameworks in Physical Education.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that disability rights literacy is a substantial determinant of inclusive physical education practice readiness among Bachelor of Physical Education students of St. Paul University Surigao. Students who possess stronger awareness of legal frameworks, participation rights, reasonable accommodations, and non-discrimination principles demonstrate higher confidence in implementing inclusive instructional strategies, adapting activities, ensuring fair assessment, and fostering social inclusion.

While the findings indicate strong cognitive preparedness, limited actual exposure to persons with disabilities highlights the need to bridge theory and practice. Teacher education institutions should strengthen experiential learning, practicum placements in inclusive schools, and applied adapted physical activity training.

Integrating disability rights literacy more deeply into the PE curriculum will not only enhance teacher readiness but also ensure that future educators uphold equity, dignity, and meaningful participation for all learners.

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