

Teacher's Self-efficacy and Emotional Burnout in Handling Learners with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms: Basis for a School-Based Guidance and Wellness Program

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Abstract

This study determined the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout among teachers of Don Vicente Rama Memorial National High School, Macopa Street, Basak San Nicolas, Cebu City, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it aimed to identify the respondents' profile, assess their level of self-efficacy in terms of instruction, behavior management, and collaboration, determine their level of emotional burnout in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, and propose a school-based guidance and wellness program based on the findings. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, with 103 teacher-respondents selected from the total teacher population through complete enumeration sampling with voluntary participation. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire and were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings revealed that most respondents were female, belonged to the middle-age group, had moderate teaching experience, handled mostly core subjects, and occupied Teacher I and Teacher III positions. The teachers demonstrated very high self-efficacy in instruction, behavior management, and collaboration. In terms of emotional burnout, emotional exhaustion was moderately low, depersonalization was low, and personal accomplishment was high, indicating that teachers remained professionally engaged and competent despite work-related demands. The study further found no significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout, suggesting that burnout may be influenced by other contextual, organizational, and environmental factors. Based on the findings, the study recommends the implementation of a school-based guidance and wellness program to strengthen teacher well-being, promote effective inclusive practices, and enhance professional performance in handling learners with disabilities.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; Emotional Burnout; Inclusive Education; Learners with disabilities; Secondary School Teachers; Cebu City

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is grounded in the principle that learners, including those with disabilities, should be given equitable access to educational programs, services, and learning environments. In the Philippines, the commitment to inclusive education is reinforced by Republic Act No. 11650, or the Inclusive Education Act for Learners with Disabilities, which institutionalizes support systems responsive to learners' diverse needs. However, the implementation of inclusive education relies heavily on teachers, who are expected to plan instruction, manage behavior, collaborate with stakeholders, and provide socio-emotional support within diverse classrooms.

Teachers in inclusive classrooms encounter complex academic, behavioral, emotional, and social demands. These responsibilities require not only pedagogical skills but also strong psychological resources. Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their capacity to organize and execute actions necessary to accomplish teaching tasks. In inclusive settings, self-efficacy commonly involves confidence in instructional adaptation, behavior management, and collaboration with parents, colleagues, and specialists. Strong self-efficacy has been associated with positive inclusive teaching practices, adaptive instruction, and willingness to support learners with disabilities (Alharbi & Iqtadar, 2024; Woodcock & Jones, 2020; Wray et al., 2022).

Emotional burnout is another important concern among teachers in inclusive classrooms. Burnout is typically understood through emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Teachers who experience emotional exhaustion may feel drained by their work, while depersonalization may appear as detachment from students or colleagues. Reduced

personal accomplishment reflects a weakened sense of competence and professional fulfillment. Studies on inclusive education have indicated that emotional competence, teacher attitudes, workload, role clarity, and organizational support may influence burnout outcomes (Buzzai et al., 2024; Calandri et al., 2025; Kuok et al., 2020; Rohmer et al., 2022).

Don Vicente Rama Memorial National High School in Cebu City serves learners in junior and senior high school and accommodates learners with disabilities in regular classes. Based on the researcher's professional observations as a guidance counselor, teachers occasionally seek assistance in managing learners with disabilities, collaborating with parents, responding to learner adjustment concerns, and coping with stress in inclusive classrooms. These observations provided a localized basis for examining the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout.

This study was conducted to determine the profile of teacher-respondents, assess their level of self-efficacy, determine their level of emotional burnout, test the relationship between self-efficacy and burnout, and develop a school-based guidance and wellness program based on the findings. The study contributes localized evidence on teacher well-being and inclusive education practice in a public secondary school context.

2. Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on established theories explaining teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout. This study is guided by theoretical perspectives that explain both teachers' sense of capability and their experience of emotional strain. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory are used to understand how teachers' beliefs about their abilities influence their classroom practices, while Maslach and Jackson's Burnout Theory provides a lens for examining emotional exhaustion in relation to teaching learners with disabilities, and is further supported by relevant legal frameworks such as the Inclusive Education Policy Framework the Department of Education and Republic Act No. 11650.

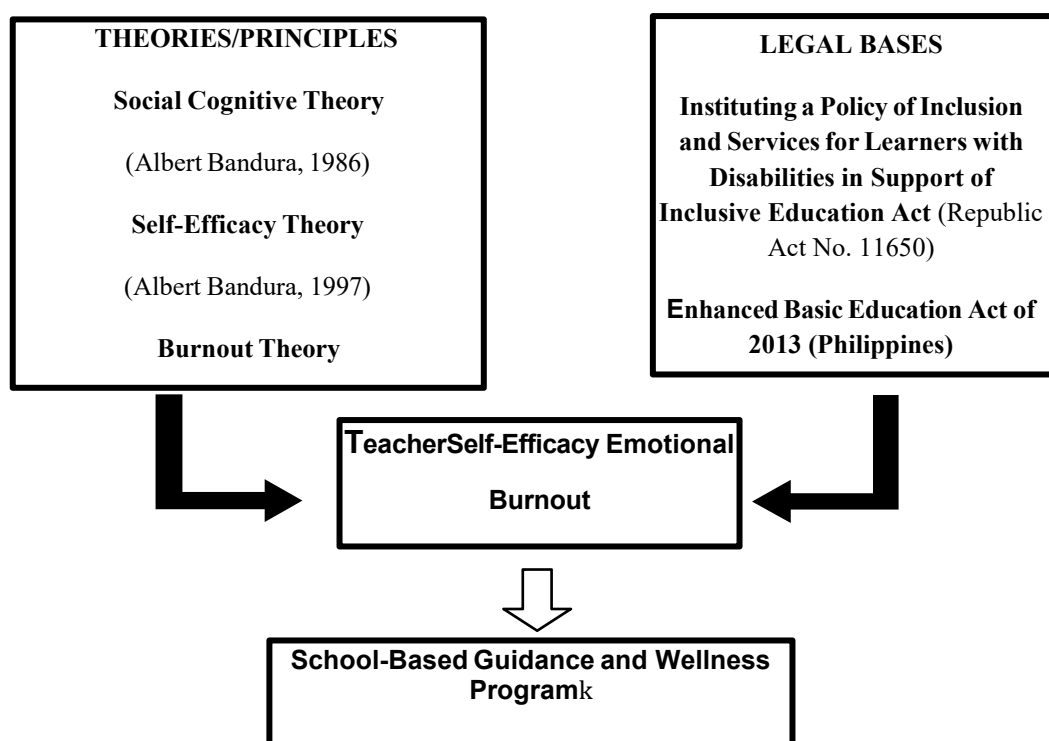


Figure 1
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Social Cognitive Theory explains that a person's behavior develops through the continuous interaction of individual beliefs, actions, and the environment. One of its central ideas is self-efficacy, which refers to how confident a person feels in carrying out tasks needed to handle specific situations. In teaching, this belief is reflected in how teachers manage lessons, maintain classroom order, and work with colleagues. Previous studies suggest that teachers who have stronger self-efficacy tend to perform better and adjust more effectively in inclusive classrooms (Alharbi & Iqtadar, 2024; Kuok et al., 2020). This makes the theory useful in explaining how teachers develop confidence in their teaching roles.

Social Cognitive Theory highlights that teachers' strong sense of capabilities can shape how they respond to different classroom situations. When teachers feel confident in their skills, they are more likely to try out and apply strategies that improve learning and help manage classroom challenges effectively, persist in the face of difficulties, and maintain positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Empirical studies confirm that self-efficacy enhances teachers' resilience and reduces vulnerability to stress and burnout, as teachers with higher self-efficacy experience lower emotional exhaustion and greater work engagement (Park & Shin, 2020; Kuok et al., 2020). In this study, self-efficacy is expected to influence how teachers manage learners with disabilities and cope with classroom demands. This theory supports the assumption that teachers' internal beliefs significantly affect their emotional well-being. Therefore, Social Cognitive Theory is essential in explaining the role of self-efficacy in this study's conceptual framework.

The Burnout Theory introduced by Maslach and Jackson (1981) describes burnout as a condition that develops when individuals are exposed to long-term work stress that they are unable to effectively manage. This experience is usually seen through three main aspects: feeling emotionally drained, becoming more distant or detached when dealing with others, and gradually losing a sense of effectiveness or achievement in one's work. Together, these dimensions help explain how continuous stress can affect teachers' emotional well-being and performance over time. Recent studies highlight that teachers in inclusive classrooms are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to increased workload and emotional demands (Calandri et al., 2025). Thus, Burnout Theory provides a framework for understanding teachers' emotional experiences.

Burnout Theory explains how prolonged stress in teaching environments leads to negative emotional outcomes that affect teachers' performance and well-being. In inclusive education, teachers are required to address diverse learners' needs, which may increase emotional strain. Research shows that burnout negatively impacts teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness (Rehman et al., 2025). Moreover, studies indicate that burnout is influenced by both personal and environmental factors, including self-efficacy (Park & Shin, 2020). In this study, emotional burnout is examined as an outcome variable that may be influenced by teachers' self-efficacy. Therefore, Burnout Theory is essential in explaining the emotional consequences experienced by teachers.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) provides an important lens for understanding how teachers' beliefs about their own abilities shape their behavior and performance. It suggests that individuals who feel confident in what they can do are more willing to take on difficult tasks, put in consistent effort, and continue working even when challenges arise. In the teaching profession, this sense of confidence is reflected in how educators manage classrooms, deliver instruction, and work with others in the school environment. Studies have also shown that teachers who believe strongly in their capabilities tend to stay more engaged in their work and experience less emotional strain (Alharbi & Iqtadar, 2024; Kuok et al., 2020). Overall, this theory helps explain why self-efficacy is an important factor in understanding teachers' performance and well-being.

The integration of Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Burnout Theory offers a useful way to understand the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout. Social Cognitive Theory explains how personal beliefs interact with environmental factors, Self-Efficacy Theory highlights the importance of confidence in influencing behavior, and Burnout Theory describes the emotional consequences of prolonged stress. Together, these theories suggest that teachers with high confidence in their ability are more competent in managing challenges and are less likely to experience burnout. These theories collectively support the study's conceptual model and provide a strong theoretical foundation.

This study is anchored on the Inclusive Education Policy Framework of the Department of Education as stated in DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019. The policy highlights the importance of giving all learners, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to participate in and benefit from basic education. It also highlights the responsibility of teachers in adjusting their teaching approaches so that students with different learning needs are properly supported in the classroom. In relation to this, the policy is connected to teachers' self-efficacy because successful implementation of inclusive education depends on how confident and prepared teachers feel in handling diverse learners.

The Inclusive Education Policy Framework emphasizes the need to properly prepare and support teachers so they can effectively handle diverse learners in the classroom. This highlights why it is important to look into teachers' self-efficacy, since their level of confidence and ability plays a major role in how inclusive teaching is carried out in actual classroom settings. In this study, the policy is used to reflect the realities teachers experience when working with learners who have different needs, which can sometimes lead to emotional strain and burnout. Overall, this legal framework supports the study by showing its relevance to current educational directions in the country.

Another legal basis is Republic Act No. 11650, also known as the "Inclusive Education Act for Learners with Disabilities," enacted in 2022. This law institutionalizes inclusive education in the Philippines and mandates the provision of appropriate support systems for learners with disabilities. It emphasizes teacher training, resource provision, and institutional support, which are essential factors influencing both self-efficacy and burnout. This law aligns with the objectives of the study, as it highlights the need to support teachers in handling inclusive classrooms.

The Inclusive Education Policy Framework and Republic Act No. 11650 collectively provide strong institutional and policy support for this study. These legal bases emphasize the importance of teacher competence, well-being, and support systems in implementing inclusive education. By examining teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout, this study contributes to the effective implementation of these policies. Therefore, the research is grounded not only in established theories but also in relevant legal frameworks, ensuring its significance and applicability in the educational system.

Another relevant to this study is Republic Act No. 11036, also known as the "Mental Health Act." This law promotes mental health awareness and ensures access to mental health services in various institutions, including schools. It emphasizes the integration of mental health programs in educational settings to support the psychological well-being of both learners and educators. The law mandates the establishment of mental health policies, provision of counseling services, and implementation of programs aimed at reducing stress and promoting well-being.

In the context of this study, Republic Act No. 11036 is highly relevant as it highlights the importance of addressing teachers' mental health, particularly in high-demand environments such as

inclusive classrooms. Teachers experiencing emotional burnout may require psychological support, counseling interventions, and institutional programs to maintain their well-being. This law strengthens the study by emphasizing that teacher mental health is not only a personal concern but also a national priority that directly affects educational quality. Therefore, it supports the need to examine emotional burnout and develop intervention programs that promote teachers' psychological well-being.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted quantitative that incorporated both descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to describe the respondents' demographic and professional profile, their level of self-efficacy, and their level of emotional burnout. The correlational component was used to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout.

3.2. Research Locale and Respondents

The research took place at Don Vicente Rama Memorial National High School, a public secondary school located at Macopa Street, Barangay Basak San Nicolas, Cebu City. The school serves both junior and senior high school learners and accommodates learners with disabilities in inclusive classroom settings. The school had approximately 165 teachers, all of whom were invited to participate. A total of 103 teachers voluntarily responded to the survey and were included in the analysis.

3.3. Research Participants

The respondents of this study consisted of 165 teachers of which 103 responded to the survey questionnaire through google form. Don Vicente Rama Memorial National High School (DVRMNHS), a public secondary school located in Cebu City. These teachers were composed of both Junior High School (Grades 7–10) and Senior High School (Grades 11–12) educators.

The respondents handled various subject areas and key stages and were exposed to inclusive classroom settings. The school has approximately 68 identified learners with disabilities, which provides a relevant context for examining teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout in inclusive education. The respondents varied in terms of age, gender, teaching experience, key stage handled, subjects handled, and teaching position. These characteristics were considered important in understanding their experiences in handling learners with disabilities.

4. Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. To ensure an orderly presentation of the items, the questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I, I collected the respondents' profile in terms of age, gender, teaching experience, subjects handled, and teaching position. Part II measured teachers' self-efficacy using the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices Scale-Short Form, which assesses efficacy in inclusive instruction, managing behavior, and collaboration (Sahli Lozano et al., 2023).

Part III measured emotional burnout using the Emotional Burnout Scale for Teachers, which measures emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2018). The self-efficacy and burnout measures used a six-point Likert scale..

5. Statistical Treatment

After examining the data, the responses were reviewed and processed with the assistance of a statistician. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize profile variables. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout at the 0.05 level of significance.

6. RESULTS

A total of 103 teachers participated in the study. The majority of the respondents were female (76.70%), with most belonging to the 31–40-year age group (34.95%). Most had 6–10 years of teaching experience (28.16%), taught core subjects (58.25%), and held the position of Teacher III (41.75%). The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of self-efficacy in inclusive education, with an overall weighted mean of 5.34 (SD = 0.66). In terms of emotional burnout, respondents exhibited an overall moderately low level (WM = 3.26, SD = 1.28). Emotional exhaustion was rated moderately low (WM = 2.69, SD = 1.39), while depersonalization was low (WM = 2.49, SD = 1.39). Conversely, personal accomplishment registered a high level (WM = 4.59, SD = 1.07), suggesting that teachers generally maintained a strong sense of competence, achievement, and professional fulfillment despite the challenges of inclusive teaching. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis further revealed a negligible negative and statistically non-significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout ($r = -0.009$, $p = 0.930$). Since the p -value exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that teachers' self-efficacy was not significantly associated with their level of emotional burnout in this study.

7. DISCUSSION

The findings show that teachers handling learners with disabilities at Don Vicente Rama Memorial National High School generally perceived themselves as highly capable of performing inclusive classroom tasks. The highest mean was found in instruction, suggesting that teachers were confident in giving alternative explanations, using varied assessment strategies, and designing tasks for diverse learners. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that teacher preparedness, instructional experience, and supportive beliefs influence self-efficacy in inclusive education (Alharbi & Iqtadar, 2024; Wray et al., 2022).

Self-efficacy in managing behavior and collaboration was also very high. This implies that teachers believed they could maintain classroom rules, prevent or address disruptive behavior, and work with parents and other professionals. These domains are central to inclusive education because learners with disabilities may require individualized support, consistent classroom routines, and coordinated school-home interventions. The result supports the view that efficacy in classroom management and collaborative practice contributes to stronger inclusive teaching engagement (Didaskalou et al., 2023; Woodcock & Jones, 2020).

Despite the demands of inclusive teaching, respondents reported a moderately low level of emotional burnout. Emotional exhaustion was present but not severe, and depersonalization was low. These findings suggest that teachers remained emotionally connected to their students and did not generally report detached or indifferent attitudes. The high level of personal accomplishment further indicates that teachers continued to find meaning and professional success in their work. This result may reflect teachers' commitment, accumulated teaching experience, support from colleagues, or the presence of coping strategies that help them manage inclusive classroom demands.

The non-significant relationship between self-efficacy and burnout is an important finding. Previous literature often suggests that strong self-efficacy can reduce burnout, yet the present study did not show a statistically significant association. This means that teacher confidence alone may not be enough to explain emotional burnout in this local context. Burnout may be shaped by other contextual and organizational factors such as workload, class size, administrative support, access to teaching resources, school climate, role clarity, and personal coping mechanisms. Studies have similarly emphasized the role of contextual conditions and organizational support in explaining burnout among teachers in inclusive settings (Buzzai et al., 2024; Kuok et al., 2020; Park & Shin, 2020).

These results point to the need for a preventive and developmental school-based guidance and wellness program. Since teachers already demonstrated very high self-efficacy and only moderately low burnout, the program should not be limited to crisis intervention. Instead, it should sustain teachers' emotional wellness, strengthen collaboration, reinforce professional accomplishment, and provide structured opportunities for stress management and peer support.

8. Tables

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n = 103)

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Female	79	76.70
Gender	Male	24	23.30
Age	31-40 years	36	34.95
Age	41-50 years	30	29.13
Age	51-60 years	20	19.42
Age	21-30 years	17	16.50
Teaching experience	6-10 years	29	28.16
Teaching experience	0-5 years	19	18.45
Teaching experience	11-15 years	19	18.45
Subject handled	Core subjects	60	58.25
Subject handled	Specialized subjects	35	33.98
Subject handled	Applied subjects	8	7.77
Teaching position	Teacher III	43	41.75
Teaching position	Teacher I	26	25.24
Teaching position	Other positions	34	33.01

The study involved 103 teacher-respondents. Most respondents were female (76.70%), while male respondents comprised 23.30%. The largest age group was 31-40 years old (34.95%), followed by 41-50 years old (29.13%). Most respondents had 6-10 years of teaching experience (28.16%), handled core subjects (58.25%), and occupied Teacher III positions (41.75%).

Table 9. Summary of Teachers Self-Efficacy

Component	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Instruction	5.45	0.58	Very High
Managing behavior	5.31	0.67	Very High
Collaboration	5.27	0.72	Very High
Grand mean	5.34	0.66	Very High

The respondents reported a very high level of self-efficacy in all three domains. Instruction obtained the highest mean (WM = 5.45, SD = 0.58), followed by managing behavior (WM = 5.31, SD = 0.67) and collaboration (WM = 5.27, SD = 0.72). The grand mean of 5.34 indicated that teachers perceived themselves as highly capable of handling learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Table 13. Summary of Emotional Burnout

Component	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Emotional exhaustion	2.69	1.39	Moderately Low
Depersonalization	2.49	1.39	Low
Personal accomplishment	4.59	1.07	High
Grand mean	3.26	1.28	Moderately Low

The overall level of emotional burnout was moderately low (grand mean = 3.26, SD = 1.28). Emotional exhaustion was moderately low (WM = 2.69, SD = 1.39), while depersonalization was low (WM = 2.49, SD = 1.39). Personal accomplishment was high (WM = 4.59, SD = 1.07), indicating that teachers continued to experience a sense of competence, fulfillment, and value in their work.

Table 14. Correlation Between Teachers Self-Efficacy and Emotional Burnout

Variables	r-value	Strength	p-value	Decision	Result
Teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout	-0.009	Negligible negative	0.930	Do not reject H ₀	Not significant

Pearson product-moment correlation showed a negligible negative and non-significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout ($r = -0.009$, $p = 0.930$). Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This result indicates that, in this study, teachers' self-efficacy was not significantly associated with emotional burnout.

9. CONCLUSION

Teachers handling learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms demonstrated a very high level of self-efficacy in instruction, managing behavior, and collaboration. This indicates strong confidence in performing essential inclusive teaching responsibilities.

The respondents generally experienced a moderately low level of emotional burnout. Emotional

exhaustion was moderately low, depersonalization was low, and personal accomplishment was high, suggesting that teachers remained emotionally engaged and professionally fulfilled despite the challenges of inclusive education.

No significant relationship was found between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional burnout. This suggests that burnout in inclusive classrooms may be influenced by factors beyond teachers' confidence, including organizational support, workload, resources, school climate, and coping systems. A school-based guidance and wellness program is therefore recommended to sustain teacher well-being and strengthen inclusive education support structures.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- School administrators should implement a teacher empowerment and resilience program that integrates stress management, peer support, and inclusive teaching enhancement activities.
- Guidance counselors and school mental health coordinators should facilitate regular wellness activities, consultation services, and referral mechanisms for teachers experiencing emotional strain.
- Head teachers and master teachers should provide mentoring, collaborative planning, and micro-teaching opportunities to sustain teachers' high self-efficacy and professional accomplishment.
- The Department of Education may continue strengthening institutional support, resources, and professional development programs for teachers assigned to inclusive classrooms.
- Future researchers may examine other factors related to burnout, such as workload, administrative support, class size, school climate, coping strategies, and availability of inclusive education resources.

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