



Wokeness as a Factor Shaping Teachers' Conceptions Learners with Special Needs (LSN) vis-à-vis Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how social media wokeness shaped teachers' conceptions of learners with disability within the context of inclusive education. Specifically, it examined (1) teachers' conceptualizations of wokeness in relation to their professional identity, (2) their role in upholding inclusive values in digital spaces, and (3) the strategies they employed to maintain professional ethics when engaging online. A qualitative exploratory design was utilized, involving ten elementary teachers from the Diplahan District. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews complemented by pakikipagkwentuhan to encourage open and culturally grounded dialogue. Thematic analysis guided the data analysis process. Findings revealed that teachers understood wokeness as heightened awareness and advocacy for inclusion, closely linked to their professional identity and ethical responsibility. Participants recognized their duty to model respectful digital behavior, promote critical digital citizenship, and safeguard learners' online well-being. They also demonstrated concrete strategies such as practicing responsible communication, verifying information, and maintaining professional boundaries and confidentiality. The study concludes that teachers critically navigate social media and integrate its influence into their commitment to inclusive education. It recommends sustained reflective digital engagement among teachers and continued research on how digital discourse influences inclusive practices in Philippine educational settings.

Keywords: Ethical Responsibility, Inclusive Education, LSN, Social Media, Wokeness

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental principle in educational systems worldwide, rooted in the belief that all learners, regardless of ability, have the right to access quality education within mainstream classrooms (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). This approach promotes equity and social justice, aiming to eliminate barriers and create learning environments that accommodate the diverse needs of all student (UNESCO, 2017). In the Philippine context, inclusive education has been supported by laws such as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities in Republic Act No. 7277 (1992). Recently, the Inclusive Education Act (2022), mandates the integration of learners with disabilities into general education settings. These policies emphasize differentiated instruction, universal design for learning (UDL), and culturally responsive pedagogy as essential strategies for addressing learner diversity (Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, n.d.).

Teaching practices and pedagogical frameworks have continued to evolve in response to inclusive education mandates. Recent professional development initiatives emphasize teachers' competencies in managing diverse classrooms, designing inclusive instructional strategies, and developing reflective and empathetic teaching practices (Florian & Black Hawkins, 2013). Contemporary research also shows that teacher beliefs and attitudes remain key determinants of effective inclusion, influencing how policies are interpreted and implemented within classroom settings (Dignath et al., 2022). These findings highlight the continuing need for teacher preparation programs that strengthen inclusive pedagogical knowledge and positive attitudes toward learners with diverse educational needs. However, despite institutional efforts, many educators continue to face challenges in bridging inclusion policy and pedagogical reality—barriers often shaped by prevailing cultural norms, personal ideologies, and the influence of external discourse (Prasad & Śliwa, 2024). In recent years, digital platforms—particularly social media—have emerged as powerful sites for shaping such discourse, with “wokeness,” defined as heightened sociopolitical consciousness, gaining traction as a framework through which many educators interpret inclusion, equity, and disability (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020).

Studies show how digital platforms influence institutional practices and public engagement. Sain et al. (2025) found that digital technologies such as online platforms, data analytics, and feedback systems improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public institutions. The study also noted that organizational culture and leadership play an important role in supporting digital innovation. These findings indicate that digital environments shape professional perspectives and public discourse. In education, such digital influence may affect how teachers interpret issues related to disability, diversity, and inclusive education.

In addition, the internet plays an important role in shaping modern education and teaching practices. Agoi et al. (2025) found that internet technologies expand access to learning resources and support collaborative and independent learning. These tools also help teachers adopt flexible approaches that respond to diverse learning needs. The study suggests that digital environments influence how educators view learning and diversity in the classroom.

Teachers, as frontline implementers of inclusive education, are particularly susceptible to the narratives they encounter online. These narratives, often amplified by viral content, advocacy campaigns, and opinion leaders, contribute to the shaping of teachers' attitudes toward learners with special needs. Recent studies emphasize that teachers' beliefs and perceptions play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of inclusive education practices in classrooms (Tarantino et al., 2022). Locally, however, limited research has examined how social media-driven discourse influences Filipino teachers' understanding of disability within inclusive education settings. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between digital narratives and teachers' pedagogical perspectives in the Philippine context.

While earlier research has focused on training, resources, and institutional support as determinants of inclusive education success, there remains a paucity of studies investigating the socio-cultural and digital factors influencing teacher perceptions. Furthermore, the emotional and ideological dimensions embedded in social media content are often overlooked, despite their potential to inform—or misinform—educators' understanding of inclusion. By exploring how wokeness on social media platforms shapes teachers' views of learners with special needs, this research contributes a novel lens through which to analyze inclusive education efforts in the 21st century.

This study holds significant implications for educational policy makers, teacher educators, and inclusion advocates. Understanding how social media wokeness informs teachers' beliefs can help refine professional development programs, align social media advocacy with educational goals, and foster a more critically aware teaching force. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, integrating media literacy into teacher preparation may become essential to ensure that inclusion is not only policy-driven but also ideologically sound and socially responsive.

This research aims to explore how social media wokeness influences teachers' conceptions of learners with special needs in the context of inclusive education. It also seeks to understand how teachers perceive their responsibility in promoting inclusivity beyond the classroom, particularly through their engagement in digital spaces. Specifically, it aims to address the following objectives:

1. Frame teachers' conceptualizations of wokeness within the context of inclusive education adjunct to their profession;

2. Determine teachers' role and responsibility in upholding inclusive values in digital spaces;
3. Identify strategies teachers employed in upholding professional ethics when engaging online related to disability and inclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing integration of inclusive education into national education systems has coincided with the rise of digital platforms, particularly social media, as influential spaces for shaping public discourse (Barroso-Moreno et al., 2024). In this context, the concept of “wokeness” has gained visibility as a lens for understanding social justice, diversity, and disability (Marshall & Wilson, 2025). Numerous studies—both local and international have explored inclusive education and teacher perception, yet only a few have examined how social media-driven wokeness influences teachers' beliefs about learners with special needs, particularly in the Philippine setting. This section therefore presents relevant local and international studies and identifies the gap addressed by the present research.

A local study by Madeloso et al. (2023) explored the influence of social media advocacy on Filipino teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in urban public schools. Using a qualitative case study design, the research involved semi-structured interviews with 10 elementary school teachers in Metro Manila. Findings revealed that teachers' exposure to disability rights campaigns and inclusion advocacy on social media increased their awareness of inclusive practices. However, some teachers adopted advocacy language without a deep understanding of special education concepts. The study concluded that social media advocacy can support inclusive awareness but must be complemented with structured professional development.

Recent studies on Filipino teachers highlight the growing role of digital platforms as sources of professional learning, particularly in inclusive education contexts. Teachers often rely on online communities to access information on disability awareness and inclusive teaching strategies. However, many teachers still face limitations in training and resources for inclusive education, which affects their ability to effectively implement inclusive practices in the classroom (Punzalan et al., 2025). In addition, the increasing use of digital platforms requires teachers to possess critical digital literacy skills to evaluate the credibility of information and avoid reliance on opinion-based content (Marcelo & Yot-Domínguez, 2019). Therefore, integrating digital literacy into teacher professional development is essential to ensure that educators can effectively utilize online information while maintaining pedagogical quality.

Likewise, recent research highlights that social media environments play a significant role in shaping how teachers understand disability and inclusive education. Online platforms contribute to the construction and dissemination of narratives related to inclusion, often emphasizing issues of rights, discrimination,

and social justice (Barroso-Moreno et al., 2024; Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025). Engagement with such digital content can increase teachers' awareness of learner diversity and encourage more reflective approaches to classroom language and labeling practices. However, scholars also note that social media discourse may simplify complex educational issues or amplify emotionally driven perspectives, which can limit deeper pedagogical understanding (Perez et al., 2023). For this reason, strengthening critical digital literacy and reflective engagement has been identified as an essential component of contemporary teacher education.

In the international context, recent research has examined how educators engage with social justice discourse on social media platforms. Studies indicate that teachers increasingly participate in online professional spaces where issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion are discussed, contributing to the development of their professional identities and awareness of social justice concerns (Carpenter et al., 2023; Manca et al., 2021). Engagement in these environments can foster professional dialogue and expand perspectives on inclusive education. However, the literature also suggests that participation in online discourse does not always translate into consistent pedagogical practice. In some cases, social media interactions may reinforce homogeneous viewpoints and limit critical reflection, highlighting the risk of echo chambers in digital professional communities (Perez et al., 2023). These findings point to the importance of strengthening critical digital literacy and reflective practice in teacher education.

Furthermore, Florian & Black Hawkins (2013) conducted a longitudinal case study examining how teachers conceptualize inclusive pedagogy in mainstream schools in the United Kingdom. Although the study did not focus on social media, it highlighted how teacher beliefs are influenced by policy narratives, professional communities, and broader societal discourse. Findings indicated that effective inclusion requires sustained professional reflection and institutional support rather than ideological commitment alone. The researchers emphasized the need to explore how emerging digital narratives influence teachers' conceptualizations of inclusion. Their work provides an important theoretical foundation for examining digital influences on teacher beliefs.

Despite the valuable insights provided by these studies, a clear literature gap remains in understanding how social media-driven wokeness specifically influences Filipino teachers' conceptions of learners with special needs. While existing local studies discuss online advocacy, cultural beliefs, and digital discourse, they do not directly examine the ideological framing of inclusion through woke narratives. The intersection of social media activism, teacher professional identity, and perceptions of disability remains underexplored in the Philippine context. This study addresses that gap by investigating how social media woke discourse shapes teachers' understanding of learners with special needs within inclusive education settings. By doing so, it contributes new insights to both local

scholarship and the broader global conversation on digital discourse and inclusive education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative exploratory research design to examine how social media wokeness influenced teachers' conceptions of learners with special needs within inclusive education. Since "wokeness" is a socially constructed and evolving digital phenomenon, it required an approach that captured lived experiences and personal interpretations rather than numerical measurement. An exploratory design was appropriate when investigating emerging or underexplored issues, as it allowed themes to surface naturally from participants' narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

This approach was suitable because teachers' beliefs were shaped by both professional training and the social discourses they encountered online. Qualitative inquiry emphasized meaning-making and context, which were essential in understanding how digital narratives may have influenced perceptions of inclusion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). By generating insights directly from teachers' reflections, the study ensured a nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of inclusive education perspectives.

Participants

The study involved ten (10) elementary teachers from the Diplahan District, who were chosen because they worked closely and directly with young learners in inclusive classrooms. Elementary teachers played a crucial role in shaping children's early school experiences—they were often the first to notice learning differences, provide support, and create a classroom environment where every child felt valued. At this stage, teachers did more than deliver lessons; they helped build confidence, belonging, and respect among diverse learners. Because they were also exposed to ongoing conversations on social media about disability rights and inclusion, their perspectives may have been influenced—consciously or unconsciously—by these digital narratives. Focusing on elementary teachers therefore allowed the study to understand how online discourses intersected with real classroom practice at a level where inclusion truly began.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's reflexive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022). After transcribing the interviews, the researcher carefully read and reread the teachers' stories to become deeply familiar with the data. Meaningful statements were coded, grouped into patterns, and developed into broader themes that reflected how social media "wokeness" shaped their views of learners with special needs. The process was not strictly linear; instead, the researcher moved back and forth between the data and emerging interpretations to

ensure that the themes genuinely represented the participants' voices (Terry et al., 2017).

Thematic analysis was selected because the study aimed to understand shared meanings and lived experiences rather than to quantify responses. As a flexible yet rigorous qualitative method, it allows researchers to identify patterns across narratives while remaining sensitive to context and complexity (Nowell et al., 2017; Terry et al., 2017). Given that the research explored socially constructed and evolving concepts such as “wokeness” and inclusive education, this approach provided space for nuance and critical reflection. Its reflexive orientation also acknowledged the researcher’s active role in meaning-making, enhancing transparency and credibility (Terry et al., 2017). Overall, thematic analysis enabled the study to transform rich conversations into meaningful insights grounded in the lived realities of elementary teachers.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to this study, especially since it involved teachers sharing their personal views and professional experiences. Before collecting any data, clear communication was established with all participants, including securing their informed consent. They were informed about the purpose of the study, what their participation involved, and their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through the use of pseudonyms and secure handling of data. Following established research ethics ensured respect for participants and strengthened the credibility of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The study also ensured that participants were fully informed and engaged throughout the process. When appropriate, they were given opportunities to clarify or validate interpretations of their responses. To enhance trustworthiness, triangulation was observed by comparing interview data with other relevant sources or reflective notes (Nowell et al., 2017). Since the research touched on sensitive and socially constructed topics, ethical awareness, transparency, and reflexivity were consistently maintained. By upholding these principles, the study safeguarded participants’ rights and ensured that the findings genuinely reflected their lived experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Conceptualizations of Wokeness within the Context of Inclusive Education adjunct to their Profession

This objective explores how teachers conceptualized “wokeness” within the context of inclusive education and how it intersected with their professional roles. By analyzing their reflections, the study seeks to uncover whether wokeness was perceived as a meaningful professional awareness, a social influence, or a

combination of both in shaping their views and classroom practices toward learners with special needs.

1. Wokeness as Awareness and Advocacy for Inclusion

This theme highlights how teachers understood wokeness as a form of awareness and advocacy within the context of inclusive education. For the participants, wokeness was not merely a social media trend but a conscious effort to recognize the rights, needs, and dignity of learners with special needs. Their narratives reflected a growing sensitivity to issues of equity, representation, and fair treatment, as well as a willingness to speak up against exclusion. In this way, wokeness was closely connected to their professional commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive classroom environments.

“For me, being ‘woke’ means being more aware of the struggles of children with special needs. Before, we just followed what was in the curriculum, but now I try to be more sensitive to how my words and actions affect them. I’ve learned from social media discussions that inclusion is not just about placing them in regular classes—it’s about making them feel accepted and valued.” (T4)

“Wokeness, in my understanding, is speaking up when you see unfair treatment. As teachers, we cannot stay silent when a child is being labelled or excluded. Even online, I try to share posts that promote respect and understanding of disabilities. It’s part of our responsibility as educators.” (T8)

The responses reveal that teachers conceptualized wokeness primarily as heightened awareness and active advocacy for learners with special needs. Rather than viewing it as a purely political or social trend, participants framed wokeness as a form of professional sensitivity—an intentional effort to recognize the rights, dignity, and unique needs of diverse learners. This aligns with inclusive education principles that emphasize equity, belonging, and participation for all students (Ainscow, 2025). Teachers’ reflections also suggest that their understanding of inclusion extended beyond physical placement in mainstream classrooms toward fostering genuine acceptance and emotional safety, a perspective consistent with contemporary inclusive education frameworks (UNESCO, 2017).

Moreover, participants linked wokeness to their ethical duty to speak against exclusion and discriminatory labelling. Their advocacy-oriented stance reflects the broader view that teachers play a critical role in shaping inclusive school cultures (Florian & Black Hawkins, 2013). The influence of social media narratives appeared to deepen their awareness, prompting reflection on language use, representation, and

fairness. This supports the idea that professional identities are continuously shaped by social discourse and digital engagement. Overall, the findings suggest that teachers' conceptualizations of wokeness were not detached from their profession; instead, they integrated it into their role as educators committed to inclusive values and learner dignity.

2. Professional Identity and Ethical Responsibility as Shaped by social media

Social media served as a space where values, beliefs, and ethical standards were constantly negotiated, reinforcing the need for teachers to align their digital presence with the principles of inclusive education (Willis et al., 2023). Through their narratives, it became evident that professional identity extended beyond the classroom and into digital spaces where accountability, advocacy, and ethical conduct remained essential (Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers, n.d.).

“Social media made me more conscious of how I present myself as a teacher, even outside school. When I post or comment about disability or inclusion, I remind myself that I am still a professional. I cannot just react emotionally. I have to think if what I say reflects respect and fairness.” (T1)

“Being exposed to discussions online helped me reflect on my responsibilities. Sometimes, I realize that I need to correct my own biases. As a teacher, I should model inclusive behavior not only in the classroom but also in digital spaces because students and parents can see what we share.” (T3)

The findings showed that teachers saw wokeness as closely connected to their professional identity and ethical responsibility as Filipino educators. They did not separate their personal social media presence from their role as teachers. Instead, they recognized that what they post, share, or comment on online reflects who they are as professionals. In the Philippine context, where teachers are viewed as role models in the community, their digital behaviour becomes an extension of their professional conduct (National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, 2017). Online discussions about disability and inclusion also encouraged them to reflect on their language, attitudes, and possible biases (Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduate Programs, 2019).

Teachers also emphasized the importance of accountability and respect in public discourse, especially when discussing sensitive topics like disability. This aligns with the Department of Education's Inclusive Education Policy Framework, which promotes equity, dignity, and support for all learners (Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education

Program, 2019). Their awareness that students and parents could see their online activity reinforced the need to model inclusive values consistently. Guided by the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, 2017), participants showed that they did not treat wokeness as just a trend, but as something that shaped how they practiced professionalism and inclusion both in the classroom and online.

Teachers' Role and Responsibility in Upholding Inclusive Values in Digital Spaces

This objective examines how teachers understood their role and responsibility in upholding inclusive values within digital spaces. As social media increasingly shapes public conversations about disability and inclusion, educators are expected to model ethical behavior, respect diversity, and protect learner dignity even beyond the classroom.

1. Modelling Respectful and Inclusive Digital Behaviour

This theme highlights how teachers recognized their responsibility to model respectful and inclusive behavior in digital spaces. As educators who are viewed as role models in the community, participants emphasized that their online actions should reflect professionalism, fairness, and sensitivity toward learners with special needs.

"I am careful with what I post or share online, especially about disability. Even a simple joke can be misunderstood or hurtful. As a teacher, I feel that I should model respect not only inside the classroom but also on social media." (T5)

"Before commenting on issues about inclusion, I think about my students. If they see my post, will they feel valued or judged? That reminds me to use respectful language and avoid spreading negative content." (T7)

The responses indicate that teachers acknowledged their responsibility to model respectful and inclusive behavior in digital spaces. They understood that their online presence could influence not only students but also parents and the wider community. This reflects the view that teachers, as public professionals, are expected to embody ethical conduct both inside and outside the classroom (Bilbao et al., 2006). In the Philippine context, educators are seen as role models whose actions—whether offline or online—carry social and moral weight. Teachers' careful attention to language and tone demonstrates an awareness that digital interactions can either promote inclusive values or unintentionally reinforce stereotypes and exclusion (Raguindin & Ping, 2025).

Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of consistently upholding inclusive principles across different environments, including digital spaces. Inclusive education in the Philippines emphasizes respect for diversity, learner dignity, and equitable participation (Beltran et al., 2025). As social media becomes part of everyday communication, teachers' ethical responsibility extends to how they engage in public discourse. By modelling respectful and inclusive digital behavior, participants reinforced the idea that professional ethics are not confined to classroom instruction but are practiced continuously in both physical and virtual communities.

2. Promoting Critical Digital Citizenship and Online Well-Being

This theme highlights how teachers saw the promotion of critical digital citizenship and online well-being as an essential part of their professional responsibility. Participants recognized that in an age where learners are constantly exposed to social media, guiding them to think critically, act responsibly, and show respect online is closely linked to inclusive education. Beyond teaching academic content, teachers emphasized their role in helping students navigate digital spaces safely while fostering empathy, fairness, and awareness of diversity.

“I always remind my pupils to think before they share or comment online. Not everything they see on social media is correct. As their teacher, I guide them to check sources and avoid posts that make fun of people with disabilities.” (T9)

“Online bullying can really affect children, especially those with special needs. I try to teach my students to be responsible digital citizens—to respect others and protect themselves from harmful content.” (T6)

The responses show that teachers viewed promoting critical digital citizenship as part of their responsibility in upholding inclusive values in digital spaces. Participants emphasized guiding learners to think critically about online content, verify information, and avoid engaging in discriminatory or harmful narratives. This reflects the broader goal of developing responsible and reflective digital users, which is recognized as an important educational priority in the Philippines (Joaquin et al., 2020). By teaching students to question online messages and practice respectful communication, teachers contributed to shaping inclusive digital communities.

Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of safeguarding learners' online well-being, particularly those who may be vulnerable to their mental health conditions. Research in the Philippine

context has noted the increasing exposure of young learners to digital risks and the crucial role of educators in fostering safe online environments (Ocampo, 2023). By integrating lessons on empathy, respect, and responsible engagement into their teaching, teachers extended inclusive education principles into virtual spaces. These findings suggest that upholding inclusive values in digital spaces is not only about personal conduct but also about actively nurturing students' critical awareness and emotional safety online.

Teachers Strategies Employed in Upholding Professional Ethics When Engaging Online Related to Disability and Inclusion

This objective examines the strategies teachers used to uphold professional ethics when engaging in public online discourse related to disability and inclusion. As educators whose roles extend beyond the classroom, teachers are expected to demonstrate integrity, respect, and accountability in both physical and digital spaces. In the Philippine context, professional conduct is guided by ethical standards that emphasize dignity, fairness, and responsible communication.

1. Practicing Responsible and Ethical Communication Online

This theme highlights how teachers consciously practiced responsible and ethical communication when engaging online, especially on topics related to disability and inclusion. Participants emphasized the importance of using respectful language, verifying information before sharing, and avoiding statements that could harm or misrepresent learners with special needs.

“When I post about disability or inclusion, I make sure that my words are respectful and based on facts. I avoid sharing posts that are purely emotional or attacking. As a teacher, I know that my statements can influence others.” (T2)

“I double-check articles before sharing them, especially if they involve children with special needs. I also avoid mentioning specific students or situations in my posts. Protecting their privacy is part of my responsibility.” (T10)

The responses demonstrate that teachers intentionally practiced responsible and ethical communication as a strategy in engaging online discussions about disability and inclusion. Participants emphasized verifying information before sharing, avoiding emotionally charged or harmful language, and protecting learners' confidentiality. These strategies reflect professional accountability and align with the ethical expectations placed upon Filipino teachers to uphold integrity and safeguard learner welfare (Aquino & San Luis, 2025). By being mindful

of tone, accuracy, and privacy, teachers actively maintained professionalism in digital spaces.

Moreover, the findings suggest that ethical online engagement was guided by awareness of the broader social impact of digital communication. In the Philippine educational context, responsible media and information engagement is recognized as an essential competence for both educators and learners (Tibaldo, 2022). Teachers' deliberate effort to avoid disclosing sensitive information and to use inclusive language illustrates how they extended classroom ethical standards into public discourse. Overall, practicing responsible and ethical communication online emerged as a concrete strategy through which teachers upheld professional ethics while supporting inclusive values in digital environments.

2. Maintaining Professional Boundaries and Confidentiality

This theme emphasizes how teachers maintained professional boundaries and protected confidentiality when engaging in online discussions related to disability and inclusion. Participants recognized that even in digital spaces, their responsibility to safeguard learners' privacy and dignity remained paramount. By exercising discretion and avoiding the disclosure of sensitive information, teachers demonstrated that ethical professionalism extends beyond classroom walls and into public and online interactions.

“Even if I want to share success stories about my learners with special needs, I make sure I do not mention their names or personal details. I always think about their privacy first before posting anything online.” (T6)

“There are times when issues about inclusion become viral, but I avoid commenting on specific school situations. As a teacher, I know I have to keep professional boundaries and not disclose information that may affect my students or my school.” (T3)

The responses reveal that maintaining professional boundaries and confidentiality was a key strategy teacher employed in upholding professional ethics online. Participants demonstrated awareness that even well-intentioned posts could compromise learners' privacy or dignity. In the Philippine context, protecting personal information is both a legal and ethical obligation, particularly under the Data Privacy Act of 2012, which emphasizes safeguarding individuals' sensitive information (*Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Data Privacy Act of 2012*, n.d.). Teachers' cautious approach to sharing stories and avoiding

identifiable details reflects their commitment to protecting learners with special needs from potential harm or exposure in digital spaces.

Furthermore, the findings of this study largely align with previous research on inclusive education and teacher professional identity while also offering new insights within the Philippine digital context. Earlier studies emphasized that teachers' beliefs and attitudes significantly influence the implementation of inclusive practices in classrooms and that social discourse can shape professional perspectives toward learners with special needs (Dignath et al., 2022; Tarantino et al., 2022). Similarly, the present findings show that teachers interpret social media-driven wokeness as a form of heightened awareness and advocacy for inclusion, reinforcing their commitment to equity, dignity, and learner participation.

The results also support literature suggesting that teachers' professional identities extend into digital environments where ethical conduct and public communication influence educational values (Joaquin et al., 2020). However, the study contributes something novel by demonstrating how Filipino teachers integrate wokeness into their professional and ethical responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom, particularly through modelling inclusive digital behaviour and promoting critical digital citizenship among learners. This suggests that digital discourse does not only influence teachers' perceptions but also shapes practical strategies for safeguarding learner dignity and fostering inclusive values in online spaces.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study affirms that teachers conceptualized social media wokeness as more than a passing digital trend; rather, they understood it as a form of awareness and advocacy that intersects with their professional commitment to inclusive education. Wokeness was framed as heightened sensitivity to learners' rights, dignity, and equitable participation, particularly for those with special needs. The findings further reveal that teachers' professional identity and ethical responsibility were shaped by their engagement in digital spaces, where reflection, accountability, and advocacy became part of their evolving role as educators. Social media, therefore, functioned not only as an influence but also as a space for critical self-examination and value formation.

Moreover, the study concludes that teachers actively upheld inclusive values online through deliberate and ethical practices. By modelling respectful digital behaviour, promoting critical digital citizenship, and prioritizing learners' online well-being, they extended inclusive principles beyond the classroom. Their strategies—such as responsible communication, careful verification of information, and maintaining professional boundaries and confidentiality—demonstrate that ethical professionalism remains central even in public and virtual discourse. Overall, the findings underscore that teacher consciously and critically navigate

social media, integrating its influence into a sustained commitment to inclusion, dignity, and professional integrity in both physical and digital learning environments.

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