



Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education: A Meta-Analysis

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ABSTRACT:

Inclusive education is one of the most essential educational programmes in all countries. It has given more opportunities to all students in education system. Success of Inclusive education depends on various factors, in which teacher is the most significant factor. District Inclusive education, as originally defined by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), refers to schooling in which all children, including children with severe disabilities, have access to regular classrooms with the help of adequate support. Inclusive education means all learners, children, and youth with or without disability being able to learn together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges, universities and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. Inclusive education in special education is a recent concept, and also an accepted approach and general education in the Indian content. The main purposes of the study are to identify the major obstacles in implementing inclusive practices in mainstream schools and to analyze different aspects of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. In connection to same, this research study intendeds to study the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. In order to answer the research questions, a descriptive research methodology is utilized. Qualitative methodology helps to provide understanding of a topic from the population's perspective as they experience it. The resulting textual description is analyzed to look for themes and to infer transferable interpretations (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). In the existing research study, the researcher found that there seems no significant difference has been observed between Male and female teachers (on their attitude towards sustainable development). Hence, it can be concluded that the impact of gender is not anyway significant on the teaching attitudes of the teachers.

Key Words: Inclusive Education; Disabilities; Adequate Support; Slow Learners; Pre-School.

Introduction:

Inclusive education is based on fundamental human rights. Inclusive education means that schools should include all children regardless of the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. It should be including all types of children such as gifted, backward, and mentally retarded, learning disabilities, Socio-economic disadvantages students etc. It is an approach that fulfills the learning needs of all children, youth and adults who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion from the educational system. Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. According to Stainback (1992) inclusion facilitates integration in school systems when general and special education personnel, as well as curriculum and instructional procedures, are combined to provide educational experiences to meet the needs of the students in an integrated setup. The Salamanca statement and framework for Action (1994) strongly promote "Inclusive Education" of "Schools for All". Inclusion gives a message that everyone belongs to the school; everyone is welcome to the school. In the words of Loreman and Depplerer (2001) it is full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. Inclusion does not mean "dumping" children when they have special needs into the regular classroom and it is a process. (Polat, 2011) defined as the inclusion of all children and young people regardless of any individual differences, including race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, or socioeconomic status. This definition of inclusive education is widely used within special education literature (Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, and Christensen, 2006). Inclusive education has been a great challenge for the Romanian educational system because it provides the principles of a new paradigm: the interactive or organisational paradigm (Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore, 1995). Thomas (1977) has defined inclusion as the 'acceptance of all pupils in the mainstream system, taught with a common framework, and identified as the responsibility of all teachers'. The basic structure of the Constitution of India as reflected in the preamble ensures social, economic and political justice as well as equality of status and of opportunities to all citizens of India. Since the early 1990s, the new principle of inclusive education has been incorporated into many countries' laws. It has also begun to appear in the statements and programmes of numerous inter-national organisations, such as the European Commission (2010), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2005) the Council of the European Union (2010), and UNESCO itself (UNESCO, 2015). It was even incorporated into the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006). Over the years, however, the principle has lost much of its original edge. From being a clear-cut outcome, inclusion has increasingly turned into an ambiguous "process" (Booth and Ainscow, 2000) or is left totally undefined, as was the case in the CRPD (United Nations, 2006). One of the main barriers in the practice of inclusive education is represented by the teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and its principles. These attitudes are influenced by several factors such as: the degree of children's difficulties, the nature of children's disabilities, the teachers' experience with children with special educational needs, the trust in their own capabilities to implement inclusive activities. Previous studies support the idea that teachers perceive students with behavioural or emotional disorders as being more difficult to work with in the classroom than the other children with different disabilities (Chhabra, Srivastava and Srivastava, 2010). For the first time, the policy considered education for all as one of the cherished goals of national development. The policy recognizes that non-enrollment and drop-out of special groups of children is one of the major difficulties in the realization of this goal. Outlining the steps for ensuring equal educational opportunities for the children with disabilities, the National Policy of Education states that the objective should be: "to integrate the physically and mentally disabled with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and enable them to face life with courage and confidence". The Plan 1987 of Action also stresses that as education of children with disabilities in special schools is very costly, it will be ensured that only those children whose needs cannot be met in common schools be enrolled in special schools. Once they acquire communication skills and study skills, they will be integrated in regular schools. Evolving from the national experience with area specific projects is a nation-wide plan, popularly known as District Primary Education Programme, to put local communities in charge of education. From the year 1995, the education of

children with disabilities has also been included as integral component of the programme. All such children in the selected districts would be enrolled for inclusive education at the primary level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride towards achieving the long-cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with States. This movement promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, assumes to provide useful and quality elementary education sector of the country, and assumes to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children including those with disabilities in the 6-14 age group by the year 2010. To give effect to the proclamation on the full participation and equality of people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, the Parliament enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Right and Full Participation) Act, 1995 which came into force with effect from 6th February, 1996. The Act desires the appropriate Governments to prevent the occurrence of disabilities ensure access to education, identify suitable posts and reserve vacancies, reserve admissions to educational institutes, promote non-discrimination in built environment and read and promote research. Every child has an inherent right to education on the basis of social justice and equality of opportunity. Ainscow and Muncey (1990) viewed that all students have the right to be exposed to the mainstream curriculum in a reasonably unadulterated form. However, actually implementing a common curriculum for wide ability range can be problematic. It is argued that some students require very significant modifications to the curriculum and teaching approach if their educational needs are to be met. Some may require separate programs with a focus on self-help and daily living skills. Research studies that probe into the attitude of secondary school teachers about the different aspects of inclusive education such as the concept of inclusive education, organizational structure required for inclusive education and classroom arrangements, instructional facilities required, teaching and learning methodology and evaluation methods will go a long way to give right type of information and develop a positive attitude among the teachers. (Reddy et al, 2006). Teachers do not feel that they are prepared or competent to teach both regular learners and learners with special educational needs. The main reason is that they did not have sufficient training to deal with these inclusive educational activities (Hay, Smit, Paulsen, 2001). There are many mainstream teachers who believe that children considered different are not their responsibility, idea which revealed the fact that there are many schools where the medical-pathological model still dominates the educational activity (Angelides, Stylianou, Gibbs, 2006). A large number of teachers believe that the successful implementation of inclusive practices should be based on a review of the curriculum and of the teaching strategies used in classes with children with special educational needs (Ghergut, 2010). Teacher attitudes are strongly associated with teacher categories, so special-education teachers have usually been the most positive group (Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, and Malinen, 2013). The landmark legislation, the Persons with Disabilities Act (1995), emphasized greater access to regular education curriculum for students with disabilities in India. Subsequent policies, programs, and legislation including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement, 2001), the Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (2005), and Right to Education (RTE) Act (2010) further strengthened the call for inclusive education. According to government's estimate, there are about 30 million children with disabilities within India's borders but only about four per cent of them have access to education (Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, 2007). This discrepancy should not be misconstrued as lack of the government's commitment to this endeavour. In fact, the central government of India has made its intentions very clear regarding its commitment to inclusive education as early as the 1970s. With the implementation of the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) program in 1974, the Indian government embarked on an arduous journey. In addition, it has set up national institutes to conduct research, disseminate knowledge, and train teaching personnel to serve the large number of children with a variety of disabilities in the country. The message is clear that the government is committed to providing appropriate opportunities to pupils who have disabilities. A number of researchers have also pointed out that there has been severe shortage of trained teachers, a lack of resources for teaching or learning, and a lack of infrastructure in schools that support the education of students with disabilities (Bhatnagar and Das, 2013a). Research from around the world in the last three decades also indicates that inclusion requires both fiscal resources and trained personnel in order for it to be successfully implemented (Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden, 2004; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Forlin, 2004). Many developing countries, like India, while grappling with this issue are achieving varying levels of success (Das, Gichuru, et al., 2013; Fayeze, Dababneh and Jumiaan, 2011). In India, the persons with disabilities protection of rights and full participation Act, 1995 enjoins upon the Government to ensure that every disabled child has access to free education in an appropriate environment till the age of the 18 years and integrate provides for setting up of special school, facilitation for imparting special education and education through open schools to disabled children or organizing teacher training programmes, taking steps for adaptation of curriculum, reform of examination system, promoting research and providing various facilities to disabled children. It is widely accepted that regular classroom teachers' positive attitudes and acceptance of inclusive educational programs are central to their successful implementation (Beacham and Rouse, 2012; Bhatnagar and Das, 2014; Das, Kuyini and Desai, 2013; Hettiarachchi and Das, 2014). The positive attitudes of teachers toward all students and the general climate they establish in the classroom have a major effect on the academic and social achievement of all students, especially those with disabilities. However, in many cases teachers who feel ill-prepared and who have negative attitudes toward inclusion tend to employ less effective instructional strategies. This may result in students with disabilities having a poor academic performance (D'Alonzo, Giordano and Van Leeuwen, 1997) and, without supports and services, may result in a non-beneficial experience for the students (Daane, Beirne-Smith and Latham, 2000). Teachers' attitudes affect whether or not a classroom learning environment is conducive to inclusive education (Monsen, Ewing and Kwoka, 2014). Inclusive schooling is often thought of as the inclusion of all students regardless of ability into the same schools and classrooms with peers who are not considered to have disabilities. Inclusive schooling, however, extends far beyond mere physical proximity to provide students the support required to belong and achieve in a classroom. So that their inclusion can be socially and academically meaningful is the challenge teachers' face in inclusive school programmes. Meaningful inclusion in schools requires administrators, teachers and parents not only to value diversity, but also question the traditional practice of segregating students who are different. James Lynch stated that the development of Inclusive Primary Education is the best option for achieving education for all in the Asian Region where school enrolment rates are still lower than 70 per cent in some countries and where most disabled children receive no schooling at all. Schools need to be provided with full range of resources necessary to deliver a full curriculum for children, through a combination of class teacher, consultancy and ancillary staff overall than at present. It is rather a question of improved and more differentiated quality than greater quality. Inclusive as it is happening in India can be viewed from three perspectives i.e., (a) Physical Inclusion (b) Social Inclusion and (c) Cognitive Inclusion. The universalization of elementary education (UEE) focuses on enrolment, retention and achievement of all children.

Review of Literature:

The review of related literature is of paramount importance for the researcher. An investigator must be aware of the new researches conducted in the field of study in the past and only then he is in a position to contribute something in original. It is through the revise of related studies that the researcher knows the works that have already been done over a period of time. Several studies have conducted more targeted analyses to explain teachers' attitudes. Literature on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion indicates that they are generally mixed. While a vast majority of teachers have supported the principle of inclusive education, they have voiced some concerns as well. Teachers have also expressed a lack of knowledge of inclusion procedures, especially relating to special education laws, co-teaching, and collaboration with parents and other school professionals. **Adams, Kimberly et.al. (1998)** studied the differences in parent and teacher trust levels. They suggested the implications for creating collaborative family school relationship. **Afzali (1995)** reviewed literature on inclusion of deaf students in the regular classroom and perception of regular educators and deaf educators relating to inclusive education. **ARicciato (2000)**. The study found that the professional development needs of the regular and special education teachers were not significantly different. **Bowers et al. (1998)** conducted a study on the code in action: some school perceptions of its user-friendliness. **Brownlee et al. (2000)** studied the opportunities for authentic experience and reflection: a teaching programme, designed to change attitudes towards disability for pre-service teachers. **Class Berry (2000)** conducted a study on perceptions of inclusive education held by general

education teachers at different grade levels. **Khan, A. T. (2011)** has conducted a study "Investigation of secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge about inclusive education in Bangladesh". The quantitative and qualitative findings of this study reveal that secondary school teachers have mostly favorable or supportive attitudes towards inclusive education for children with special educational needs. This study also concludes that Most of the Bangladeshi secondary school teachers had positive feelings about the inclusion of such children in the mainstream classes. **Cook and Bryan et al. (2000)** conducted a study on teachers' attitude towards their included students with disabilities. **Cowasji (1985)** conducted a study on the effectiveness of orientation programmes for teachers working in the integrated education for the disabled children in Rajasthan. **Bettencourt and Laurie (1999)** examined general educators' attitudes toward students with mild disabilities and their use of instructional strategies. **Simone and Parmar, (2006)** with regard to teachers' attitudes in the secondary setting, a number of researchers have concluded that teachers' attitudes are less positive in middle or high schools than in elementary environments. **Fakolade, Adeniyi and Tella (2009)** studied on "Attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of special needs children in general education classroom: the case of teachers in some selected schools in Nigeria. **Gorne (1997)** examined the relationship that exists between regular education teachers' degree of satisfaction with including students with disabilities in their classroom demonstrated in the programme. **Herman (1995)** examined the perceptions of elementary school principals regarding the desirability and feasibility of adapting regular elementary classrooms and programmes for the inclusion of children with moderate and severe disabilities. **Hoffman et al. (1997)** analyzed inclusion in New Jersey school districts. This study was concerned with general education teachers' experiences and perceptions about inclusion and supports these teachers received from their administration in order to implement inclusion in their classes. **Hoover (1984)** In his study which included inexperienced participants who were teaching children with learning, emotional and behavioural disorders in the mainstream. **Horton (1998)** investigated the opinions of parents of both disabled and non-disabled elementary children regarding inclusion of disabled students in regular education classes. **Jena (2000)** investigated the priorities of training and attitude of special educators towards people with mental handicap. **Lambe and Bones (2006)** in a study found that attitudes of secondary teachers towards the philosophy of inclusive education were generally positive, with more than 80 per cent of participants believing that all teachers should experience teaching children with special education needs. **Lombard, Richard et al. (1998)** conducted a survey on school-to work and technical preparation: teacher attitudes and practices regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities. **Mashiya (2003)** in his study "Educators' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education" found that factors such as age, gender, qualification, and phase/grade taught and class size have an influence on educators' attitudes towards inclusive education. **Mendez (1998)** conducted a study to investigate the effect of teachers perceives role stress, perceived self- efficacy, and support for research based effective teaching behaviors on their attitudes towards inclusive education. **Mukhopadhyay and Sharma (1990)** conducted a study of identifying teaching competencies specifically for integrated education of disabled children. **Naidu (2000)** studied Head Start Teachers conceptions of full inclusion of young children. This study examined the conceptions that four teachers in a Midwest Urban Head Start programme held about inclusion. **Praisner (2003)** surveyed 408 elementary school principals to investigate relationships regarding attitude towards inclusion of students with disabilities, variables such as training and experience and placement perceptions. **Ragunathan (2005)** conducted a study on awareness, attitudes and competencies required by the teachers in dealing with low vision children at primary stage. **Reddy and Sujathamalini, (2005)** conducted a study on the awareness, attitude and competencies of special school teachers reveals that the study reveals that out of 48 aspects, in 21 aspects only the special school teachers possess high awareness in dealing with children with disabilities. **Schunn and Vaughn (1992)** surveyed general educators at the elementary middle and secondary school levels to determine their attitudes about planning as well as their planning practices for students with disabilities. **Shah, Das, Desai, and Tiwari, (2014)** a number of researchers have argued that intensive training in special education is required for all regular education teachers in order for them to be effective in an inclusive education setting. **Sivakami (2000)** investigated "Effectiveness of certain instructional strategies to overcome learning disabilities in English at primary stage". **Susan Stainback and William Stainback (1982)** studied the influence of attitudes of regular class teachers about the education of severely retarded students. **Taplin, Margaret and White, Marian (1998)** studied parents' and teachers' perception of gifted provision. Seventy- one parents of gifted children completed a questionnaire concerning their perceptions of the current services provided their children and the parents' preferences. **Topping, K., and Jindal-Snape, D. (2013)** studied on "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion in High Schools. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice" displayed the breakdown of mean scores by gender. **Trader and David (2000)** studied the relationship between teacher effectiveness and teacher attitude towards issues related to inclusion. **Westwood and Graham (2003)** conducted comparative study in "inclusion of students with special needs: benefits and obstacle perceived by teachers in New South Australia". **Yeager (1994)** made analysis on absenteeism, achievement and self - concept of elementary students in an inclusive classroom. **Kaur, M. & Kaur, K. (2015)** have conducted a study "Attitude of Secondary School Teachers' towards inclusive Education". The findings of the study there was no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers with respect their attitude towards inclusive education. This study also indicates that there was significant difference between rural and urban secondary school teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusive education. **Zahn (1998)** investigated the perceptions and attitudes of elementary school teachers towards the practice of inclusions, its implementation, impact and future. Inclusive education is the need of the learners'. If we want to ensure the right of education for the children and equal opportunities for all, the inclusive education is the only alternative before us. Although inclusive education is still a matter of debate nationwide and worldwide but inclusive education is regarded as the only way to future educational system which will lead us to better education, better society and a better world. After all it is a matter of will and attitude of the stake holders – teachers, administrators, educational planners, and parents. As the teachers are the primary stake holders of this system it is very vital to ascertain the attitude of the teachers toward the inclusive education.

Statement of the Problem:

The statement of the research problem is as under:

"Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education: A meta-analysis"

Aims and Purpose of the study: The main purposes of the study are to identify the major obstacles in implementing inclusive practices in mainstream schools and to analyze different aspects of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. In connection to same, this research study intendeds to study the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Besides, this research study aims to study the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education in Secondary Schools of Visakhapatnam District.

Hypothesis of the study:

There seems no significant difference between the male and female teacher attitude towards inclusive education.

Methodology:

In order to answer the research questions, an descriptive research methodology is utilized. Qualitative methodology helps to provide understanding of a topic from the population's perspective as they experience it. The resulting textual description is analyzed to look for themes and to infer transferable interpretations (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). The study involved a self-administrated questionnaire which contains items for demographic data and items regarding inclusive education. The participants provided some socio-demographic information such as age, gender, professional environment in which they operate number of years in the work field, number of years in the primary school activity, level of education and residential town.

❖ **Population and sample:** Thus, the total sample consists of 100 secondary school teachers working in both rural and urban schools.

- ❖ **Design:** The method design for the present investigation is a descriptive study of normative survey type. In this method the attitude of school teachers towards inclusive education is studied. A standard type of test for measuring the attitude towards inclusive education is administered to the school teachers.
- ❖ **Procedure for Data Collection:** For the present study, the investigator has opted for self made tools like questionnaire, which standardized following the pilot study and split half method and a checklist to collect the data from teachers

Analysis and Interpretation of Data: After collecting the data from the sample schools and teachers a data sheet has prepared and collected data are arranged in the data sheet in a systematic manner. The data treated using descriptive statistics as per the necessity of the objectives. The data presented in tabular form and in percentage for a better understanding. The results are analyzed by using descriptive statistics, t- tests, F-tests and Pearson product moment correlations. The data cannot serve any worthwhile purpose unless it is carefully edited, systematically classified, tabulated, scientifically analyzed, intelligently interpreted and rationally concluded. The adopted methods in selection of the sample, collection of data, scoring, analysis and statistical techniques are employed. The organisation, analysis, and interpretation of data, formulation of results and conclusions are necessary steps to get a meaningful picture out of the collected data in quantification of the data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data: The detailed analysis and interpretation of the data is given as under:

Table: 1.1: Showing significance difference between male and female teachers on various dimensions of attitude towards inclusive education. . (N=200 each)

Variable	Male teachers		Female teachers		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
ATIE	278.76	76.61	277.44	72.32	0.22#
##= Not significant at 0.1 level of confidence					

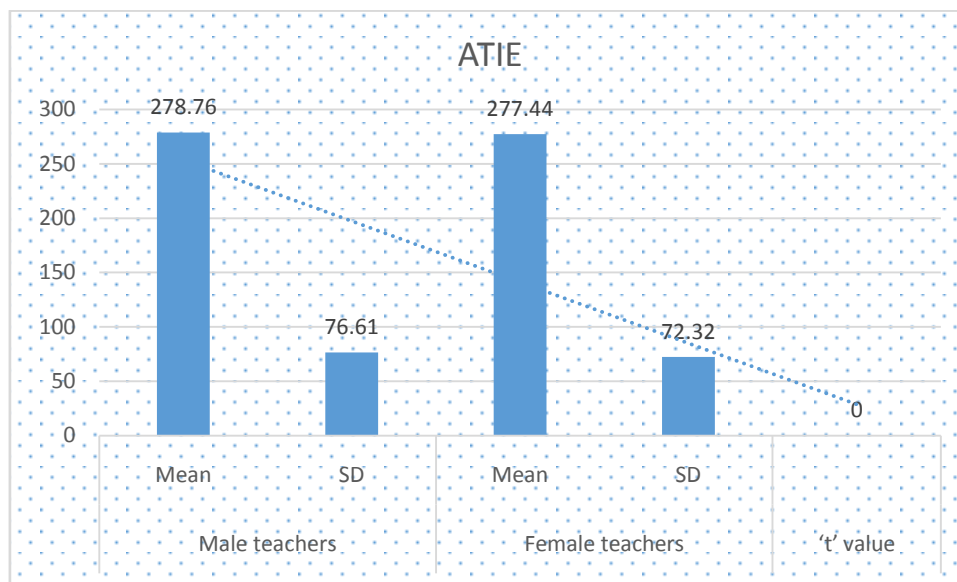


Fig: 1.2: Showing significance difference between male and female teachers on various dimensions of attitude towards inclusive education. .

While analyzing the male and female teachers on their “Composite Score”, it has been observed that there is again insignificant difference between Male and female teachers on their composite score. The comparative analysis indicates that the mean score of urban teachers was reported 278.76 which is significantly resembles the mean score of rural teachers (M=280.44). The comparative analysis of the independent ‘t’ test indicate that there is insignificant difference between Male and female teachers. The calculated ‘t’ value (t=0.22) was reported insignificant at 0.01 level of confidence. Hence, from the above results it can be inferred that significant difference has been observed between Male and female teachers (on their attitude towards sustainable development).

Conclusion:

In the existing research study, the researcher found that there seems no significant difference has been observed between Male and female teachers (on their attitude towards sustainable development). Hence, it can be concluded that the impact of gender is not anyway significant on the teaching attitudes of the teachers.

Educational implications of the study: Inclusive Education is the need of the hour. If we want to ensure the right of education for the children and opportunities for all, then Inclusive Education is the only alternative before us. Although Inclusive Education is still a matter of debate nationwide and worldwide but Inclusive Education regarded as the only way to future educational system which will lead us to better education, better society and a better world. According to the findings of the study, there are some implications that might be considered for future research.. Their responses, therefore, may not be representative of teachers from public schools or schools run by other managements. The model of inclusive education adopted by this school system may be different from the models of inclusive education adopted by other schools. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study including teachers working in a variety of setting such as public, private, and government affiliated schools. Third, this study included only secondary

school teachers. Future research may include teachers from elementary and middle schools as well. Also, attitudes of other stakeholders need to be identified as they have crucial roles in the implementation of inclusive education programs. Fourth, this study used only a qualitative research method involving a much smaller sample size. Other research might use quantitative research or mixed methods involving a larger sample to examine teachers' attitudes.

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