



Promoting Inclusion in Education: Teachers' Attitude and Self-efficacy towards Differently Abled Children in Mainstream Schools

Farhat Nasim ¹, Sarfraz Hussain ², Samina Akhtar ³, Inza Shoqat⁴

¹ Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: farhatnasim54@gmail.com

² Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Superior University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: sarfrazhussain8059786@gmail.com

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Education, The Women University, Multan, Pakistan.

Email: samabdullah33@hotmail.com

⁴ Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, The Women University, Multan, Pakistan. Email: inzashoqat786@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Significant shifts in policy have been made in most of the developing nations, such as Pakistan, with regard to the inclusion of children with diverse learning needs, in particular those with disabilities. The main goal of this study was to investigate the attitudes and self-efficacy of teachers towards differently abled children in mainstream schools. Data was collected from three hundred and sixty one (361) primary school teachers working in Multan District, where an inclusive education pilot project is being implemented, using a quantitative research design. The results regarding the teachers' current practices, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' sense of self-efficacy towards differently abled children indicate an overall positive attitude in mainstream schools. However, results showed that on the basis of teacher's gender, location, professional, and academic qualifications there was no statistically significant difference in their attitude except in the domain of teaching experience. The current study suggests that teachers' in Multan need to be required to engage in professional training focused on effectively managing students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These trainings seem to be offering great support for these teachers.

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Corresponding Author's Email: farhatnasim54@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The term inclusivity refers to the process of integrating oneself into a group or structure and participating in its activities. Establishing an environment that fosters the inclusion of those with disabilities is of utmost importance. Although the concept of inclusion frequently encompasses the act of inviting people who have been historically marginalized, it is crucial to ascertain the individuals who are eligible for inclusion and those who possess the authority to exclude them. The inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life and their integration into society is a collective obligation that falls upon individuals (Ehsan, 2018). The concept of inclusion acknowledges the inherent unity of individuals, irrespective of their distinct capabilities and limitations. It aids in addressing the issue of the curse of inclusion, which gives rise to instances of prejudice and bias between those with disabilities and those without. The establishment of a support structure is necessary in order to promote inclusivity, and it is incumbent upon individuals to actively contribute towards fostering inclusion (Asante, 2002). Since the early 1990s, teachers have increasingly expressed concerns regarding the global acceptance of inclusive education. Scholars place significant emphasis on the significance of attending to the varied requirements of students with disabilities to facilitate their successful integration into regular educational settings. Within this context, Kamran, Siddiqui, and Adil (2023) are in agreement with the expressed notion that this integration process takes into account the Salamanca Statement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Pakistan endorses in conjunction with the Education for All declarations.

It is highly advisable for educational institutions to incorporate all students into regular learning settings and adequately cater to their varied requirements within the classroom, as stipulated by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Kamran & Thomas, 2022). In 2011, Pakistan officially approved the CRPD (Hameed & Manzoor, 2019). Moreover, there is a contention that every person, regardless of any impairment, should have the right to fundamental human rights that are equal to those of their peers, which includes the provision of basic education. It is crucial to underscore that the provision of basic education is a non-progressive entitlement, compelling governments that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to promptly ensure its availability. It is imperative that governments do not postpone the implementation of fundamental education until financial resources become readily available. This phenomenon carries particular importance in nations characterized by low- and middle-income levels.

The significance of adaptation in enhancing the protection of individuals with disabilities and defending their inherent rights from exploitation is acknowledged by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Pakistan recognizes and supports the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools and conventional classes, as indicated by the research backdrop. Nevertheless, there is a notable inadequacy in terms of strategic planning and readiness (Shaukat, 2023). Based on the observations by Kazmi, Kamran, and Siddiqui (2023), the hesitancy exhibited by educators in embracing inclusive approaches can be attributed to their constrained knowledge, competencies, attitudes, and financial constraints. Hence, the presence of external support is crucial to enabling the efficient execution of inclusive measures (Kamran, Thomas, & Siddiqui, 2022). Pakistan, with a population of 26.2 million children, ranks second in terms of the number of young individuals who are not pursuing education. Pakistan has faced challenges in the successful implementation of international policies designed to improve literacy rates and attain universal primary education, notwithstanding its status as a signatory to such agreements. The education system is confronted with myriad challenges stemming from several factors, such as global and national instability, limited accessibility, inadequate funding for education, and economic limitations (Hameed & Manzoor, 2019). Metropolitan regions frequently have enhanced education systems and experience an increase in literacy rates (Kazmi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, these geographical areas persistently encounter significant challenges, leading to the partial or complete marginalization of a considerable number of children from accessing educational prospects. However, there is a lack of academic studies that particularly examine the self-efficacy of teachers in supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools. While previous studies have explored the overall self-efficacy beliefs held by teachers, there is a research gap that necessitates a more focused investigation into self-efficacy within the realm of inclusive education methods. Examining the level of competence among teachers in adopting accommodations, adjusting instructional tactics, and engaging in collaborative efforts with stakeholders may provide valuable insights into potential avenues for professional growth and assistance.

1.1. Problem Statement

Despite global emphasis on inclusive education, Pakistani mainstream schools struggle to integrate differently abled youngsters. The attitude, goals, and self-efficacy of instructors toward aiding differently abled children in mainstream schools are crucial to inclusive education achievement. Disparities in mainstream schools' educational experiences for differently abled children suggest teacher readiness, understanding, and commitment to inclusive approaches have been lacking. Teachers' views of differently abled students can affect their education, social integration, and well-being. Negative attitudes or inadequate teacher assistance can perpetuate discrimination and exclusion and impair these children's academic achievement. Teachers' intentions to serve differently abled students are vital for identifying inclusive education barriers and facilitators. Teachers' intentions show their readiness to practice inclusively and meet students' different needs. Teachers' intentions might reveal their motivations and classroom decisions. There is a need to study teachers' attitudes, intents, and self-efficacy in mainstream schools for differently abled students due to the lack of research in Pakistan.

In this regard, UNECEF has started a pilot project in District Multan and Jehlum for differently abled children, including in mainstream schools. Primary school teachers have been trained about the techniques used in teaching and how to include these children in mainstream schools. Because the quality of inclusive education depends on teachers' self-efficacy, or

confidence in their capacity to serve differently abled children, teachers with high self-efficacy use adaptable teaching methods, provide individualized support, and create a good learning environment for all students. Low teacher self-efficacy can lead to emotions of ineptitude, frustration, and reluctance to use inclusive practices, which can harm differently abled children's education.

1.2. Objectives of Study

1. To explore the *current practices of teachers towards differently abled children in mainstream schools*.
2. To identify the teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy towards differently abled children in mainstream schools.
3. To analyze the relationship between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy based on gender, location, academic and professional qualifications, and teaching experience.

1.3. Research questions

1. What are the *current practices of teachers' toward supporting differently abled children?*
2. What are attitudes of teachers towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools?
3. What is the level of teachers' self-efficacy towards differently abled children in mainstream schools?
4. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy based on gender, location, academic and professional qualifications, and teaching experience?

1.4. Significance of Study

1. The attitude of teachers towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive educational practices and fostering conducive environments that support successful learning for all students.
2. Research can determine the challenges faced by differently abled children in mainstream schools due to teacher attitudes, ensuring fair access to excellent education and opportunities for social and intellectual development.
3. The findings of the study can offer helpful guidance for the creation of customized teacher training initiatives aimed at enhancing attitudes and competencies in supporting differently abled children, thereby leading to enhanced educational outcomes.
4. The research findings offer parents of differently abled children the necessary knowledge and assurance to effectively advocate for their children's educational requirements. This entails comprehending the attitudes of teachers and collaborating with educational institutions to ensure the provision of sufficient assistance.

2. Literature Review

The international community has commendably endeavored to identify and address this issue globally through a convention and many declarations. The international community ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). According to CRPD Article 24, the general education system should primarily incorporate persons with disabilities (PWD) to prevent their segregation and ensure they get free and mandatory primary education, regardless of their impairment. As a signatory and endorsee of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), Pakistan is obligated to implement inclusive education in its educational institutions due to the well-documented advantages of inclusion. The significance of teacher attitudes may appear apparent. Given a teachers opposition towards a *toward supporting differently abled children* in her classroom, it is challenging to envision how any additional resources or training may prevent the placement from being unsuccessful. The mere presence of resources, such as knowledge or support, cannot solely determine the outcome. The teacher must utilize these materials in order to achieve a specific objective. Teachers' views towards integration or inclusion have been the subject of substantial research for several decades due to their significant importance (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011; Shevlin & Banks, 2021). Typically, these studies have been conducted mostly in the United States, although it is worth mentioning that they have been conducted elsewhere, even in underdeveloped nations. The broad range of interest observed may potentially be attributed to the proactive involvement of the United Nations and UNESCO in advancing inclusive policies on a global scale. Comparing outcomes can be challenging due to the inherent variations in local circumstances and legislation across different regions worldwide. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that there is a notable recurrence of

comparable outcomes pertaining to the principles of inclusive education throughout many nations (Saloviita, 2020).

The most effective approach to addressing this problem is through inclusive education, as it serves as a deterrent against exclusion (Gupta, Mongia, & Garg, 2017). Inclusive education is founded on the principle of societal fairness, ensuring that all learners have equal access to all learning opportunities, irrespective of their disability. According to Cassady (2011), educators globally are increasingly advocating for the integration of impaired students into mainstream classrooms. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that simply articulating one's viewpoints does not ensure the endorsement of such policies by educators in the classroom. According to Carrington, Tangen, and Beutel (2019), empirical research has demonstrated that instructors' attitudes are the primary obstacle to effectively using inclusive classroom practices. The primary rationale for doing this research study is the imperative to investigate the viewpoints of teachers on inclusive education. This is due to the significant role that teachers' level of assertiveness plays in effectively addressing and embracing diversity within the classroom setting. Kazmi, Siddiqui, and Siddiqui (2021) conducted a study that underscores the significance of teachers' self-efficacy in improving student learning outcomes and fostering a learning environment. Kazmi et al. (2023) define the notion of a teacher's self-efficacy as the degree of assurance an individual holds regarding their capacity to proficiently impact particular educational outcomes through their pedagogical practices. The effectiveness philosophies of an educator are dependent on the degree of commitment they demonstrate towards their instructional practices and their ensuing outcomes within the educational environment. We can categorize a teacher's self-efficacy by distinguishing between teaching efficacy and personal efficacy. An individual's belief in their ability to effectively regulate motivation, behavior, and the social context is known as self-efficacy. The teacher's level of conviction is crucial in determining the successful implementation of an inclusive plan. The perspective of the instructor plays a pivotal role in the provision of accommodations for impairments since it has a direct impact on the educational development and progress of students (Raath & Hay, 2016).

According to Korkmaz, Van Engen, Knappert, and Schalk (2022), teachers play a vital role in the execution of inclusive education (IE), as their actions are expected to exemplify inclusive practices inside educational institutions. Previous studies in this field have indicated that in inclusive classrooms, the success of all students relies heavily on positive teacher attitudes as well as the acquisition of pedagogical skills and knowledge (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Saloviita, 2020). This concept pertains to an individual's self-assurance in their ability to proficiently strategize and execute the requisite actions to accomplish a particular educational goal within a designated context. Therefore, it includes a conviction that influences motivation, conduct, and instructional decisions (Gallard & Cartmell, 2014). Teachers with robust self-efficacy are more inclined to utilize diverse tactics to motivate and address the needs of their students, including those that provide challenges to their advancement (San Martin, Ramirez, Calvo, Muñoz-Martínez, & Sharma, 2021). Therefore, the self-efficacy attitudes held by educators exert influence on the student's learning process. Scholarly research has provided evidence of a positive and constructive relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their self-efficacy beliefs, shedding light on the essential elements of teachers' behavior within the framework of inclusive education (Sharma & Sokal, 2015). Consequently, teachers who showed higher levels of self-efficacy about inclusion displayed a more positive inclination towards inclusion as a whole, particularly when considering the integration of students with impairments. Teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy views about inclusion have also been associated with gender. According to Finkelstein, Sharma, and Furlonger (2021), a number of studies have indicated that female educators have more favorable dispositions towards inclusive education. In a recent study conducted by Dorji, Bailey, Paterson, Graham, and Miller (2021), it was shown that male teachers had a notably more favorable disposition towards inclusion in comparison to their female counterparts. Teacher training is a characteristic that is associated with the cultivation of favorable attitudes towards inclusion. In the opinion of Özokcu (2018), empirical data indicates that educators who receive training in inclusion subjects or special educational needs tend to exhibit more favorable views compared to their counterparts who do not receive such training. According to Yada, Tolvanen, and Savolainen (2018), the acquisition of a teaching qualification might enhance instructors' self-efficacy through the completion of specialized courses or extended training in inclusive education.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Researchers employ surveys as a means of gathering data from a sample or the entire population within the framework of quantitative survey research methods. The purpose of this data collection is to provide a description of individuals' perspectives, beliefs, or activities (Creswell, 2011). A descriptive survey research approach was employed in the present study to examine the perspectives of primary school teachers regarding teachers' attitude, intentions and self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools.

3.2. Population and Sample of the Study

The research was carried out in the Multan district of Punjab, with a specific emphasis on primary school teachers employed in public sector schools. The sample for this study consisted of 361 primary school teachers who are currently employed in public sector schools. In the sample, a significant majority (51.2%) consisted of females ($n = 361$), while males (48.8%) accounted for 176 responses.

In order to conduct the main analysis of the study, it is important to examine the profiles of the respondents. Table 1 represents the demographic information for 361 participants. The demographic and professional characteristics of the study participants were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' demographic information (N=361)

Demographic Variable		Participants Responses	
		Frequency	%age
Location	Urban	182	50.4
	Rural	179	49.6
	Total	361	100.0
Gender	Male	176	48.8
	Female	185	51.2
	Total	361	100.0
Teaching Experience	0-10 years	33	9.1
	11-20 years	231	64.0
	21 years and more	97	26.9
	Total	361	100.0
Academic Qualification	BA/B.Sc	54	15.0
	MA/M.Sc/BS	182	50.4
	M.Phil/MS	125	34.6
	Total	361	100.0
Professional Qualification	B.Ed	161	44.6
	M.Ed	200	55.4
	Total	361	100.0

According to Table 1, 182 participants (50.4%) were employed in urban areas, whereas 179 participants (49.6%) were employed in rural areas. 187 (44.6%). Moreover, the number of female teachers was 185 (51.2%), while the number of male teachers was 176 (48.8%). Similarly, the profiles of teachers based on their experience reveal that 33 (9.1%) had teaching experience ranging from 0 to 10 years, 231 (64.0%) had experience ranging from 11 to 20 years, and 97 (26.9%) had 21 years or more of experience. In addition, with regards to educational qualifications, 54 (15.0%) participants held a BA/B.Sc. degree, 182 (50.4%) participants held a MA/M.Sc./BS degree, and 125 (34.6%) participants held an M.Phil./MS degree. Regarding professional qualifications, 161 (44.6%) participants held a B.Ed. degree, whereas 200 (55.4%) participants held a M.Ed. degree.

3.3. Participant Questionnaire

Data was collected using an online questionnaire consisting of four sections. The initial section depicted "demographic information." The following section comprised six items related to "current practices used by teachers in fostering inclusive settings." The third section pertained to the teachers' present attitudes and intentions for fostering inclusive settings, encompassing a total of six items. The fourth component of the study focused on the measure of teachers' self-efficacy in promoting inclusive settings. This section consisted of eight items, each requiring a response on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4. Procedures

The data were collected from employed primary school teachers currently working in public sector schools in Multan District. An email including a link to an online survey was sent to each participant who participated in an inclusive education training. Before obtaining access to the instruments, the participants provided their approval for the inclusion of informed consent in the questionnaire.

3.5. Analysis

The findings were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANNOVA). The scales for teachers were validated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .893. The study employed descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the present behaviors, attitudes, intentions, and self-efficacy of teachers among a sample of primary school teachers in Multan District.

4. Results

Table 2: Current practices of teachers' towards differently abled children

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I am in favor of incorporating differently abled children into my classroom.	4.18	.86
2	I am eager to participate in teacher programs focused on instructing academically challenged, differently abled children.	4.22	.81
3	I am actively involved in enhancing my pedagogical abilities to teach differently abled children within the classroom setting.	4.01	.81
4	I acknowledge the duty of teaching differently-abled children.	3.47	1.16
5	Consistent self-assessment will enhance my teaching in environments that are inclusive.	4.03	.86
6	I collaborate with parents of differently abled children to enhance the well-being of their children.	4.17	.85
		4.01	0.59

The overall mean score of all items was 4.01 (SD = 0.59), suggesting that current practices teachers had a moderately positive attitude toward supporting differently abled children. A higher mean score was observed for statement No. 2, "I am eager to participate in teacher programs focused on instructing academically challenged, differently abled children" (M = 4.22, SD = .81). A lowest mean score was observed for statement No. 3, "I am actively involved in enhancing my pedagogical abilities to teach differently abled children within the classroom setting" (M = 4.01, SD = .81).

Table 3: Teachers' attitude towards differently abled children

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD
7	Every differently-abled children should be entitled to participate in mainstream classes.	4.06	.98
8	It is possible to teach differently-abled children, average abilities in the same educational setting.	4.18	.78
9	I provide assistance to students with disabilities in the classroom when they require additional support from me.	4.13	.73
10	Include assistive technologies and tools in the learning environment to help differently-abled children access information and participate in activities	3.93	.95
11	I employ instructional methods and educational resources that are suitable for individuals with intellectual and/or physical disabilities.	4.22	.79
12	I utilize teaching assistants or para-educators to assist differently-abled children, fostering active participation and personalized classroom support.	4.08	.80
		4.10	0.51

The overall mean score of all items was 4.10 (SD = 0.51), suggesting that teachers' attitude and intentions toward supporting differently abled children. A higher mean score was observed for statement No. 11, "I employ instructional methods and educational resources that are suitable for individuals with intellectual and/or physical disabilities" (M = 4.22, SD = .79). A lowest mean score was observed for statement No. 10, "Include assistive technologies and tools in the learning environment to help differently-abled children access information and participate in activities" (M = 3.93, SD = .95).

Table 4: Teachers' sense of self-efficacy towards differently abled children

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	SD
13	I offer an alternative explanation, such as when students experience confusion.	3.98	.84
14	I provide support to families in facilitating their children's academic success.	3.88	.92
15	I inspire students who exhibit a lack of interest in academic tasks.	3.97	.86
16	I want to foster students' confidence in their ability to excel academically.	4.12	.87
17	I ensure that children adhere to classroom regulations.	4.20	.78
18	I possess the ability to effectively manage a disruptive or noisy student.	4.23	.73
19	A classroom management method is implemented with each group of students.	4.14	.86
20	I employ a diverse range of evaluation techniques.	4.04	.97
		4.07	0.59

The overall mean score of all items was 4.07 (SD = 0.59), suggesting that teachers' sense of self-efficacy toward supporting differently abled children had a moderately positive attitude toward supporting differently abled children. A higher mean score was observed for statements No. 18 and 17: "I possess the ability to effectively manage a disruptive or noisy student" (M = 4.23, SD = 0.73) and "I ensure that children adhere to classroom regulations" (M = 4.20, SD = 0.78). The lowest mean score was observed for statement No. 14, "I provide support to families in facilitating their children's academic success" (M = 3.88, SD = .92).

Table 5: Gender-wise differences in teachers' attitude towards differently abled children in mainstream schools (N=361)

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Current practices of teachers	Male	176	23.77	4.01	359	-1.650	.100
	Female	185	24.38	2.98			
Teachers' attitude and Intentions	Male	176	24.19	3.59	359	-2.499	.013
	Female	185	24.99	2.47			
Teachers' sense of self efficacy	Male	176	31.79	5.60	359	-3.008	.003
	Female	185	33.29	3.64			

Table 5 demonstrates the p-value (.100) for current practices of teachers towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their gender, showing that there was no statistically significant difference. The p-value for teachers' attitude and intentions, and sense of self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools respectively (.013, .003) on the basis of their gender shows that there was a statistically significant difference.

Table 6: Location -wise differences in teachers' attitude towards differently abled children in mainstream schools (N=361)

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Current practices of teachers	Urban	182	23.98	2.33	359	-.525	.600
	Rural	179	24.18	4.43			
Teachers' attitude and Intentions	Urban	182	24.45	2.35	359	-.968	.334
	Rural	179	24.76	3.69			
Teachers' sense of self efficacy	Urban	182	32.64	3.39	359	.314	.754
	Rural	179	32.48	5.82			

Table 6 demonstrates the p-value for current practices of teachers, teachers' attitude and intentions, and teachers' sense of self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their location, respectively (.600, .334, .754), showing that there was no statistically significant difference.

Table 7: Professional Qualification -wise differences in teachers' attitude towards differently abled children in mainstream schools (N=361)

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Current practices of teachers	B.Ed	161	24.01	4.06	359	-.328	.743
	M.Ed	200	24.14	3.05			
Teachers' attitude and Intentions	B.Ed	161	24.54	3.48	359	-.335	.738
	M.Ed	200	24.65	2.74			
Teachers' sense of self efficacy	B.Ed	161	32.29	5.57	359	-.961	.337
	M.Ed	200	32.78	3.96			

Table 7 demonstrates the p-value for current practices of teachers, teachers' attitude and intentions, and teachers' sense of self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their professional qualifications, respectively (.743,.738,.337), showing that there was no statistically significant difference.

Table 8: Differential analysis using a one-way ANOVA in teachers' attitude towards differently abled children in main stream schools based on their teaching experience (N=361)

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Current practices of teachers	Between groups	247.777	2	123.888	10.478	.000
	Within Groups	4232.893	358	11.824		
	Total	4480.670	360			
Teachers' attitude and Intentions	Between groups	225.161	2	112.580	12.550	.000
	Within Groups	3211.399	358	8.970		
	Total	3436.560	360			
Teachers' sense of self efficacy	Between groups	454.972	2	227.486	10.629	.000
	Within Groups	7661.998	358	21.402		
	Total	8116.970	360			

Table 8 demonstrates the p-value for current practices of teachers, teachers' attitude and intentions, and teachers' sense of self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their *teaching experience*, showing that there was a highly significant difference.

Table 9: Differential analysis using a one-way ANOVA in teachers' attitude towards differently abled children in main stream schools based on their Academic Qualifications (N=361)

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Current practices of teachers	Between groups	55.084	2	27.542	2.228	.109
	Within Groups	4425.587	358	12.362		
	Total	4480.670	360			
Teachers' present attitude and Intentions	Between groups	63.732	2	31.866	3.382	.035
	Within Groups	3372.827	358	9.421		
	Total	3436.560	360			
Teachers' sense of self efficacy	Between groups	119.800	2	59.900	2.681	.070
	Within Groups	7997.169	358	22.338		
	Total	8116.970	360			

Table 9 depicts the p-value (.109) for current practices of teachers, sense of self-efficacy towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their *academic qualifications*, showing that there was no significant difference. The p-value (.035) for teachers' attitude and intentions towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools on the basis of their *academic qualifications* indicates that there was a significant difference.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The transformation of schools into equitable and inclusive environments has emerged as a significant priority in both national and international educational strategies over the past few decades (UNESCO, 2009). Hence, it is essential to comprehend the attitudes and intents of teachers towards inclusive practices while formulating strategies to equip them with the necessary resources and abilities for teaching in an inclusive classroom (Laranjeira, Teixeira, Roberto, & Sharma, 2023). This study expands upon and enhances previous studies conducted in the Multan District in different ways. Initially, it evaluates numerous aspects of primary school teachers, specifically the current practices of teachers towards supporting differently abled children in mainstream schools, teachers' attitudes and intentions, and teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Second, analyze the relationship between teachers' attitudes, intentions, and self-efficacy based on gender, location, academic and professional qualifications, and teaching experience. The findings of our study suggest that the primary school teachers who took part in this research have a fairly positive disposition towards providing help for differently abled children in mainstream schools, when considered collectively. However, our findings align with previous research, which suggests that teachers generally have favorable or indifferent views regarding

the integration of differently abled children into mainstream classrooms (Saloviita, 2020). This phenomenon was also noted in the context of the aspirations to cultivate an educational environment within inclusive mainstream classrooms. Teachers demonstrated a greater propensity to engage in collaborative efforts with parents of children with disabilities in order to improve the overall welfare of their children. Teachers demonstrate a diminished inclination to motivate students who display a dearth of enthusiasm towards academic endeavors. It is crucial to implement training protocols that empower teachers to understand the diversity and flexibility of teaching as a fundamental aspect of their responsibilities for differently abled children. Moreover, it is essential to equip teachers with the necessary resources and skills to effectively carry out this aspect of their duties in their regular teaching efforts, with a specific focus on fostering the ability to work together (Dignath, Rimm-Kaufman, van Ewijk, & Kunter, 2022). The findings of our analysis indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference in the present practices, attitudes, intentions, and sense of self-efficacy among teachers in mainstream schools when considering their geographical location, professional qualifications, and academic qualifications that support differently abled children. The results of our study suggest a statistically significant difference in the present methodologies employed by teachers, their attitudes and intents, and their level of self-confidence in providing assistance to students with disabilities in regular educational settings, contingent upon their prior teaching background. In addition, San Martin et al. (2021) assert that the findings of this study and prior research indicate that individuals' attitudes towards inclusion and their self-assurance in effectively implementing inclusive practices in an educational environment positively influence their intention to engage in such practices. The current investigation corroborates the conclusions drawn in the study conducted by Yada and Savolainen (2017), which showed that female educators hold a more favorable perception of teachers' attitudes, intentions, and self-efficacy in providing assistance to students with disabilities in mainstream educational settings.

5.1. Recommendations

1. In order to excel in inclusive environments, teachers must possess adequate training, including the essential resources, skills, and knowledge.
2. Teachers in Multan have been required to engage in professional training focused on effectively managing students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These trainings seem to be offering substantial assistance to these teachers.
3. The Punjab government must continue allocating resources towards teacher training programs to enhance their abilities and knowledge. This will facilitate teachers in providing enhanced support to differently abled students in their instructional settings.

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