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Title: A Global Perspective on Teacher Attitudes Towards Inclusion:
Literature Review.

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Date of Publication (Unpublished): June 2018

Abstract

A teacher is essential in implementing inclusive policy practices into the classroom. Teacher attitudes towards inclusion, be it positive, negative or indifferent, can determine the success of an inclusive classroom and how it influences students with special educational needs and their school life. This literature review reports on information gathered from teachers about their perceptions of inclusive policy and practice, spanning over many different countries and representing individuals from a variety of cultural, religious and education backgrounds, in order to analyse which factors influence their attitudes towards inclusion. Teacher-related factors, child-related factors and environmental factors significantly impact how a teacher perceives, accepts and implements inclusion into their classroom. This synthesized research is vital in providing information and background data on teacher attitudes regarding this field of education, subsequently enabling steps towards ensuring any issues about inclusive practice in schools is immediately addressed.

The purpose of this literature review is to identify common global factors that influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion through comprehensive research analysis. The first section addresses global teacher-related factors that influence attitudes towards inclusion, the second section examines child-related factors, and the third section summarises environmental-related factors (Sandhu, 2017). A conclusion is presented that summarises what research indicates are the most significant influences contributing to teacher attitudes towards inclusion and the successful implementation of an inclusive classroom.

Introduction

Positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion are essential to the successful implementation of an inclusive classroom (Cologan, 2012; Costello & Boyle, 2013). Inclusion is conceptualised as although children, young adults and adults may have differing characteristics, interests, and learning abilities, they are entitled to and must have access to regular education that can meet their special educational needs (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education is educating students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in an equal social, cultural and educational environment that supports individual differences and learning styles. However, inclusion fundamentally depends on the willingness

of classroom teachers to accept and provide instruction to students with disabilities (Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Underwood, Valeo & Wood, 2012). Teacher attitudes play an important role in creating a positive learning environment, and teachers with a healthy and positive attitude towards inclusion are more likely to be successful in implementing inclusive practices in their classroom (Costello & Boyle, 2013; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016). In the early 1980's a survey on teacher education was conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Through data collection and analysis, it was discovered that regular classroom teachers were willing to have special needs children in their classes, but a main concern was they lacked training in this field (Odongo & Davidson, 2016; UNESCO, 1994). This research identified a concern in the reality of application regarding inclusion, and in 1994, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education in Spain organised a world conference to discuss special needs education and how to achieve inclusive practices in mainstream school settings worldwide (Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; UNESCO, 1994). However, although law and policy dictate inclusion operation in schools, the success of inclusive education is still largely dependent upon the classroom teacher implementing the theoretical concepts and policies of inclusion into practical application. From global perceptions, teacher concerns and impressions of inclusive education are influenced by common factors that

affect their attitudes towards inclusion. As inclusion requires reconstructing mainstream schooling so every child, with or without a disability, can be accommodated, the teacher is the most valuable asset in establishing and guaranteeing inclusive practices are successfully implemented. They are the individuals that adapt the pedagogy which acknowledges the difference in learning processes and educational needs of each individual student (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016). The role of the teacher is a critical determinant in the practical implementation of inclusion and its overall success, and teachers need a positive mindset, motivation and fundamental support in achieving the inclusion goal (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Varying factors affect teacher attitudes towards inclusion and it is essential to analyse teacher-reported data on what these are to ensure steps are taken that facilitate future positivity and motivation towards inclusive practices in the teaching community.

This literature review synthesises what evidence indicates are common global factors that influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Akalin, Demir, Sucuoglu, Bakkaloglu & Iscen, 2014; Alquraini, 2012; Amr, Al-Natour, Al-Abdallat & Alkhamra, 2016; Cwirynkalo, Kiswar-Ivanda, Gregory, Zyta, Arciszewska & Zrilic, 2017; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016;

Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Cordier & Falkmer, 2015). The studies are from Kenya, Croatia, Western Australia, England, Jordan, India, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Poland and Ghana, representing teachers from varying cultural, religious and educational backgrounds. The evidence presented offers a general global perspective on factors that influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion.

Teacher-Related factors

The combination of internal and external influences contributes to a teacher's attitude and perception towards their educational system, their school and their students. These attitudes can be reinforced by different factors such as fundamental personal beliefs, basic demographics or confidence in one's own teaching ability. Evidence in research suggests that global teacher-related factors that contribute to attitudes towards inclusion are age, gender, grade level taught, teacher training, background knowledge, teacher efficacy and previous experience with people with disabilities (Akalin et al., 2014; Alquraini, 2012; Amr et al., 2016; Cwirynkalo et al., 2017; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015).

Basic demographics of a teacher are associated with their attitudes towards inclusion. Research indicates that age contributed to an individual teacher's attitude towards inclusion (Cwirynkalo et al., 2017; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz et al., 2015). In general, evidence reports that older teachers hold a more negative attitude towards inclusion as these teachers may have limited or no training in inclusive education (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz, et al., 2015). Therefore, because inclusive policy requires teachers to adapt their classroom practices and teaching styles to accommodate a new group of students, this can consequent influence an older teacher's acceptance of inclusion as it potentially threatens their perceived competency associated towards working with SEN students (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz, et al., 2015). In comparison to Vaz et al. (2015) that noted teachers over 55 were less inclined towards inclusive education, some studies claimed that in research older teachers were more accepting of inclusion as they would potentially have additional experience in working with students with different educational needs and therefore be more competent in the classroom (Cwirynkalo et al., 2017; Priyadarshini and Thangarajathi, 2016). The data presented does not comprehensively indicate which age group holds more positive or negative attitudes towards inclusion, but the research does confirm that age is a factor.

Furthermore, the gender of a teacher and their attitudes to inclusion was identified in research as being a significant factor contributing to how teachers perceive inclusion (Alquraini; 2012; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz, et al., 2015). Male teachers were generally more negative towards inclusion than female teachers, yet research does not indicate whether these results reflect the attitudes towards the concept of inclusion or the actual reality of inclusive practice (Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz, et al., 2015). Vaz et al (2015) implied females hold more positive attitudes towards inclusion due to their greater tolerance and conative attitude, yet also indicated the research did not differentiate between male and female teacher attitudes towards the practice of inclusion compared to contemplating the idea of inclusion. Analysis and comparison between differing perceptions related to the theoretical and practical application of inclusion and how these individually contribute to teacher attitudes should be investigated further.

However, evidence revealed cultural circumstances influence how gender correlates with teacher attitudes towards inclusion, as seen in the research conducted by Alquraini (2012). Alquraini (2012) examined both male and female general classroom and special education teachers perspectives towards inclusion of students with severe intellectual disabilities. From the 161 male and 139 female participants, male teachers were more positive towards

inclusion. This data is contradictory to other research (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2015; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz, et al., 2015), yet Alquraini (2012) theorised the results reflect the differences between cultural and religious contexts as this data is consistent with other studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ahmadi, 2009, as cited in Alquraini, 2012). However, there is no indication of the ratio between female special education and regular classroom teachers in this study, and as females in Saudi Arabia receive their education separate from males and in specific subjects either relating to perceived wifely duties or certain occupations available to women, perhaps very few female participatory teachers received training in inclusive practices, therefore influencing the overall results.

However, it is important to note that both age and gender are not singularly significant factors that influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion. In conjunction with other factors, age and gender are notably contributors to teacher attitudes towards inclusion but are most certainly not the main cause. Age in association with the lack of teacher training and gender association with cultural influences were evident in research as integrated influences that affected attitudes towards inclusion, indicating that age and gender are probably not a predominant factor but do reinforce attitudes towards inclusion (Alquraini, 2012; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Vaz, et al., 2015).

Whether grade or age level taught contributes to teacher attitudes towards inclusion presented conflicting results in research (Alquraini 2012; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016). Priyadarshini and Thangarajathi (2016) investigated regular school teacher attitudes regarding their professional and logistical concerns of inclusive education, revealing that the level of the class influenced teacher attitudes towards inclusion, especially comparing early years and secondary students. In contrast, grade level was not a significant factor in teacher attitudes concerning students with severe intellectual disabilities and inclusion (Alquraini, 2012). Cultural contexts influencing perspectives on grade level are probable in this circumstance. In India, it is implied that general classroom teachers are the primary instructor for students with disabilities, therefore the grade and student developmental level would be an influential factor, an example being the younger years would need more attention in inclusive classroom compared to secondary students who are usually more independent and can receive instruction from their peers (Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016). In comparison, in Saudi Arabia at the time of this study, students with severe intellectual disabilities were usually educated in segregated settings, and the results reflect the possibility that general and special education teachers may not have had students with severe intellectual disabilities in their classroom, therefore grade level did not

influence their attitudes (Alquraini, 2012). Most likely, differing cultural circumstances and education policies determine whether grade level influences teacher attitudes towards inclusion, yet research indicates it is a factor, albeit a minor one.

Training in any field to build a fundamental knowledge base and increase confidence in practice is essential for any work place environment that requires a specific skill set. Teacher training in inclusive practices facilitates confidence in a teacher on their ability to work with students with SEN and increases their efficacy in implementing inclusive practices in the classroom.

Evidence informs that teacher training is a factor that contributes to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, as teachers who received training in inclusive practices and training in working with students with SEN had a more positive attitude towards inclusion than teachers with limited training (Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015). Several studies indicated that an overwhelming number of teachers stated their concern regarding their lack of training and professional development in inclusive teaching practices, and this subsequently impacted their perceived ability in successfully providing an inclusive learning environment (Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Vaz et al., 2015). Research further indicated that if teachers perceived

they could not demonstrate inclusive practices and principles due to inadequate teacher instruction, or did not understand a student's disability and how to approach it, they would not be able to successfully implement these practices in their classroom (Akalin et al., 2014; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Without adequate training teachers sensed they would experience frustration and guilt over not being able to give their best to the inclusive environment, further affected by their feelings of low confidence towards their ability to adapt the curriculum for students with SEN (Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Qualitative data research gathered from focus groups and teacher interviews revealed more acute information on teacher attitudes towards inclusion, especially concerning teacher training, with the research indicating that the success of inclusion was negatively influenced by teacher-related factors, specifically the lack of knowledge and skills in inclusive practices (Akalin et al., 2014; Odongo and Davidson, 2016). However, in contrast, some research suggested that access to special education training was not a factor contributing to teacher attitudes (Alquraini 2012; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013). These findings are somewhat surprising in comparison to evidence from other studies indicating a strong correlation between teacher training and positive teacher attitudes (Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015). Both studies had a high

rate of participants, with general classroom and special education teachers, so the logic for these contradictory results is undetermined. A possible reason is that the Mosen, Ewing and Kwoka (2013) study was more engineered towards collecting quantitative data on teacher attitudes in the classroom environment, adequacy of support and the health and stress of the teacher with only small questionnaire on teacher demographics. The limited amount of data collected on teacher training and its correlation to teacher attitudes may have contributed to the lack of statistically significant data concerning this factor. Nevertheless, a large extent of research indicates teacher training in inclusion is a predominant factor that contributes to teacher attitudes towards inclusion.

Theoretical and practical knowledge of inclusion in conjunction with teacher efficacy can influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion and successfully implementing an inclusive classroom. Research reported that knowledge on the concepts of inclusion and inclusive practice provided a fundamental base for teachers that increased their confidence, therefore giving them further motivation to employ inclusive practices in the classroom (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Vaz, et al., 2015). Investigation into the knowledge teachers held concerning the actual concept of inclusion revealed that many teachers regarded inclusion as only the physical placement of a student with SEN in the inclusive classroom

(Amr et al., 2016; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016). Amr et al. (2016) reported that nearly all teachers (86) participating in this study stated that inclusion meant only placing students with disabilities in a regular classroom with no mention of adapting the environment or accommodating their learning needs, with only a few further mentioning encouraging the social development of a student with SEN. This data was collected from regular classroom teachers in Jordan where these teachers usually place the entire responsibility of educating students with SEN on the special education teachers in the schools, therefore analysis of this research suggests the regular teachers in this context have limited knowledge on inclusive education and validates why they consider the physical placement of a student is the main purpose of inclusion in schools (Amr et al., 2016). Further data conveyed that limited knowledge held by classroom teachers negatively impact their attitude towards inclusion as it results in low teacher efficacy due to their belief they lack the expertise implementing inclusion and teaching students with SEN (Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Vaz, et al., 2015). These findings are critical as a teacher's efficacy is likely to influence the learning environment they are in and this will subsequently affect all children, whether with SEN or not, in the class (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Vaz et al., 2015).

The research revealed that years of teaching experience in the classroom has

some significance in contributing to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, yet there is a probability that other variables interact with this factor (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi 2016; Sandhu; 2017). Research from two studies conducted in India suggest years of teaching experience does influence attitudes, yet the results concerning the actual amount of experience were contradictory (Priyadarshini and Thangarajathi 2016; Sandhu; 2017). Other variables combined with years of experience, such as the type of school, training in inclusion, educational qualifications and grade level, most likely reinforce attitudes towards inclusion (Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi 2016). However, as these authors deemed it necessary to analyse data on the correlation between inclusion attitudes and years of experience in the teaching field, this suggests this factor could potentially be a significant contributor to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, especially in some cultural contexts.

Evidence confirmed that previous experience working with people with special needs, whether in a professional or personal setting, influenced teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Alquraini; 2012; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi 2016; Sandhu, 2017). Many teachers expressed concern over their lack of current professional and personal experience in working with students with SEN, but not all data measured how previous experience could

also influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Alquraini, 2012; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Vaz et al., 2015). Surprisingly, pre-service teachers who had experience with people with disabilities during their applied education course were found to have less positive attitudes towards inclusion (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Furthermore, results comparing pre-service teachers with previous experience and those without this experience before and after applied education placement revealed no significant differences in attitudes. This evidence indicates that experience in working with people with disabilities does not negatively influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion, yet neither does it reinforce positive attitudes. Most likely, the pre-service teachers were confronted with the actuality of inclusion and the reality of including students with SEN in their class (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). Research has indicated previous experience is a factor that contributes to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, yet not specific whether these attitudes are positive or negative.

Child-Related Factors

The evidence in literature reveals different child-related factors from a global perspective influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The most predominant factor is how the type of disability a student has affects teacher

attitudes towards inclusion and accepting the student into an inclusive classroom (Akalin et al., 2014; Alquraini, 2012; Amr, et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013). Evidence suggests that teachers are more accepting of students with mild disabilities as opposed to children with behavioural and multiple needs, with further analysis revealing some teachers believe there are students who will not benefit from inclusion and are therefore not suited to an inclusive classroom (Akalin et al., 2014; Alquraini, 2012; Amr, et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013). This attitude towards specific impairments is obviously a significant determinant as students who may not be advantaged by inclusive practices could disrupt the class or require extra support, subsequently affecting the successful implementation of an inclusive classroom and therefore the general attitude of the teacher. Moreover, teachers who believe they lack adequate instruction and skills in inclusive practices and working with students with special needs will most likely not be as accepting of students with undesirable behaviours or impairments, as these may present a problem to the stable learning environment, therefore influencing the teacher's perceived efficacy on implementing a successful inclusive classroom (Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Vaz, et al., 2015). Research has indicated teachers seem to be more accepting of students with characteristics of mild disabilities such as learning, visual, hearing or physical impairments as these

impairments would not disrupt the environment and the students would be easier to accommodate, both academically and socially, in the classroom (Amr et al., 2016; Cwirynkalo et al., 2017; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013).

The type of disability a student with SEN has is a significant contributor to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and in conjunction with this, research also indicated teacher attitudes were influenced by the academic ability of the student and the need for curriculum diversity as well as a student's capacity to meet the demands of the learning environment (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). The academic ability of a student with SEN and how it affects the academic success of a school was evident as a factor contributing to teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Amr et al., 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). From differing cultural contexts, teachers reported the curriculum of regular classrooms are core to the perceived effectiveness and success of the school, measured by how students learn this syllabus and therefore a relevant factor to teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Amr et al., 2014; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Data analysis revealed teachers feared the inclusion of students with SEN as the teachers would need to differentiate their curriculum to ensure students could achieve the learning requirements, they were also unsure that students lacked the skills to master the learning content and that the inclusion of these students potentially affected the academic performance of their peers without disabilities (Amr et

al., 2014; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). A curriculum is difficult to diversify if it must suit a wide range of learning styles and with the added pressure of students achieving these curriculum standards by a deadline (Amr et al., 2014). The extra workload of needing to adapt a curriculum to successfully implement an inclusive classroom and satisfy all student educational needs would understandably contribute to teacher attitudes towards inclusion as with a higher workload there is most likely increased stress. Research has already noted that teacher attitudes are influenced by the amount of training they receive regarding inclusive practices, and therefore it is justifiable that the lack of adequate instruction in modifying the curriculum to suit the academic abilities of each individual student in an inclusive classroom influences teacher attitudes and should be investigated further (Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Odongo & Davidson, 2016; Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016; Sandhu, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the data revealed teacher concern about students not being involved in classroom activities because they lacked the ability to participate, subsequently hindering them from learning the content taught in the classroom (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016). In Kenya, research noted that 85.1% of teachers indicated they were concerned about not having enough time to meet the educational needs of all students in their classroom (Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Assuming teachers must effectively employ inclusive education

practices in the classroom, they also require time to interact and support each student on their individual learning level. Evident in research, there was an apparent general negative teacher attitude towards inclusion in the Jordon study, where teachers believed students with SEN should adapt to the learning environment and not vice versa, suggesting if a student cannot meet the learning requirements due to their impairment they should not be in an inclusive classroom (Amr et al., 2016). In general, the teachers in this study did not favour inclusion, yet this reflects how a combination of factors can reinforce teacher attitudes, with the lack of appropriate infrastructure and lack of teacher training in Jordon most likely facilitating negative attitudes towards students who lack the capacity to meet the academic requirements in a typical learning environment (Amr et al., 2016). Limiting the number of special needs students in one classroom is an obvious solution yet this would also be dependent on whether the schools in each cultural context were entitled to restrict the number of students placed in their classrooms, or if law and policy allowed the school autonomy of student acceptance (Odongo & Davidson, 2016). The inability of students to meet the learning requirements of the classroom is a factor that contributes to teacher attitudes as because a teacher may not be able to meet the educational needs of every student, their efficacy in implementing a successful inclusive environment is affected, influencing their overall attitude towards inclusion (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Vaz et al.,

2015).

Environment Related Factors

External influences that are neither related to the teacher or student contribute to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, as sometimes these are issues that a teacher has no control over. Evidence indicates that class size, the adequacy of school facilities, access to extra resources and support from families and the community are factors that influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion and the successful implementation of an inclusive classroom (Alquraini , 2012; Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016).

Class size was a significant factor reported by teachers that influenced their attitudes towards inclusion, especially concerning large class sizes and a teacher's willingness to include students with SEN in the class (Alquraini , 2012; Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016).

Research noted teachers may hold negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with SEN if the class already has a large number of students and if there is an excess number of students with SEN in one classroom (Akalin et al., 2014). A large class size increases the chance of a teacher not being able to

interact with every student daily, and as evidence previously noted, teachers feared not being able to meet the educational needs of all students and a large class size with many students and a variety of learning capabilities will make this objective increasingly difficult to achieve (Odongo & Davidson, 2016).

The adequacy of school facilities and resources to support students with SEN was also evident in research as a concern that influenced teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). This included the physical structure of the school, incorporating facilities like ramps and appropriate bathrooms, as well as classroom materials and other resources to support students with disabilities.

The data revealed that the physical structure of school facilities and the lack of sufficient resources and instructional materials in the class impacted teacher attitudes towards the successful implementation of inclusive education as without these conveniences the task would be more difficult to accomplish (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016) In one study, Priyadarshini and Thangarajathi (2016) collected demographical information concerning a teacher's financial stability. The results indicated that teachers who are economically strong hold higher attitudes towards inclusive education as they would be best able to supply their

students with appropriate instructional materials. This implies that teachers in this region of India are required to, or need to, buy their own resources for their inclusive classrooms. However, it is generally assumed schools provide teacher and classroom resources, hence why research indicates this factor is reported on in other studies as contributing to teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Nketsia, Saloviita & Gyimah, 2016; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Only this study conducted comparative research concerning the personal financial situation of teachers, therefore further data on this aspect may only be relevant in certain contexts (Priyadarshini & Thangarajathi, 2016).

Furthermore, internal support from teacher assistants, other staff members, school administration and external support from families and the community can influence teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Research confirmed that the higher the adequacy of support, whether internal or external, was indicative of higher positive attitudes towards inclusion (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Teachers who lack support and feel unsupported are more likely to be less positive towards inclusion, and this is a critical factor as teachers without support and negative attitudes are less inclined to provide

learning environments suitable for students with or without SEN (Akalin et al., 2014; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Evidence also revealed that support from the families and society is also essential in influencing teacher attitudes, with research implying that negative attitudes towards disability and limited support from families and society towards inclusion or to the teachers is a fundamental barrier in hindering inclusion (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016). Teachers in Kenya reported that the amount of support they received to implement an inclusive program was a contributing factor to its overall success, primarily dependent on the positive attitudes of teachers but also support from school administration allowing the teacher some autonomy in the decision making process in their classroom (Odongo & Davidson, 2016). The findings suggest teachers who have higher positive attitudes towards inclusion make a greater effort to adapt their learning environment to provide a positive atmosphere for students with SEN, and providing teachers with internal and external support will facilitate developing these positive attitudes that will affect the inclusive classroom (Akalin et al., 2014; Amr et al., 2016; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2013; Odongo & Davidson, 2016).

Conclusion

Evidence from several studies identify significant and minor factors that teachers report influence their attitudes towards inclusion. Research was gathered from a variety of cultural contexts with data analysis revealing the similarities between teacher perspectives towards inclusion from around the globe. In general, research indicated teacher training in inclusive practices, the type of disability of a student and the adequacy of facilities and resources available were the most significant factors influencing teacher attitudes towards inclusion. It was also evident in research that a combination of factors reinforced teacher attitudes, not just one single factor in entirety. Research from this selected literature gives a more global perspective of teacher attitudes towards inclusion as compared to just being situated in one cultural context, yet it cannot be assumed that the research presented is a generalised representation of teacher attitudes in each specific country. However, it does offer insight into global teacher perspectives regarding inclusive education and what factors influence their attitudes towards it. In conclusion, the research has identified global influences that contribute to teacher attitudes towards inclusion, and the implications of this data provide important information for further investigation into teacher needs and potential solutions that support inclusion in schools. Continued study in this field will advocate for the essential component in implementing successful inclusive practices, the classroom teacher.

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