Article

Perceived Issues and Challenges in Educational Landscape

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Abstract: This study examined the challenges faced by teachers in special education and inclusive classrooms. The results indicated no statistically significant correlation between these challenges and students' achievement. Despite this, the findings emphasized the importance of targeted professional development, particularly in areas like differentiated instruction and collaborative teaching strategies. Additionally, improved administrative support was identified as a key factor in reducing teacher workload. Although these challenges did not directly impact academic outcomes, mitigating them could enhance instructional effectiveness and classroom dynamics. The study highlights the critical role of stakeholder collaboration and the allocation of sufficient resources in promoting a more successful inclusive education environment.

Introduction

Special education encompasses customized instructional approaches tailored to meet the distinct needs of students with disabilities (Alnahdi et al., 2024). These programs involve specialized teaching methods designed to support learning in various settings, including traditional classrooms, home environments, and even hospitals (Francisco et al., 2020). In contrast, inclusive education aims to incorporate students with disabilities into general education classrooms, ensuring they learn alongside their peers while receiving the necessary support and accommodations (Skinner et al., 2024). This dual framework reflects the global progression of educational systems, which have increasingly emphasized both individualized support and inclusive practices (Wang & Hartman, 2020).

The relevance of special education in modern schooling lies in its ability to offer personalized assistance that promotes both academic achievement and holistic development for students with disabilities

(Francisco et al., 2020). With evolving educational policies, many nations are now emphasizing inclusive education by adopting systems that promote the integration of students with special needs into mainstream classrooms (Cerna et al., 2021). Teachers operating in both special education and inclusive environments play a pivotal role, often having to balance the unique needs of individual learners with the broader goals of a diverse classroom (Wang et al., 2020). Their responsibilities have expanded significantly, requiring adaptability, teamwork, and the implementation of evidence-based strategies to address varied learning needs (Hartman et al., 2020).

Recognizing the difficulties teachers face in special and inclusive settings is essential, as these challenges significantly influence the quality and effectiveness of instruction (Allam & Martin, 2021). Educators often grapple with aligning individualized education plans with whole-class objectives, particularly when confronted with limited resources (Wang et al., 2020). Understanding these obstacles is vital to shaping professional development initiatives that enhance teacher capability and preparedness for inclusive education (Francisco et al., 2020). Without this understanding, inclusive education policies may falter in practice, resulting in unmet student needs and increased teacher burnout (Hester et al., 2020).

The challenges encountered by teachers in these settings can have far-reaching consequences for students, educators, and the broader educational system (Wray et al., 2022). When teachers are overwhelmed, students with disabilities may not receive adequate academic or social support, which can hinder their learning and integration (Wang et al., 2020). For educators, juggling the demands of a diverse classroom and individual support often leads to stress, job dissatisfaction, and burnout (Hartman et al., 2020). On a systemic level, unresolved challenges can obstruct the effective implementation of inclusion policies, creating a disconnect between policy objectives and actual classroom practices (Brennan & King, 2022).

Conducting research into these teacher challenges is vital to inform both policy decisions and classroom practices (Beaton et al., 2021). Policymakers need empirical data to understand barriers such as inadequate training, resource limitations, and the complexities of addressing diverse student needs (Wang et al., 2020). By identifying these issues, stakeholders can introduce strategic interventions that support teachers and improve student learning outcomes (Hartman et al., 2020). Additionally, such insights are crucial for developing

professional development programs that prepare educators for the realities of inclusive teaching environments.

There remains a clear gap in research regarding the specific difficulties teachers face in special education and inclusive settings—particularly around addressing individual learning needs, managing administrative duties, and fostering effective collaboration with colleagues. Many educators report difficulties balancing differentiated instruction with managing group dynamics, which can reduce the impact of inclusive teaching strategies (Francisco et al., 2020). Administrative responsibilities further compound these issues by diverting time and energy from direct instruction (Wang & Hartman, 2020). Moreover, while collaboration is critical for successful inclusion, teachers frequently identify it as an area needing more structured support and coordination (Jurkowski et al., 2023).

This study holds substantial value for both schools and educators, as it sheds light on the complex challenges teachers navigate within inclusive classrooms. For educational institutions, the findings can drive improvements in policy, resource distribution, and teacher training to better support inclusion efforts. For teachers, understanding these challenges provides a foundation for advocating for the tools and professional development needed to enhance their effectiveness. Ultimately, this research contributes to building a more equitable and inclusive education system that serves all learners, especially those with special needs.

Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative research design to investigate the challenges faced by teachers working in special education and inclusive classroom settings. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research involves the systematic gathering and analysis of numerical data, allowing researchers to detect patterns, examine relationships between variables, and generalize results to broader populations. This method proved effective for the study, as it enabled a structured analysis of teacher challenges in relation to demographic factors such as age, gender, and years of teaching experience. Data were collected using survey questionnaires that included both closed-ended and open-ended items. To ensure reliability and validity, the survey incorporated adapted instruments such as the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) Scale developed by Sharma et al. (2012) and the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP). The questionnaire explored key areas including challenges in addressing individual learner needs, managing administrative responsibilities, and fostering collaboration with colleagues. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, which

allowed researchers to quantify participants' levels of agreement with statements reflecting common issues in inclusive teaching environments. This quantitative approach enabled the analysis of extensive data sets, identification of relevant patterns, and examination of factors that influence teacher efficacy in inclusive education.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Meeting Individual Learners' Needs

Meeting Individual Learners' Needs	Mean	VD
Teachers often report insufficient training in differentiating instruction for diverse learners, particularly those with special needs	3.20	A
Lack of appropriate resources and materials tailored to individual learning needs is a significant barrier	3.00	MA
Large class sizes hinder the ability of teachers to provide individualized attention to each student	3.20	MA
Teachers struggle with the time required to plan and implement individualized education plans (IEPs) effectively	3.22	A
Managing the diverse behavioral needs of students with disabilities adds complexity to meeting individual learning needs.	3.34	A
Grand Mean	3.19	MA

The data in Table 1 highlight the various challenges teachers face in addressing the individual needs of students in special and inclusive education settings. The overall grand mean of 3.19, interpreted as Moderately Agree, indicates that while teachers do not strongly affirm these challenges, they experience them to a considerable extent. The highest-rated item, with a mean of 3.34, reflects teachers' agreement that managing the diverse behavioral needs of students with disabilities adds complexity to meeting individual learning needs. Similarly, teachers agree that insufficient training in differentiated instruction (mean = 3.20) and the time required to effectively plan and implement individualized education plans (IEPs) (mean = 3.22) are notable challenges. In addition, the lack of appropriate resources (mean = 3.00) and large class sizes (mean = 3.20) were also acknowledged as moderate barriers to providing individualized support. These findings suggest that while teachers are making efforts to meet learners' diverse needs, they are constrained by limited training, resources, time, and classroom conditions—factors that may impede effective inclusive teaching practices.

The data in Table 2 reflect teachers' perceptions of the administrative challenges associated with special and inclusive education. The grand mean of 3.11, interpreted as Moderately Agree (MA), indicates that teachers moderately experience administrative tasks as burdensome, though certain aspects are viewed as more problematic than others.

Table 2. Handling administrative work

Handling administrative work	Mean	VD
Teachers report that administrative tasks, such as documentation and reporting, consume a significant amount of time that could be used for teaching	3.10	MA
The process of creating, updating, and monitoring IEPs is labor-intensive and often overwhelming for teachers	3.10	MA
Teachers frequently cite insufficient support from school administration in managing the administrative workload associated with special education	3. 20	A
Balancing teaching duties with administrative responsibilities leads to significant time management challenges	3.04	MA
he needs to comply with numerous regulations and standards, such as those mandated by IDEA, adds to the administrative burden	3.27	A
Grand Mean	3.11	MA

The highest-rated item, with a mean of 3.27, suggests that compliance with regulations and standards, such as those required by IDEA, contributes significantly to teachers' administrative workload. Teachers also agree that they receive insufficient support from school administration in managing these responsibilities (mean = 3.20), pointing to a lack of institutional backing. Tasks like documentation, reporting, and IEP development and monitoring (both with a mean of 3.10) are seen as time-consuming, taking away from instructional time. Additionally, balancing these administrative duties with teaching obligations presents time management difficulties (mean = 3.04). Overall, the data highlight how administrative demands—especially when unsupported—can detract from teachers' instructional focus and contribute to stress and inefficiency in inclusive settings.

Table 3. Collaborating with colleagues

Collaborating with colleagues	Mean	VD
Challenges in effectively communicating with parents, particularly those of children with special needs, can hinder collaboration	2.63	MA
Teachers often lack formal training in collaborative practices with colleagues and parents, which is crucial in inclusive settings	2.50	MA
Finding time for effective collaboration with colleagues and parents amidst teaching and administrative duties is challenging	2.83	MA
Unclear roles and responsibilities between general and special education teachers can lead to ineffective collaboration	2.70	MA
Parental involvement is often inconsistent, making it difficult to maintain a unified approach to supporting the student's needs	2.80	MA
Grand Mean	2.70	MA

Table 3 presents data on the challenges teachers face when collaborating with colleagues and parents in inclusive education settings. The grand mean of 2.70, interpreted as Moderately Agree (MA), suggests that while collaboration is recognized as important,

teachers only moderately agree that it is consistently effective or well-supported. The highest-rated item, with a mean of 2.83, indicates that finding time for meaningful collaboration amid teaching and administrative responsibilities is a significant obstacle. Similarly, inconsistent parental involvement (mean = 2.80) and unclear roles between general and special education teachers (mean = 2.70) are seen as barriers to effective teamwork. Teachers also moderately agree that communication with parents of children with special needs can be challenging (mean = 2.63), and that a lack of formal training in collaborative practices (mean = 2.50) limits their ability to work effectively with others. These results suggest that although collaboration is a key element of inclusive education, structural and practical limitations—such as time constraints, unclear responsibilities, and insufficient training—undermine its success. Addressing these issues could strengthen coordinated support for students with special needs.

Table 4. Students' Academic Performance

Subject	Grade	VD
English	85.65	Very Satisfactory
Mathematics	85.43	Very Satisfactory

The data presented in Table 5 reflects the academic performance of students in two key subjects: English and Mathematics. The students achieved an average grade of 85.65 in English and 85.43 in Mathematics, both of which fall under the Very Satisfactory category. These scores indicate that the students are performing well in both subjects, consistently achieving grades that demonstrate a strong understanding of the material. The relatively close averages in the two subjects suggest that the students are maintaining a balanced level of competence across different academic areas. This performance can be seen as a positive reflection of the instructional strategies and support provided by the teachers, despite the challenges they face in special education and inclusive settings. It highlights the potential effectiveness of inclusive education practices when teachers are able to manage the complexities of their role.

Table 5 presents the statistical analysis of the relationship between the challenges teachers face in inclusive settings and students' performance in English. The results show that none of the examined constructs—meeting individual learners' needs, handling administrative work, and collaborating with colleagues—demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with students' English performance, as indicated by p-values greater than 0.05 across all variables.

Table 5. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Challenges encountered and English Performance

Constructs	r-value	t-value	P value	Remarks	Decision
Meeting individual learners' needs	0.690	1.90	0.370	Not Significant	Do not reject
Handling administrative work	-0.501	-1.23	0.250	Not significant	Do not reject
Collaborating with colleagues	0.215	1.49	0.614	Not significant	Do not reject

The construct "meeting individual learners' needs" had a positive r-value of 0.690 and a t-value of 1.90, suggesting a moderate positive correlation, yet the p-value of 0.370 indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant. Similarly, "handling administrative work" showed a negative correlation (r = -0.501) with a t-value of -1.23, but the p-value of 0.250 suggests this relationship is also not significant. Lastly, "collaborating with colleagues" had a weak positive correlation (r = 0.215) and a t-value of 1.49, with a p-value of 0.614, further confirming a lack of significance. These findings imply that, while teachers experience various challenges in inclusive settings, these do not appear to have a direct, statistically significant impact on students' English academic performance within the context of this study. It is possible that other mediating factors such as teaching strategies, student motivation, or parental support play a more substantial role in influencing academic outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings show that although teachers in special and inclusive education settings face challenges—such as addressing individual learner needs, managing administrative tasks, and collaborating with colleagues these do not have a statistically significant impact on students' academic performance. Nonetheless, the need for enhanced teacher training in differentiated instruction and collaboration, along with stronger administrative support, remains clear. Addressing these areas through targeted professional development and better resource allocation could ease teacher workload and strengthen inclusive education. While current challenges may not directly hinder academic outcomes, improving systemic support and collaboration is vital for the long-term success of inclusive practices.

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