



## TEACHERS' SENTIMENTS, ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SELF-EFFICACY FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

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### Abstract:

The present study explores Greek teachers' attitudes and sentiments about inclusive education and their overall self-efficacy in instructing students with disabilities. Further aims of the study are: (i) to determine the degree to which teachers' sentiments, attitudes, and concerns towards inclusion can be a predictive factor for teaching self-efficacy and (ii) to investigate the extent to which demographic variables and occupational profile are related to attitudes, perceptions, and concerns of inclusion and teachers' self-efficacy. 165 Greek teachers responded to (1) The Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised [SACIE-R] (Forlin *et al.*, 2011), (b) Teaching Students with Disability Efficacy Scale - TSDES (Dawson & Scott, 2013). The findings showed a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy for implementing inclusive practices and their attitudes, sentiments, and concerns regarding inclusive education. Greek educators are in favour of inclusive education, feeling positive about it and acting like positive role models. Self-efficacy is predicted by their attitudes, perceptions, and concerns which are influenced by demographic factors. The regression analysis indicated that self-efficacy in the effective adoption of inclusion is correlated with teachers' attitudes and perceptions. Results may help shape the curriculum for teacher preparation programs to further support inclusive education.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, self-efficacy, teachers' attitudes, sentiments, concerns

### 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs until 2030 (United Nations, 2019), include, among others, the examination of discrimination and ensuring equal access for children

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to all levels of education, including persons with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Inclusion is a reformatinal process that aims to accept diversity, examine social inequalities, and remove social exclusion (Alkahtani, 2016; Koutsouris *et al.*, 2020; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018; Sharma *et al.*, 2012). Orientation towards equal opportunities, empowerment, and social inclusion of vulnerable groups is a challenge for educational systems (Daroini *et al.*, 2022; Troupkou & Gdodeli, 2023; Yada & Savolainen, 2017). Regarding students with disabilities, pertinent studies have demonstrated that (a) the successful integration of inclusive practices is largely dependent on the role, skills, abilities, and self-efficacy of educators (Block *et al.*, 2013; Pit-ten Cate *et al.*, 2018; Yada & Savolainen, 2017), and (b) the extent to which teaching staff and school principals have cultivated positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Boyle *et al.*, 2020; Forlin *et al.*, 2011; Saloviita, 2020). The willingness of educators to support and satisfy the various needs of students with disabilities in the classroom determines how successful the adoption of inclusive education will be (Gilor & Katz, 2017; Mouchritsa *et al.*, 2022).

This study investigates the attitudes feelings, and concerns Greek educators experience about inclusive education in connection to their confidence in their ability to teach students with disabilities. The current study also aimed to ascertain the extent to which teachers' attitudes, views and concerns regarding inclusion as well as their self-efficacy, were influenced by the occupational profile and demographic characteristics. Its specific goal was to ascertain the degree to which teaching self-efficacy can be predicted by teachers' attitudes, sentiments, and concerns regarding inclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Teachers' Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns About Inclusive Education

Effective inclusive teaching is directly influenced by teachers' positive attitudes and perceptions of inclusion, taking into account a considerable number of contemporary published investigations (Boyle *et al.*, 2020; Forlin, 2013; Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016; Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019; Lüke & Grosche, 2018; Rekaa *et al.*, 2019; Saloviita, 2020; Sukbunpant *et al.*, 2013). It has been suggested that educators can successfully implement inclusive education practices if they have the right knowledge, abilities, and skills and have a positive attitude toward inclusive education (Coelho *et al.*, 2017; Emmers *et al.*, 2020; Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Parey, 2023). Hofman and Kilimo (2014) assert that educators who have a positive attitude toward students who have special needs or disabilities also have a greater faith in the students' abilities and are more supportive of inclusion. Consequently, teachers' behavioral intentions can be predicted by their attitudes about inclusion (Emmers *et al.*, 2020). One of the most important factors in increasing the participation disabled students in school processes and evert day practices is the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about inclusion (Avramidis *et al.*, 2019; Sharma & Sokal, 2015).

Even though most teachers believe that students with disabilities and special educational needs can gain significant advantages from inclusion, most teachers express concerns about the effective implementation of inclusive practices (Butakor, Ampadu &

Suleiman, 2020) and if inclusion is being applied globally, it's critical to ascertain whether it benefits each cohort equally, and if not, it should be ascertained why not (Russell *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, teachers feel more comfortable when this group of students is placed in special education classes (Zoniou –Sideri & Vlachou, 2006). According to studies (Jury *et al.*, 2021; Greguol *et al.*, 2018) instructors' attitudes do depend on how severe a student's disability or special education needs are. Students with mild disabilities are typically accepted into regular settings with ease (Forlin *et al.*, 2011; Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Pappas *et al.*, 2018), while moderate or high disabilities usually manifest negative attitudes on the part of teachers (Pappas *et al.*, 2018; Sparling, 2002).

Moreover, several educators contend that they are not qualified to instruct students with disabilities and that they should not be required to do so on their own without assistance (Akçamete & Dağlı Gökbulut, 2018; Anglim *et al.*, 2018). Research by Forlin (2013) and Candeias *et al.* (2021) found that due to teachers' lack of knowledge and skills to tutor students with disabilities, teachers experience elevated levels of stress and burnout. Therefore, the attitude of educators and their readiness to welcome students with disabilities and/or special education needs in their classrooms will determine the success of integration (Mouchritsa *et al.*, 2022). Less favorable attitudes and perceptions towards inclusion, create negative feelings about it (Tuncay & Kizilaslan, 2022) and are related to higher levels of stress (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017).

## **2.2 Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Inclusive Practices**

The concept of self-efficacy is generally defined as a person's belief and faith that they possess the ability to perform a specific task under specific circumstances (Bandura *et al.*, 1999). Self-efficacy beliefs influence emotions, effort, persistence in the face of adversity, course of action, and degree of task completion (Bandura, 1995). Hofman and Kilimo (2014) note that teachers characterized by high levels of self-efficacy are more open to new ideas and methods and more willing to take into account the individual needs of students in their educational practice. Educators with high self-efficacy beliefs feel capable of responding to the special demands of students, shaping a positive learning environment, developing effective teaching strategies, display empathetic behaviors toward children with disabilities, and are a critical and decisive factor in inclusion (Voulgaraki *et al.*, 2023; Wray *et al.*, 2022; Katsora *et al.*, 2022; Tümkeya & Miller, 2020).

Teachers who perceive their self-efficacy as having high standards, maintain control of the classroom even in cases of difficulties, attract students' interest, and motivate students to high academic achievements (Woodcock & Hardy, 2023; Cherry, 2020; Hussain *et al.*, 2022; Klassen & Tze, 2014). Moreover, teachers experience higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of job stress (Jentsch *et al.*, 2023; Ortan *et al.*, 2021; Nwosu *et al.*, 2021).

Van Mieghem *et al.* (2022) reported that in comparison to students with a single diagnosis, teachers' self-efficacy is lower when it comes to students with multiple diagnoses and it is also lower when it comes to students with behavioral and/or socioemotional disorders than when it comes to students with learning disabilities. These

findings provide evidence that teacher self-efficacy levels may be influenced by the type and severity of a disability. Shaukat *et al.* (2019) argued that the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers were found to be significantly influenced by their, gender, age, academic education and teaching experience. When it came to teaching students with a variety of needs, female teachers demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs than their male counterparts. In contrast, Hauerwas and Mahon (2018) found that notwithstanding differences in how each country views disability and approaches inclusive education, factors such as gender, demographics prior training, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience do not appear to have had a significant impact on the self-efficacy of teachers of disabled students.

### **3.3 Teachers' Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns towards Inclusive Education and Self-efficacy**

Katsora *et al.* (2022) and Voulgaraki *et al.* (2023) inextricably link teachers' emotional intelligence and sentiments about inclusive education with teaching effectiveness and argue that emotionally intelligent teachers are characterized by high levels of self-efficacy in adopting and implementing successful inclusive practices. Savolainen *et al.* (2022) in a study conducted on a large sample of 1326 teachers in Finland found that teacher self-efficacy has a positive effect on both teachers' attitudes and perceptions and their concerns towards inclusive education. As they note, the increase in the self-efficacy of educational staff regarding inclusive practices positively changes their attitudes towards inclusion (Savolainen *et al.*, 2022; Savolainen *et al.*, 2012). At the same time, a key inhibiting factor for inclusive practices is a reduced sense of self-efficacy (Boyle *et al.*, 2020).

In a sample of 1163 teachers, Ozokcu (2018) revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between the attitudes of educational staff and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices. Furthermore, it contended that teacher self-efficacy is a significant predictor of teacher attitudes toward inclusive education. However, the inclusive environment is a demanding work environment for typical school teachers and teachers face many difficulties in implementing inclusive education, especially in managing students with different types of disabilities (Mamgain, 2018; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Consequently, teachers characterized by low levels of self-efficacy face more problems when implementing inclusive education (Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Similar results were found in a study by Jordic *et al.* (2023) which revealed that teachers show moderate levels of self-efficacy in teaching students with physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities. Yada and Savolainen (2017) in a study conducted on 359 Japanese teachers, showed that although teachers maintain positive feelings towards disabilities, they have strong concerns about the successful implementation of inclusive education, and the levels of self-efficacy especially in matters of behavior management and cooperation were relatively low (Yada & Savolainen, 2017; Yada *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, the goal of Yada *et al.* (2022) in a meta-analytic study was to determine if various moderators had an impact on the relationship between teachers'

attitudes and self-efficacy. They discovered that the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their self-efficacy was not significantly predicted by either sample characteristics (i.e., cultural differences, grade level taught, and percentage of female participants) or publication characteristics (i.e., publication type and year). These results imply that, although the degree of teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy may vary depending on the factors, the relationship between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy is fairly universal, independent of time, culture, grade level taught, or gender (Van Steen & Wilson, 2020). Besides that, Sharma *et al.* (2018) found that attitudes and efficacy emerged as significant predictors of participants' intentions to include students with disabilities in regular classrooms in a study that examined teachers from Australia and Italy. Furthermore, researchers (Malinen *et al.*, 2012) report that the sense of efficacy is a predictive factor of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

### 3. Material and Methods

#### 3.1 Sample

The study sample was one hundred and sixty-five (N=165) teachers, of which 73.3% (n=121) were female and 26.7% (n=44) were male. Regarding age, 21.8% (n=36) were 22-30 years old, 41.2% (n=68) were 31-40 years old, 19.4% (n=32) were between 41-50 years old, while 17.6% (n=29) were over 51 years of age. Regarding the educational level of the participants, 38.8% (n=64) had basic studies, 58.8% (n=97) had a master's degree, and 2.4% (n=4) held a PhD. Regarding teaching experience, 44.8% (n=74) had experience from 0-5 years, 18.8% (n=31) had experience between 6-10 years, 23% (n=38) between 11-20 years and 13.3% (n=22) had more than 21 years of experience. Regarding the level of schooling employed, 63.6% (n=105) worked in primary education while 36.4% (n=60) worked in secondary education. Finally, regarding studies in special education, 42.4% (n=70) had specialized studies in special education whereas 57.6% (n=95) had studied only in typical education. However, 73.9% (n=122) had training in special education.

#### 3.2 Research Tools

For the needs of the study the following scientific instruments were used: (a) The Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised - SACIE-R (Forlin *et al.*, 2011) and (b) Teaching Students with Disability Efficacy Scale – TSDDES, (Dawson & Scott, 2013). The SACIE-R scale examines on a 4-point Likert scale (1) teachers' sentiments when teaching students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, (2) teachers' attitudes, i.e. to what extent the teachers accept the specific students, and (3) teachers' concerns towards inclusive education. The Teaching Students with Disability Efficacy Scale, examines on a 9-point Likert scale, dimensions of teachers' self-efficacy when teaching students with disabilities and/or special educational needs such as (1) instructions, (2) professionalism, (3) teaching support (4) classroom management and (5) related duties.

### 3.3 Statistical Analyses

Gender, years of age, level of education, teaching experience, level of schooling employed, and education in Special Education were used as independent variables. The questionnaires factors were used as the dependent variables. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between sentiments/attitudes/concerns about inclusive education and teachers' self-efficacy in their educational work. Furthermore t-tests for independent groups were used to correlate sentiments/attitudes/concerns about inclusive education and self-efficacy with the independent variables such as gender, special education, the workforce, and level of education. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the independent variables which included demographic factors such as age, level of education and teaching experience. Finally, Linear Regression Analysis was used to create a predictive model of sentiments/attitudes/concerns about inclusive education and teachers' self-efficacy in including students with disabilities.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Internal Consistency and Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha statistical index was utilized to evaluate the internal consistency and check the reliability of each factor. According to researchers (McNeish, 2018; Taber, 2018), values greater than .70 are considered satisfactory and values above .90 are excellent. It emerged that the reliability of the research questionnaires is high to excellent, as the values of the Cronbach's Alpha index ranged: (i) for the SACIE: Sentiments  $\alpha = 0.733$  attitudes  $\alpha = 0.825$  concerns  $\alpha = 0.738$  ενώ (ii) for the TSDES: instruction  $\alpha = 0.923$  professionalism  $\alpha = 0.883$  teacher support  $\alpha = 0.897$  classroom management  $\alpha = 0.872$  and related duties  $\alpha = 0.878$ .

### 4.2 Sociodemographic Characteristics and Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns towards Inclusive Education

Generally, teachers seem to have developed positive sentiments and attitudes towards inclusion, however, they maintain a relative concern about the degree of positive inclusive practices. Table 1 lists the average figures Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of factors regarding Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns towards inclusive education.

**Table 1:** Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised - SACIE-R

Factors SACIE-R	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sentiments	165	3.01	0.53
Attitudes	165	3.05	0.64
Concerns	165	2.45	0.59
SACIE-R	165	2.84	0.38

The t-test for independent groups revealed a statistically significant difference in the SACIE-R questionnaire in terms of the gender variable, where the average of women ( $M = 2.78$ ) was statistically smaller ( $t(159) = -2.975, p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ) than the male counterpart ( $M = 2.98$ ). Regarding the age variable, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests on the SACIE-R questionnaire showed statistically significant differences  $F(3,157) = 0.113, p = 0.019 < 0.05$ , where teachers aged 31-40 ( $M = 2.89$ ), followed by teachers aged 22-30 ( $M = 2.87$ ) appear more positive but also more worried about inclusive education, while teachers over 50 ( $M = 2.63$ ) appear less positive and less concerned about inclusive education. Regarding the teaching experience variable, the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests on the SACIE-R questionnaire showed a statistically significant difference in the mean values ( $F(3,157) = 2.679, p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ). Specifically, teachers with up to 10 years of teaching experience are found to have overall more positive feelings and attitudes but also greater levels of concern ( $M = 2.98$ ), compared to teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience ( $M = 2.71$ ).

### 4.3 Sociodemographic Characteristics and Teaching Students with Disability Self-Efficacy

The participants evaluated their self-efficacy as very high in the factors (a) teaching support ( $M = 8.11 \pm 0.91$ ) and (b) professionalism ( $M = 8.20 \pm 0.84$ ), as relatively high in the classroom management factor ( $M = 7.10 \pm 1.17$ ) and as less high in the factors (a) instructions ( $M = 6.66 \pm 1.39$ ) and (b) related duties ( $M = 6.21 \pm 2.40$ ). Table 2 lists the average figures Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of factors regarding Teaching Students with Disability Self-Efficacy.

**Table 1:** Teaching Students with Disability Efficacy Scale – TSDES

Factors TSDES	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instructions	6.66	1.39
Professionalism	8.20	0.84
Teachers Support	8.11	0.91
Classroom Management	7.10	1.17
Related Duties	6.21	2.40
TSDES	7.29	0.94

The t-test controls for independent groups, in the TSDES questionnaire showed statistically significant differences in terms of the gender variable, where the mean of women ( $M = 7.13$ ) was statistically lower ( $t(159) = -3.715, p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) than the male counterpart ( $M = 7.74$ ). Concerning the teaching experience variable, the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests on the TSDES questionnaire showed that teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience are characterized by a higher level of self-efficacy in terms of the "Instructions" factors  $F(3,157) = 2.677, p = 0.049 < 0.05$ ) and "Teaching Support"  $F(3,157) = 3.156, p = 0.026 < 0.05$ ) compared to the rest of the teachers, while teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience show the lowest level self-efficacy in terms of the two aforementioned factors ( $M = 5.69$  and  $M = 7.73$  respectively). In addition,

the independent sample t-test regarding the specialized studies or not in special education, showed a statistically significant difference in the mean values in the TSDES ( $t(159) = -2.195, p = 0.030 < 0.05$ ). Specifically, the average of teachers who have specialized studies in special education ( $M = 7.48$ ) is statistically greater ( $t(159) = -2.195, p = 0.030 < 0.05$ ) than the corresponding one of teachers who do not have studies in Special Education ( $M = 7.15$ )

#### 4.4 Correlating Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education and Teachers' Efficacy (Spearman rho)

The possible correlation of teachers' emotions/attitudes/concerns with their teaching self-efficacy was examined through the Spearman Correlation Coefficient. The results showed a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between the variables ( $r = 0.521, p = 0.000$ ) (Table 3), which indicates that the change in one variable leads to a corresponding change in the other variable. Therefore, when teachers' feelings and perceptions towards inclusion are more positive and their concerns are limited, then their level of self-efficacy in adopting inclusive practices increases.

**Table 3:** Correlation Coefficient SACIE-R and TSDES

Factor		SACIE-R
TSDES	r	0.521
	p	0.000
	N	1
*p < 0.00		

**Table 4:** Spearman's rho Sentiments/Attitudes/Concerns X Self-efficacy

	TSDES	Sentiments	Attitudes	Concerns	Instructions	Professionalism	Teaching Support	Classroom Management	Related Duties
Sentiments	0,420**	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Attitudes	0,318**	<b>0,18</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Concerns	0,282**	0,380**	<b>0,008</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-
Instructions	0,804**	0,371**	0,288**	0,436**	1	-	-	-	-
Professionalism	0,726**	0,216**	0,305**	<b>0,144</b>	0,484**	1	-	-	-
Teaching Support	0,614**	<b>0,113</b>	0,179*	0,207**	0,349**	0,744**	1	-	-
Classroom Management	0,770**	0,416**	0,171*	0,254**	0,564**	0,491**	0,546**	1	-
Related Duties	0,683**	0,316**	0,184*	<b>-0,004</b>	0,347**	0,234**	<b>0,109</b>	0,392**	1
SACIE-R	0,521**	0,674**	0,577*	0,697**	0,561**	0,348**	0,261**	0,422*	0,250**

(\* = p-value < 0.05, \*\* = p-value < 0.01)



According to the intensity of the correlation, a fairly strong correlation emerged regarding the factors (a) instructions, (b) classroom management, (c) professionalism and (d) teaching support (Table 4).

#### 4.5 Teachers' Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns About Inclusive Education as a Predictor of Self-efficacy - Multiple Regression Analysis

Characterized by a moderate level of predictive ability since the R Square index obtained a value of 0.272 (Table 5; Table 6). This indicates that the independent variable only accounts for 27% of the variance of the dependent variable. The results of the analysis showed that there are other predictive factors of self-efficacy and therefore further research is needed.

**Table 2:** Linear Regression Model TSDDES & SACIE\_R

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.521	0.272	0.267	0.81139	2.154

**Table 6:** Linear Regression Coefficients TSDDES & SACIE\_R

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.627	0.481		7.545	0.000
	SACIE_R	1.292	0.168	0.521	7.704	0.000

The outcomes of the linear regression analysis matched when the SACIE\_R scale's subfactors were considered. Specifically, it was found that there is statistically significant and positive correlation (sig. = 0,000 < 0,05) between in SACIE\_R large scale and teachers' self-efficacy regarding inclusion. Nevertheless, the results of the analysis showed that teachers' concerns for inclusion are not a significant predictor on their self-efficacy towards it. In the instance, the indicator R-Square yielded value of 0.290, indicating a moderate level of predictive ability for the linear regression model, which, based on the data in the following tables, took the form  $TSDDES = 3,434 + 0,634 * Sentiments + 0,454 * Attitudes$  (Table 7; Table 8).

**Table 7:** Linear Regression Model TSDDES & SACIE\_R (subfactors)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.539	0.290	0.277	0.80623	2.151

**Table 8:** Linear Regression Coefficients TSDDES & SACIE\_R (subfactors)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.434	0.488		7.042	0.000
	Sentiments	0.634	0.128	0.360	4.950	0.000
	Attitudes	0.454	0.098	0.310	4.616	0.000
	Concerns	0.230	0.117	0.143	1.970	0.051

## 5. Discussion

The study's findings supported the primary research hypothesis, which held that there was a positive relationship between teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom and their attitudes/sentiments/concerns regarding inclusive education. It seems that the effect of emotions is stronger than the effect of attitudes, while teachers' concerns about inclusive education do not significantly affect their level of self-efficacy when adopting inclusive practices in the classroom. The aforementioned findings further strengthen the results of other studies (Forlin *et al.*, 2010; Forlin, *et al.*, 2011; Mamgain, 2018; Ozokcu, 2018; Sharma, *et al.*, 2012; Sharma & Sokal, 2015; Savolainen *et al.*, 2022; Urton *et al.*, 2014), which concluded that teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive education contribute to increasing their level of self-efficacy in teaching students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards students with disabilities and/or special learning needs seem to be influenced by teachers' characteristics, such as gender, age, educational experience, and specialized studies in Special Education. Moreover, the level of their perceived self-efficacy seems to be significantly influenced by gender characteristics, teaching experience, and carrying out specialized studies in the field of special education. Regarding the gender of the teachers, the results of the study showed that male teachers seem to maintain more positive attitudes and appear more receptive to the co-education of students with disabilities compared to their female colleagues. These results are in line with studies, which show that males are receiving higher scores on positive attitudes than females (Colmenero *et al.*, 2019; Emmers *et al.*, 2020).

The results are not confirmed by several studies that report more positive attitudes of women toward inclusion (Vaz *et al.*, 2015; Mohamed Emam & Al-Mahdy, 2020; Avramidis *et al.*, 2019; Navarro-Mateu *et al.*, 2019; Shaukat *et al.*, 2019), nor didn't support that gender significantly affect teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education (Orakci *et al.*, 2016; Hofman and Kilimo, 2014; Yada *et al.*, 2022; Savolainen *et al.*, 2022). Regarding age, the present study supports that younger teachers (20-30 years old) are characterized by more favorable attitudes towards inclusive education, while older teachers present more negative attitudes towards inclusion. The results are in agreement with previous studies (Avramidis *et al.*, 2019; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Panagou & Kaprinis, 2022). However, other researchers do not find a significant difference in teachers' attitudes with age (Özokcu, 2018). Furthermore, educational experience seems to significantly influence their attitudes toward inclusive education, a finding that is in agreement with several studies (Bielik *et al.*, 2022; Emam & Mohamed, 2011; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2020) while previous teaching experience with students with disabilities it is a crucial factor in shaping positive views and attitudes towards inclusion (Panagou & Kaprinis, 2022; Wray *et al.*, 2022). The specialized education and training of teachers in Special Education is also of particular importance, given that teachers who have been trained in the field of special education tend to be more positively situated in inclusion (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019; Leonard & Smyth, 2022; Saloviita, 2020).

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the results of this investigation, there is a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and concerns about inclusion and their teaching self-efficacy. The more positive teachers are about inclusive education, the higher their level of self-efficacy in implementing inclusive methods. Gender, age, teaching experience, level of education and specialized studies in special education all have an impact on teachers' attitudes, perceptions and concerns regarding inclusion. Gender, teaching experience, and completion of specialized studies in special education all have significant impact on the self-efficacy of the produced educational work. Finally, teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and concerns regarding inclusive education predict their self-efficacy.

## 7. Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

These results may help shape the curriculum for teacher preparation programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels to support inclusive education. Instead of focusing on conventional teaching methods like the traits of particular disability types, these programs should place more of an emphasis on encouraging teachers' positive attitudes and increasing their self-efficacy for working with parents, institutions, and other professionals. It would be productive and beneficial for educational policymakers, and school principals, through the design of awareness programs, to cultivate inclusive values to change the attitudes and perceptions of teachers to defend the social good of education for all vulnerable groups. In addition, it is considered necessary to organize training programs for teachers on issues of managing an inclusive classroom. This study is cross-sectional in nature, with a small sample of educators from a small number of schools that provide inclusive education programs. Larger studies are, nevertheless, required in the future. Undoubtedly, tracking teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy perceptions over time would provide a deeper understanding of how these concepts developed. Lastly, the study presented here used a research design that was entirely quantitative. Obtaining qualitative information would have undoubtedly brought to light a few contextual elements that influenced the stated opinions.

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