

## Original Paper

# Factors Influencing Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education in Myanmar

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### **Abstract**

*Many researchers worldwide have acknowledged the importance of teachers' attitudes towards Inclusive Education (IE). The main objective of this research is to explore factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards IE. A total of 439 in-service teachers working under the Ministry of Education and 305 pre-service teachers studying at the Universities of Education in Myanmar were included in this study. The results indicated that both pre-service and in-service teachers showed somewhat positive attitudes towards inclusion. Nevertheless, in-service teachers showed more positive attitudes towards including Children with Disabilities (CWDs) than pre-service teachers. Besides, their attitudes towards inclusive education were predicted directly and indirectly by familiarity with IE policies, having contact with disabilities, having knowledge about IE, type of disability, and availability of support. Therefore, this study recommended comprehensive IE courses and hands-on experiences at the teacher training colleges and universities to develop the knowledge and skill needed to mainstream CWDs to foster inclusiveness.*

### **Keywords**

*inclusive education, attitudes, children with disabilities, pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, Myanmar*

### **1. Introduction**

Although Inclusive Education (IE) originated in the late twentieth century following the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1989), its implementation was further accelerated following the Education for All (1990) movement, and especially after the Salamanca Statement (1994) adopted at the World Conference on Special Education. The statement declared that developing the education

system with diverse learning needs in the regular schools is the most effective way of creating a welcoming society that can combat discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO & Ministry of Education and Science, Spain, 1994). Therefore, the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular classroom has become a global fashion in recent years. Most countries are now going ahead towards attaining this goal, and Myanmar is not an exception.

Myanmar also introduced the implementation of inclusive education since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the title of “lu-tine-a-kyone-win-pyinnayar-yay” (Oo, 2012). The most important movements that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar moved forward were ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2011 and enacting the National Education law in 2014, which was amended in 2015. The new National Education law (2015) clearly stated the right of children with disabilities as, “Every person with disabilities shall have the right to access the education on an equal basis with others” (Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2015, p. 8). Children with disabilities can enroll in every school offered by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Besides, all the public, private, and charity-based special schools are under the control of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (MSWRR). The MSWRR is responsible for supporting persons with disabilities regarding rehabilitation, education, vocational training, training for trainers, and establishing laws and policies (Union of Myanmar, 2009). Therefore, these two stand-alone Ministry systems stood in the way of education for children with disabilities.

In terms of public awareness on IE, only a limited number of people have realized the concept of inclusive education in Myanmar. Professionals and staff in the areas of Education and parents in rural areas are unaware that their disabled children have access to education (Humanity & Inclusion, 2018). Teachers, including both the pre-service and in-service teachers, are not well-trained to include children with disabilities. Lack of resources, limited knowledge, negative attitudes, school inaccessibility, etc., are significant barriers discussed in previous studies towards implementing inclusive education successfully. Children with disabilities still do not benefit very much from the inclusive education policy because of several challenges. In that case, teachers’ duties and responsibilities in supporting children with disabilities cannot be overlooked.

Many previous studies argued that successful implementation of inclusive education relies extensively on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion (Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Hoskin et al., 2015; Kurniawati et al., 2012; Saloviita, 2019; Varcoe & Boyle, 2014). The teachers need to possess a positive attitude towards inclusive education in addition to knowledge and skills. Without teachers’ positive attitudes, the implementation of inclusive education would be meaningless. Mainstreaming of children with disabilities in general education classrooms does not just imply opening the doors of the school to allow children with disabilities to sit in the classroom. A lot of changes and adaptations are needed, but without positive attitudes, teachers will be unable to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Therefore, the achievement of students with disabilities in mainstream schools depends mainly on teachers maintaining a positive attitude (Kurniawati et al., 2012). Moreover, the importance of teachers’

perceptions is also displayed by Sakurai (2021).

Most of the researchers reported favorable attitudes towards inclusive education (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Chiner & Cardona, 2013; Khan et al., 2017), while some researchers reported negative teacher attitudes (de Boer et al., 2011; Sharma et al., 2009). For example, Varcoe and Boyle (2014) studied 342 pre-service teachers studying at a metropolitan university in Australia, ranging from the first year to post-graduate students. The result showed that pre-service teachers possessed positive attitudes towards inclusive education. A contradictory finding was reported by Sharma et al. (2009). The study was conducted on 480 pre-service teachers enrolled in a one-year post-graduate B.Ed. Program at Pune University in India and showed negative attitudes towards inclusive education. However, some studies argued that most primary and secondary school teachers showed ambivalent attitudes towards including children with disabilities in their classrooms (Parey, 2019; Savolainen et al., 2012).

While there are studies in Western and Asian countries related to inclusive education, much previous research has been conducted on the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education worldwide, and limited research on inclusive education has been completed in Myanmar. Therefore, this study aims to find the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in general classrooms in Myanmar. The specific objectives are:

- (1) What are the pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes towards IE in Myanmar?
- (2) Are there any differences in attitudes towards IE between pre-service and in-service teachers?
- (3) Which variables predict the pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes towards IE?

This study adopted a definition of attitudes defined by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) taking attitudes as being formed by the individual's evaluative process, which occurs when they respond evaluatively to something on a cognitive, affective, and behavioral basis (as cited in Hassanein, 2015). How these three psychological traits shaped the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education will be examined. Inclusive education (IE) refers to the inclusion of students with various types of disabilities in a regular mainstream class with students without disabilities under the same curriculum and with the same learning textbooks and teachers (Rombo, 2017).

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Study Design-Internet Survey*

Because of the global pandemic's repercussions, an internet survey was employed to gather the necessary information. When the individuals are spread out and there is little physical interaction, it is helpful (Sue & Ritter, 2007). A web-based survey was utilized among many online surveys by producing a link and putting it on a social media platform where the participants are available. It is a low-cost method of data collection, and the information obtained can be used immediately. Aside from the benefits, it presents a problem to the researcher in determining whether or not the participants are from the target group (Nayak & K A, 2019). Meyerson and Tryon (2003) stated that the results acquired from web-based surveys could be more reliable, valid, and of the same quality as data obtained through

the paper-and-pencil survey approach (as cited in Liao & Hsieh, 2017). Because the web-based survey may directly input data into the data analysis, errors in data entry can be eliminated, boosting validity (Maymone et al., 2018).

### *2.2 Participants and Sampling*

This study included pre-service teachers studying at Universities of Education and in-service teachers employed under Myanmar's Ministry of Education. Non-probability sampling was utilized, which means that not every member of the population has a possibility of being chosen (Cohen et al., 2018). People who are unable to access the Internet are purposefully excluded. Among different types of non-probability sampling, convenience sampling, sometimes known as accidental sampling, was used; convenience sampling involves selecting individuals who are simple to reach (Cohen et al., 2018). The data was collected using a Microsoft Form questionnaire shared on social media until the required sample size was reached. After cleaning the data and removing duplicates, a total of 305 pre-service teachers and 439 in-service teachers were found to be valid for further analysis.

### *2.3 Materials*

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Questionnaires were created and divided into two parts. Part I asked demographic questions such as gender, age, education level, experience teaching students with impairments, etc. Part II of the survey had questions about attitudes toward inclusive education. The research purposes and target population were identified first, and the specific items were included based on the literature review and previous instruments designed for the same purpose (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Mahat, 2008). Finally, theory of Eagly and Chaiken (1993) was used to operationalize the questionnaire (as cited in Hassanein, 2015). This questionnaire had 46 items, all of which were measured on a 6-point Likert scale: 9 items measuring opinions or beliefs towards inclusive education, 11 items measuring feelings toward inclusive education, ten items measuring predispositions toward inclusive education, eight items measuring attitudes toward inclusive education based on students' nature and types of disabilities, and another eight items measuring attitudes toward inclusive education based on support availability. Some negative elements were scored in the opposite direction. A pilot study was done using Microsoft Forms to test the reliability, practicability, and clarity of the wording and instructions. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha value of over 0.7, which indicates that the components constitute a scale with reasonable internal consistency and reliability.

### *2.4 Data Analysis*

The researchers used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to conduct exploratory component analysis to better understand the link between variables and examine how they measure the same idea or variables (Bryman & Cramer, 2011). Then the independent sample *t*-test was conducted to identify significant differences between the two groups. The effect of predictor variables on the dependent variable, teachers' attitudes, was next investigated using multiple regression analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to confirm, modify, and test the causal link models between

variables to answer the main study problem. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate the questionnaire or measurement model before using SEM. Researchers were recommended to do CFA as the first phase of SEM, according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), to ensure that the measurement model is valid and acceptable (as cited in Hatcher, 2003).

### 3. Result

This study involved 305 pre-service teachers studying at the Universities of Education and 439 in-service teachers working under the Ministry of Education in Myanmar. Table 1 explains some of the demographic characteristics of participants. Less than ten percent had training, and more than 80 percent had no friends or family members who were disabled.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Characteristics	Pre-service teachers		In-service teachers	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	119	39	82	18.7
Female	186	61	357	81.3
<b>Training IE</b>				
Yes	22	7.2	33	7.5
No	283	92.8	406	92.5
<b>Having friends who are disable</b>				
Yes	49	16.1	32	7.3
No	256	83.9	407	92.7
<b>Having family who are disable</b>				
Yes	49	16.1	55	12.5
No	256	83.9	384	87.5
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>305</b>		<b>439</b>	

#### 3.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education in Myanmar (Q1)

In terms of attitudes towards inclusive education, the result showed that both pre-service and in-service teachers had somewhat positive opinions towards including children with disabilities, with mean scores of 3.76 (SD=0.89) and 3.93 (SD=0.86) (See Table 2), respectively. They showed positive feelings towards the inclusion of children with disabilities, and they did not appear distressed or frustrated when communicating. Furthermore, they demonstrated a high readiness to participate in the implementation of IE, including curriculum adaptation, various teaching, and evaluation methodologies, and so on. In addition, both pre-service and in-service teachers had somewhat positive attitudes towards different

types of disabilities, including students with physical disabilities, followed by blind and deaf children. However, their intents to foster inclusiveness were contingent on the availability of support.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Attitudes towards IE**

Variables	Pre-service Teachers (N=305)		In-service Teachers (N=405)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Opinions or beliefs	3.76	0.89	3.93	0.86
Feelings towards IE	4.58	0.72	4.61	0.73
Predisposition towards IE	4.87	0.54	4.91	0.50
Types of disability	3.50	1.29	3.61	0.99
Availability of support	5.03	0.58	5.00	0.49

### 3.2 The Difference in Attitudes towards IE between Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers (Q2)

Results from the independent sample *t*-test revealed that the mean values of in-service teachers were a little bit higher than the mean values of pre-service teachers, as shown in Table 3. A statistically significant difference was only found in the opinions or beliefs towards IE between pre-service and in-service teachers, with  $t(739) = -2.63$ , and  $p < 0.01$ . It could be concluded that in-service teachers possessed more positive opinions or beliefs towards implementing IE than pre-service teachers. It was not surprising that pre-service teachers had no experience teaching children with disabilities, while some in-service teachers had experience teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms. No significant differences were found in their feelings, predisposition towards IE, attitudes towards different types of disability, and availability of support among them.

**Table 3. Difference in Attitudes towards IE between Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers**

Variables	Pre-Service		In-Service		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			
Opinions or beliefs	26.33	6.24	27.53	6.03	-2.63	739	0.01**
Feelings	50.39	7.96	50.69	8.05	-0.49	739	0.63
Predisposition	29.19	3.22	29.44	3.03	-1.08	739	0.28
Types of disability	17.5	5.03	18.05	4.96	-1.48	739	0.14
Availability of support	35.22	4.09	35	3.49	0.78	739	0.44

\*\* $p < .01$ .

### 3.3 Variables affecting Teachers' Attitudes towards IE (Q3)

Results from the forward multiple regression indicated that teachers' attitudes (opinions, feelings, predisposition) towards IE were predicted from the combination of several predictor variables. The beta

weights and significance values for all models are presented in Table 4. The model that included all predictor variables explained the most variance in the pre-service teachers' opinions or beliefs towards IE,  $F(2, 302) = 62.42$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.29$ . This indicated that this model explained 29% of the variance in opinions or beliefs towards IE. Similarly, 17% of the variance in pre-service teachers' feelings towards IE was explained by this model. Therefore, it can be interpreted that pre-service teachers' positive opinions and feelings towards the inclusion of children with disability are dependent on their attitudes towards different types of disability and their familiarity with the IE-related policies. Moreover, the model that included all predictor variables explained the most variance in their predisposition towards IE with  $F(4, 300) = 28.19$ ,  $p < 0.00$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.26$ . It can be interpreted that their willingness to practice IE in their classroom is increased according to the availability of support, types of disability of children, familiarity with IE-related policies, and knowledge about IE. Similarly, for the in-service teachers, 24%, 16%, and 28% of the variance in opinions or beliefs, feelings, predisposition towards IE were explained by the models, respectively (see Table 5).

**Table 4. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Summary Predicting Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes towards IE**

Explained Variables	Predictors	B	SEB	$\beta$	$R^2$
Opinions or Beliefs Towards IE	Types of disability	0.61	0.06	0.49***	0.29
	Familiarity with policies	0.9	0.28	0.16**	
Feelings towards IE	Types of disability	0.54	0.09	0.342***	0.17
	Familiarity with policies	1.28	0.39	0.175**	
	Availability of support	0.27	0.04	0.35***	
Predisposition towards IE	Types of disability	0.12	0.03	0.19***	0.26
	Familiarity with policies	0.43	0.16	0.14**	
	Knowledge about IE	0.53	0.22	0.13*	

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 5. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Summary Predicting In-Service Teachers' Attitudes towards IE**

Explained Variables	Predictors	B	SEB	$\beta$	$R^2$
Opinions or Beliefs Towards IE	Types of disability	0.58	0.05	0.48***	0.24
	Age	1.02	0.40	0.11*	
Feelings towards IE	Types of disability	0.38	0.07	0.24***	0.16
	Availability of support	0.53	0.11	0.23***	
	Age	2.34	0.57	0.18***	
Predisposition towards IE	Availability of support	0.40	0.04	0.46***	0.28

Familiarity with policies	0.36	0.14	0.11**
Types of disability	0.06	0.03	0.10*

Note \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

### 3.3.1 Factor Influencing Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Before conducting SEM, the authors used the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to validate the measurement model, which is also recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) (as cited in Hatcher, 2013). The maximum likelihood approach was used, and the Global Fit criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) and the Muller and Hancock (2008) index were used to assess the fitness of the proposed model. The result showed that the model  $\chi^2$  for the proposed measured model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2$  (df = 261, N = 744) = 655.74,  $p < 0.0001$ . Furthermore, the measured AGFI value of 0.92 was not greater than the suggested threshold of 0.92, whereas the observed SRMR value of 0.05 was lower than 0.06. The CFI and the normed fit index (NFI) were 0.93 and 0.90, respectively. Both values satisfied the recommended criteria of 0.90, which is acceptable. Therefore, the global fit indices indicated that the measurement model fit to the data and acceptable.

Then, the direct and indirect effects between attitudes toward inclusion and the predictor variables were investigated using structural equation modeling (SEM). Based on the outcomes of prior investigations and a literature study, a prediction model was created. Opinions, feelings, and predisposition to IE with the rectangles were latent variables in this model, represented by circles. The rectangles represent measure variables. Maximum likelihood parameter estimation was utilized, and the fit of the data to the model was tested using five model fit indices and chi-square test findings.

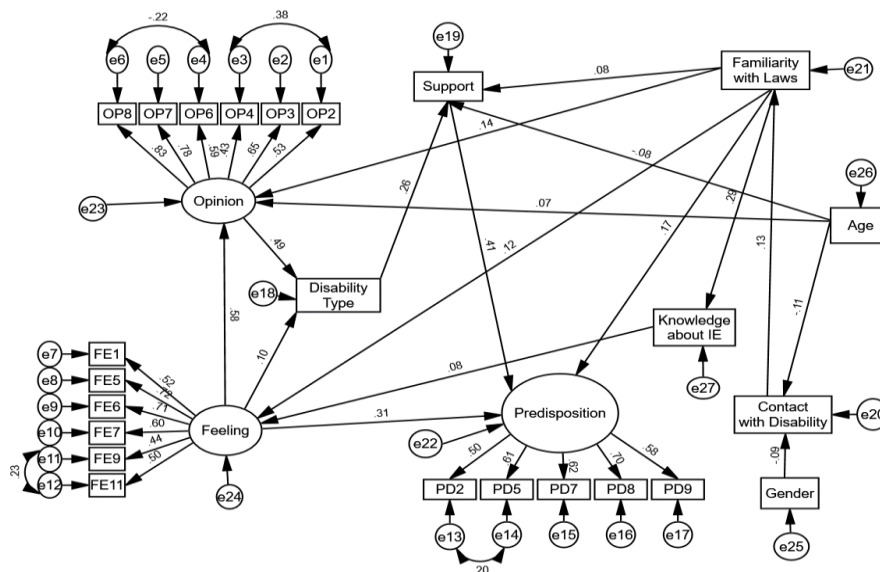


Figure 1. Structural Equation Modeling for Teachers' Attitudes towards IE



According to the result of the final model, the value of  $\chi^2/df$  was 2.60, which was accepted as a good fit for the data. The standardized root means square error of approximation was 0.05, which is lower than the criteria of 0.06. The standardized root means square residual was 0.05, lower than 0.08, indicating an adequate model fit. Other measures, including CFI, GFI, and AGFI, were above 0.9, which is considered acceptable. Therefore, SEM showed a good fit for the theoretically hypothesized model.

All the estimates for the model shown in the figure were significant at the  $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and  $p < 0.001$  level. The analysis showed that the opinions towards IE were predicted by age ( $R^2 = 0.07^*$ ), familiarity with laws ( $R^2 = 0.14^{***}$ ), and feelings ( $R^2 = 0.58^{***}$ ). The feelings towards inclusive education were predicted by familiarity with laws ( $R^2 = 0.12^{**}$ ) and knowledge about IE ( $R^2 = 0.08^*$ ). The predisposition towards IE was predicted by feeling ( $R^2 = 0.31^{***}$ ), familiarity with laws ( $R^2 = 0.17^{***}$ ), and the availability of support ( $R^2 = 0.41^{***}$ ). The availability of support was predicted significantly by the disability type ( $R^2 = 0.26^{***}$ ), familiarity with laws ( $R^2 = 0.08^*$ ), and age ( $R^2 = -0.08^*$ ). Attitudes towards disability type were predicted by opinion ( $R^2 = 0.49^{***}$ ) and feeling ( $R^2 = 0.09^*$ ). Familiarity with laws was predicted by having contact with disabilities ( $R^2 = 0.13^{***}$ ), and knowledge about IE were predicted by familiarity with laws ( $R^2 = 0.29^{***}$ ).

**Table 6. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Predictor Variables on Criteria Variables**

Criteria	Predictors	Direct	Indirect	Total
Opinions	Feelings	0.581***	–	0.581
	Knowledge about IE	–	0.047	0.047
	Familiarity with laws	0.135***	0.085**	0.22
	Having contact with disability	–	0.028**	0.028
	Gender	–	-0.002*	-0.002
	Age	0.07*	-0.003**	0.067
Feelings	Knowledge about IE	0.082*	-	0.082
	Familiarity with laws	0.122**	0.023	0.146
	Having contact with disability	–	0.018**	0.018
	Gender	–	-0.002*	-0.002
	Age	–	-0.002**	-0.002
Predisposition	Availability of support	0.413	–	0.413
	Disability Types	–	0.107**	0.107
	Opinion	–	0.053**	0.053
	Feeling	0.31	0.041**	0.351
	knowledge about IE	–	0.029	0.029
	Familiarity with laws	0.174	0.091**	0.265
	Having contact with disability	–	0.033**	0.033

Gender	–	-0.003*	-0.003
Age	–	-0.035*	-0.035

Table 6 illustrates direct, indirect, and total effects for the structural model of factors impacting teachers' attitudes towards IE. Regarding the opinions towards IE, it was found that feeling towards IE had the most substantial direct and total effect. As a result, the more positive feelings the teachers possessed towards IE, the more positive opinions they would show about it. Familiarity with the laws and age can also explain opinions towards IE, both directly and indirectly. Having contact with a disability had a positive indirect effect, and gender negatively impacted the opinions towards IE. Knowledge about IE directly explained the feelings towards it. The more they knew about IE and disability, the more they showed favorable feelings towards IE. Familiarity with the laws also influenced the feelings towards IE directly and indirectly. Gender and age, on the other hand, had a negative indirect effect on feelings towards IE, whereas interacting with a disability had a positive direct impact on it. As a result, being a young female teacher with more contact with CWDs could foster a positive feeling towards IE.

Positive attitudes and familiarity with IE legislation had a significant direct and indirect impact on their desire to practice IE in their classroom. As a result, the more positive emotions teachers had about IE and the more knowledgeable they were with IE policies, the more they would act to implement IE. The availability of support had a direct and strong beneficial impact on teachers' attitudes about IE implementation. The more support they received for implementing IE, the more they wanted to include disabled children. In addition, disability type, beliefs, knowledge about IE, and having contact with disabled people had a favorable indirect influence, whereas gender and age had a negative effect on the inclination to act in favor of IE.

The types of disabilities directly explained the availability of support. The availability of support was influenced both directly and indirectly by familiarity with the laws and age. The younger they were and the more familiar they were with IE laws, the more positive attitudes they had regarding adopting IE. Opinions, feelings, knowledge of IE, contact with a disability, and gender all influenced the availability of support for applying IE indirectly.

Attitudes towards the different types of disabilities were explained by the opinions towards IE. The more positive opinions teachers had towards IE, the more they would show favorable attitudes towards the different types of disabilities. Feelings towards IE had both direct and indirect positive effects. Having positive feelings towards IE could affect the inclusion of children with different disabilities. Moreover, knowledge about IE, familiarity with the laws, having contact with a disability, and gender directly affected the attitudes towards different types of disabilities.

The teachers' familiarity with the laws directly explained how they knew IE. The more they understood IE laws, the more they realized IE and impairments. In addition, having contact with someone with a disability had a favorable indirect effect on IE knowledge, but age and gender had a negative indirect

effect. As a result, the more frequently a young female teacher interacted with a person with a disability, the more knowledgeable that teacher was about IE and disabilities. Familiarity with the laws contributed directly and significantly to having contact with disabilities. Therefore, the more friends or family members teachers have who are disabled, the more familiar they will be with the IE laws. Gender and age explained familiarity with laws and contact with disability indirectly and negatively.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study investigated the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education. Three research questions guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the teachers' attitudes towards IE in Myanmar?

The authors examine the general teachers' perceptions towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in Myanmar. Based on these findings, both pre-service and in-service teachers showed a somewhat positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms. They would like to fully include children with different types of disabilities in their classrooms. These findings were consistent with those of other researchers' past studies (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Khan et al., 2017). Most of the teachers in current studies stated that inclusive education might result in beneficial changes in the future, allowing for a safer, more supportive, and peaceful environment. It could result in a win-win scenario for both disabled and non-disabled children. On the other hand, despite their good attitudes about adopting inclusive education, the teachers still seem to believe that special education is the best way to satisfy the requirements of children with disabilities. Thus, this study implied that teachers are welcoming to implement inclusive education in their classroom only to ensure SDG Goal 4; however, they still have doubts about the effectiveness of the IE program.

Research Question 2: Are there any differences in attitudes towards IE between pre-service and in-service teachers?

This section compared the pre-service teachers' and in-service teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities. The result showed that in-service teachers were more favorable about involving students with disabilities than pre-service teachers. In-service teachers showed more positive beliefs towards the implementation of IE than those of pre-service teachers. The authors reasoned that most of Myanmar's pre-service and in-service teachers have never been trained to teach children with special needs. On the other hand, in-service instructors have prior teaching experience and know how to approach and interact with various types of pupils. They even have pupils with disabilities in their classes on occasion. Even though they are not trained systematically, in-service teachers have more practical knowledge of teaching than pre-service or novice teachers, and they are more confident to handle the classroom with different learning needs. As a result, in-service teachers were more enthusiastic about adopting inclusive education. In fact, the above findings have significant implications for indicating how much teaching experience is important and suggest providing some internships for pre-service teachers in the future to address the problem.

Research Question 3. Which variables predict the pre-service and in-service teachers' attitudes towards IE?

How some predictors variables, including the types of disability, familiarity with IE policies, availability of support, etc., are influencing their attitudes (opinions, feelings, predispositions) towards inclusive education were examined. According to the results of multiple regression analysis, the more positive attitudes pre-service teachers had about various types of disabilities and the more knowledgeable they were with IE policies, the more positive opinions and emotions they had regarding IE. It is self-evident that teachers who have positive attitudes toward various types of disabilities will be more likely to welcome students with disabilities in their classrooms than teachers who have negative attitudes toward disabilities. Furthermore, teachers who are familiar with IE policies are enthusiastic about IE and wish to mainstream CWDs. This finding demands that teachers' knowledge about inclusive education should be boosted to increase their willingness to implement inclusive education.

Their opinions towards inclusion were predicted by the types of disability and their ages for in-service teachers. Like the pre-service teachers, the more they showed positive attitudes towards different types of disability, or the older the teacher, the more they possessed positive opinions towards inclusion. Most previous research noted a trend towards more positive attitudes towards IE at a younger age (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Vaz et al., 2015). It might be possible to contradict the result of the previous studies. When comparing younger and older teachers, older teachers had more experience in teaching different children, and they are more confident to accept children with varying needs of learning. The result suggests that teacher training institutions should provide hands-on experience in dealing with different types of children with special needs.

The type of disabilities of the children, the availability of assistance, and their awareness of IE and IE-related policies influenced pre-service and in-service teachers' readiness to use IE in the classroom. The previous study suggested that the availability of assistance (Boyle et al., 2020), having competence and understanding regarding inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000), and the type of disability can all influence teachers' desire to mainstream CWDs (Sharma et al., 2009). Even experienced teachers may require physical assistance to make their teaching process more accessible. The availability of assistance may encourage them to include children with various types of disabilities. It could help them feel less worried and stressed.

From the results of this SEM analysis, many factors influenced each component of teachers' attitudes towards IE directly and indirectly. The result showed that the teachers' beliefs or opinions towards inclusive education were directly affected by their feelings towards IE and indirectly by having knowledge about IE, having contact with disabilities, and gender. This suggested that teacher educators and policymakers should implement the teacher education curriculum with more practicum courses to let the student teachers have direct contact with disabilities. Their feelings towards the inclusion of children with disabilities were also explained directly and positively by the knowledge about IE and

directly and indirectly by familiarity with IE policies. It is reasonable that the teacher who has adequate knowledge and skills about CWDs will not be concerned about mainstreaming them in their classroom. Those familiar with the policies will show a supportive emotion towards them. Having friends or family members could indirectly influence their feelings about inclusion. Since they have close contact with them, they can understand their feelings and behaviors and show more sympathy and positive feelings. The availability of support predicted directly and positively the teachers' intention to practice inclusion and indirectly by disability types, opinions towards IE, knowledge about IE, and having contact with disability.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

There are some implications that result from this study. First, the results showed the general image of teachers' attitudes towards IE in Myanmar since it involved both pre-service and in-service teachers. Second, this study used the well-validated assessment of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion that could be utilized for further studies. Finally, the present study provided initial evidence of a complete figure of predictors that are shaping the teachers' opinions, feelings, and predisposition towards the implementation of inclusive education in Myanmar. These findings recommend to stakeholders and policymakers how to improve access to education for children with disabilities by promoting the teachers' attitudes towards IE.

At the same time, this study has some limitations. First, since the research was conducted online, most of the participants were from major urban areas, and it cannot be regarded as representative of the total population. Second, the subjects of analysis were mostly aged 20 to 35, which caused less generalizability. Finally, because of the weakness of the online survey, it is challenging to know who the actual person is answering the questionnaire. Therefore, it would be useful if future research would increase the generalizability and validity of the results.

This study had shown that many factors were influencing teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms. Despite their positive attitudes toward IE, teachers were nonetheless hesitant to include CWDs into their classes. Teachers agreed that inclusive education might improve CWDs' social and academic achievements, but they still lacked confidence in their own skills and abilities. Therefore, present studies recommended educators and policymakers to prescribe the inclusive education course as mandatory for completing the teachers' degree at teacher training colleges and universities in Myanmar. Additionally, this study can suggest that policymakers improve awareness of their implementing laws and policies to keep in touch with stakeholders and other people, including teachers, parents of children with and without disabilities, principles, community, etc. More familiarity with inclusive policies could significantly improve inclusiveness in society. The results of this study from Myanmar would suggest a future policy direction of IE by providing more IE courses for both pre-service and in-service teachers that would benefit future of IE, therefore, benefits to realize the world concept of "no one left behind".

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## Note

Note 1. These lists contain the words from the lexicons that are used in the novels under analysis and might contain terms that are regarded as rude.