



Attitudes towards Inclusion of Visually Impaired Students

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Research Background

- ⇒ German ratification of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in March 2009
 - ↳ **Art. 24** calls on all States Parties to ensure an **inclusive education system**

- ⇒ **Integration vs. inclusion**
 - ↳ Integration claims participation in the **general education system**
 - ↳ Inclusion claims an **individual education for all** from the outset

⇒ **Basic assumption**

↳ The implementation of an inclusive education system depends largely upon the attitudes of the people involved

⇒ Focus of this study is on **teacher attitudes**

- ⇒ **Teacher attitudes towards inclusion seem to be more positive ...**
 - ⇒ ... **among special education teachers** as compared to general education teachers (Mastin, 2010)
 - ⇒ ... when teachers have some **experience in teaching students with disabilities** (Sharma, Moore & Sonawane, 2009)
 - ⇒ ... when **information, support and teacher training** are available (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Mintz, 2007)
 - ⇒ ... when the **disabling condition is less severe** (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002)

Hypotheses

1. Different attitudes among **special education** and **general education teachers**
2. Different attitudes towards inclusion of **children with different disabilities**
3. Previous **experience with people with disabilities** and **teacher self-efficacy** should be positively related to attitudes towards inclusion

- ⇒ **n = 88 primary school teachers**
- ⇒ **n = 206 secondary school teachers**
 - ↪ 53 secondary general school teachers
 - ↪ 119 intermediate school teachers
 - ↪ 34 grammar school teacher
- ⇒ **n = 75 special education teachers**
- ⇒ From schools in Mannheim, Germany

Sample description

Variable, M (SD)	Primary School Teachers (n = 88)	Secondary School Teachers (n = 206)	Special Education Teachers (n = 75)
Age (years)	42.74 (12.96)	44.59 (12.05)	42.14 (11.27)
Gender (% female)	95.35 _A	70.85 _B	91.89 _A
Class size (number)	23.91 _A (1.84)	26.56 _B (3.22)	9.50 _C (2.51)
'Inclusion' known (%)	97.73 _A	83.98 _B	100.00 _A

Note. Different subscripts indicate statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

⇒ Control Variables

↪ **Age, gender**

↪ **Social Desirability Scale** (Winkler, Kroh & Spiess, 2006)
6 items (1-7 scale); e.g., “I am always honest with others”, “I always know why I like things”

⇒ Predictor Variables

↪ **Teacher Self-efficacy Scale** (Schwarzer & Schmitz, 1999)
10 items (1-4 scale); e.g., “I feel confident that I am able to inspire the students for new projects.”

↪ Previous **experience with people with disabilities**:
dichotomous 1-item-measure

⇒ **Outcomes: Attitudes towards Inclusion**

- ↳ Modified German version of the **Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion scale TATI** (Stanley, Grimbeek, Bryer & Beamisch, 2003)
11 items (1-6 scale); e.g., “When a student with disabilities is enrolled in an inclusive education classroom, the positive benefits to the other students outweigh any possible problems that this practice may present.”
- ↳ **Willingness to teach in an inclusive classroom** next school year: 1-item-measure (1-6 scale)
- ↳ Semantic differentials (10 bipolar pairs of adjectives) regarding the **inclusion of children with different types of disabilities** (i.e., visual impairment, learning disabilities, mental disabilities)
Case vignettes of child A/B/C → “I perceive the inclusion of child A/B/C as ...”
positive vs. negative (1-7 scale), suitable vs. unsuitable (1-7 scale), etc.

⇒ Predictor Variables

Variable (range), M (SD)	Primary School Teachers (n = 88)	Secondary School Teachers (n = 206)	Special Education Teachers (n = 75)
Socially desirable response behaviour (6-42)	30.99 _A (4.04)	30.41 _{A,B} (4.16)	29.12 _B (3.95)
Teacher self-efficacy (10-40)	30.18 _{A,B} (4.02)	29.80 _A (3.73)	31.13 _B (3.42)
Experience with people with disabilities (%)	60.92 _A	60.91 _A	100.00 _B

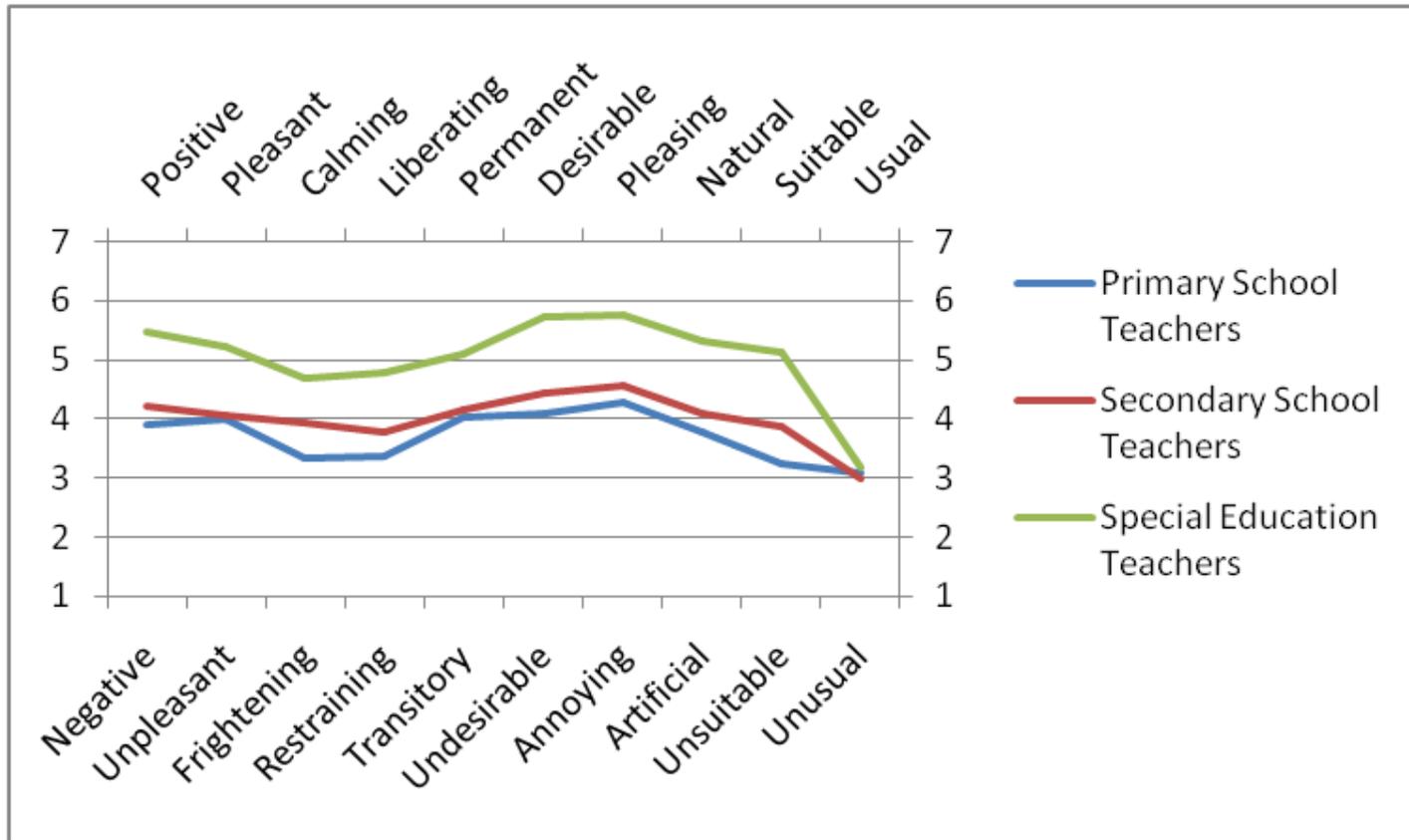
Note. Different subscripts indicate statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

⇒ Differences in attitudes between teacher groups

Variable (range), M (SD)	Primary School Teachers (n = 88)	Secondary School Teachers (n = 206)	Special Education Teachers (n = 75)
TATI (11-66)	37.20 _A (9.28)	37.82 _A (9.08)	43.61 _B (8.68)
Willingness to teach in an inclusive classroom (1-6)	2.40 _A (1.55)	2.83 _A (1.47)	4.20 _B (1.51)
Inclusion of a child with ...			
... visual impairment (10-70)	37.19 _A (14.98)	40.46 _A (13.53)	50.73 _B (12.53)
... learning disabilities (10-70)	43.22 _A (13.92)	43.36 _A (10.71)	53.21 _B (11.24)
... mental disabilities (10-70)	29.28 _A (12.81)	34.92 _B (12.56)	40.82 _C (13.58)

Note. Different subscripts indicate statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

⇒ Inclusion of a child with visual impairment



⇒ Differences depending on type of disability

M (SD)	Inclusion of a Child with		
	Learning Disabilities	Visual Impairment	Mental Disabilities
All	45.34 (12.27)	> 41.68 (14.45)	> 34.72 (13.34)
Primary School Teachers	43.22 (13.92)	37.19 (14.98)	29.28 (12.81)
Secondary School Teachers	43.36 (10.71)	40.46 (13.53)	34.92 (12.56)
Special Education Teachers	53.21 (11.24)	50.73 (12.53)	40.82 (13.58)

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

↪ The **inclusion of a visually impaired child** was rated significantly more favorably than the inclusion of a child with mental disabilities, but significantly less favorably than the inclusion of a child with learning disabilities

⇒ Predictors of attitudes towards inclusion

Predictor, M (SD)	Dependent Variable					
	TATI		Willingness to teach in an inclusive classroom		Inclusion of a child with visual impairment	
	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2
Age	-.04	.00	-.02	.00	.01	.00
Gender	.03	.00	.01	.00	.08	.01
Socially desirable response behaviour	-.09	.01	-.12*	.01	-.18**	.03
Experience with people with disabilities	.20**	.04	.34***	.11	.22***	.05
Teacher self-efficacy	.23***	.05	.23***	.05	.17**	.03

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

- ⇒ **Special education teachers were significantly more positive** about the inclusion of children with disabilities than general school teachers (H 1)
 - ↪ Independent of type of disability
 - ↪ Inclusion of children with disabilities is widely seen as lying in the responsibility of special education teachers and **has not yet reached the general education system**

- ⇒ **Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion differ depending on what type of disability is mentioned (H 2)**
 - ↪ The **inclusion of a visually impaired child** was rated significantly more favorably than the inclusion of a child with mental disabilities, but significantly less favorably than the inclusion of a child with learning disabilities

- ⇒ **Previous experience with people with disabilities and teacher self-efficacy significantly predict teacher attitudes towards inclusion (H 3)**
 - ↪ Applies also to attitudes towards **inclusion of visually impaired children** (controlling for age, gender, and socially desirable response behaviour)
 - ↪ Small, yet **inverse effect of the tendency to give socially desirable responses**, i.e., the stronger the socially desirable responding tendency, the less positive the attitudes towards inclusion of visually impaired children
 - ↪ **Previous experience with students with disabilities might be a key** to more positive attitudes towards inclusion

⇒ Limitations

- ↪ Random samples, but not representative
- ↪ Some sub-samples are rather small (e.g., $n = 34$ grammar school teachers)
- ↪ Cross-sectional design



Thank you for your attention!

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