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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Measuring Teachers' Personal Characteristics and Perspectives on Inclusive Education**

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**| ABSTRACT**

In the implementation of inclusive education to all educational institutions our teachers have been facing different challenges in handling learners with special needs. This descriptive-correlational research study investigated the correlation between two specific variables: teachers' personal attributes and attitudes of 52 general education teachers towards inclusive education at Bankal National High School in Lapu-Lapu City Division. The instrument consisted of five parts; teaching background of the respondents, brief resilience scale, self-esteem scale, optimism assessment, teachers' level of attitude towards inclusion, and the relationships between the personal attributes and attitudes of the respondents towards inclusive education. The findings revealed that most of the respondents were female in their late twenties to mid-thirties; with a high level of educational attainment, most had earned master's level units; respondents represented a diverse range of specializations; almost half of the respondents had six to ten years of teaching experience; and the respondents reported high levels of resiliency, self-esteem, and optimism, as well as a high level of positive attitudes towards inclusive education. However, the study found that there are no significant relationships between the respondents' personal attributes on resiliency and their attitudes towards inclusive education ( $r=0.231$ ,  $p=0.099$ ). On the other hand, the study also found a weak positive and significant relationship between Personal attributes on self-esteem and optimism and their attitudes towards inclusive education ( $r=0.416$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). Therefore, a comprehensive intervention plan that addresses these factors is necessary to empower general education teachers and promote the successful inclusion of all students in regular classrooms.

**| KEYWORDS**

Inclusive education, general education teachers, resiliency, self-esteem, optimism, teacher attitudes, teacher personal attributes

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**Introduction**

Inclusive education has become a major concern in basic education because schools are increasingly expected to address learner diversity within regular classroom settings (Ainscow, 2020). Rather than separating learners according to disability, learning difficulty, language background, behavior, or other differences, inclusive education promotes meaningful participation and access to quality learning for all students (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusion therefore requires more than physical placement in general classrooms; it also depends on classroom practices, teacher preparedness, peer acceptance, and school environments that reduce barriers to learning (Van Mieghem et al., 2020). Recent scholarship emphasizes that inclusive education should be understood as a continuing process of improving equity, participation, and learning opportunities for diverse learners (Ainscow, 2020).

General education teachers are central to the success of inclusive education because they directly plan lessons, manage classroom behavior, assess learning, and create conditions for student belonging (Sharma et al., 2021). Their attitudes toward inclusion can influence how they respond to learners with additional needs and how willing they are to adjust instruction. Research has shown that teachers' beliefs, confidence, and perceived competence are strongly connected with their acceptance of inclusive practices

(Yada et al., 2022). For this reason, examining teacher-related factors is essential in understanding how inclusion is carried out in everyday classroom situations.

Among the personal qualities that may influence inclusive teaching, resiliency is especially important. Inclusive classrooms can present challenges such as differentiated instruction, collaboration with specialists, limited materials, behavioral concerns, and pressure to address varied learning outcomes. Resilient teachers are better able to adjust to these demands, manage stress, and continue performing their professional responsibilities despite difficulties. Teacher resilience has been described as a dynamic process shaped by personal strengths and contextual support, allowing teachers to sustain commitment and effectiveness in challenging school conditions (Hascher et al., 2021).

Self-esteem is also relevant because it affects how teachers view their own competence, value, and capacity to contribute to student learning (Orth & Robins, 2022). Teachers with positive self-esteem may be more confident in trying inclusive strategies, communicating with learners, and participating in collaborative decision-making (Harris & Orth, 2020). In contrast, low self-esteem may lead to hesitation, anxiety, or avoidance when teachers feel unprepared for diverse classroom situations. Recent psychological literature continues to show that self-esteem is linked with adjustment, well-being, motivation, and social functioning, making it a meaningful factor in professional behavior and personal confidence (Orth & Robins, 2022).

Optimism likewise supports inclusive education because it reflects a teacher's expectation that challenges can be addressed through effort, support, and appropriate strategies (Rand et al., 2020). Optimistic teachers may be more willing to view learner diversity as manageable rather than burdensome. They are also more likely to persist when students require additional assistance and to maintain constructive expectations about learner progress. Recent research connects optimism with well-being, coping, and adaptive functioning, especially when individuals face demanding or uncertain conditions (Gallagher et al., 2020).

Although many studies on inclusive education focus on teacher training, resources, administrative support, and teaching experience, there remains a need to examine teachers' internal strengths as possible influences on their attitudes toward inclusion. Reviews of inclusive education research suggest that inclusion is shaped by both system-level conditions and classroom-level teacher responses, making teacher characteristics an important area for continued study (Van Mieghem et al., 2020). Therefore, assessing resiliency, self-esteem, optimism, and attitudes among general education teachers may provide a clearer understanding of how personal strengths support the implementation of inclusive education. This study focuses on the levels of resiliency, self-esteem, optimism, and attitudes of general education teachers toward inclusive education. By examining these variables, the study may contribute to a better understanding of how teachers' psychological strengths relate to their willingness to accept, accommodate, and teach diverse learners in regular classrooms.

## **Literature Review**

Inclusive education studies emphasize that teachers' attitudes are an essential factor in shaping how effectively inclusion is carried out in regular classrooms. When teachers express positive views about inclusion, they are more inclined to modify lessons, apply flexible instructional approaches, work with other professionals, and encourage meaningful participation among learners with varied needs. These attitudes are influenced by different factors, such as teacher preparation, classroom experience, self-confidence, and the support available within the school. Yada, Leskinen, Savolainen, and Schwab (2022) emphasized that teachers' self-efficacy and beliefs are strongly associated with their acceptance of inclusive practices. Similarly, Van Mieghem, Verschueren, Petry, and Struyf (2020) found that teacher-related characteristics and school conditions are important in shaping inclusive education practices for diverse learners. These studies indicate that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion are not fixed; they can improve when teachers receive relevant training, practical assistance, and opportunities to build confidence in inclusive instruction. Recent studies also indicate that teachers' personal qualities may help maintain inclusive practices, particularly when classroom responsibilities become demanding. Resiliency enables teachers to handle stress, respond to difficulties, and continue assisting learners despite limited resources or complex classroom conditions. Hascher, Beltman, and Mansfield (2021) explained that teacher resilience is connected with adaptation, well-being, and the ability to remain effective in challenging professional situations. Self-esteem is also significant because teachers who recognize their own worth and professional capability may be more prepared to face difficult teaching responsibilities and respond constructively to learners' needs. Orth and Robins (2022) noted that self-esteem is associated with well-being, adjustment, motivation, and healthy social functioning. Optimism further strengthens inclusive education because it supports teachers in maintaining positive expectations, continuing interventions, and believing that learners can improve through suitable support. Rand, Shanahan, Fischer, and Fortney (2020) found that optimism and hope are related to well-being and adaptive functioning. In the same way, Capone and Petrillo (2020) reported that positive psychological resources contribute to teachers' well-being and work engagement.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the personal attributes of general education teachers and their attitudes toward inclusive education. This design was suitable because it allowed the researcher to describe the current characteristics of the respondents and identify the relationship among variables without altering or controlling the research

environment. The study was carried out at Mandaue Sped Center High School, Mandaue City Division, with general education teachers who were handling inclusive classes as respondents. Data were gathered through a modified survey questionnaire composed of five sections. The first section obtained the demographic profile of the respondents. The second section assessed resiliency using items adapted from the Brief Resilience Scale by Smith et al. (2008), which measures an individual's ability to bounce back from stress and adversity. The third section measured self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg (1965), which evaluates self-worth and self-acceptance. The fourth section assessed optimism using items adapted from the Life Orientation Test by Scheier and Carver (1985), which measures general expectations and a positive outlook in life. The fifth section determined teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education using an adapted questionnaire from Wilkerson (2012). The instrument consisted of 6 items for resiliency, 10 items for self-esteem, 10 items for optimism, and 14 items for attitudes toward inclusive education. Responses were scored using a five-point scale. The weighted mean was utilized to describe the level of each variable, while Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between teachers' personal attributes and their attitudes toward inclusive education.

**Results**

Table 1. Level of Personal Attributes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education in Terms of Resiliency

S/N	Indicator	WM	Verbal Description
1	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.	3.92	High
2*	I have a hard time making it through stressful events.	3.29	Moderate
3	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.	3.67	High
4*	It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.	3.35	Moderate
5	I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.	3.25	Moderate
6*	I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.	3.60	High
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.42	High

Table 1 shows that the respondents demonstrated a high level of resiliency, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.42. This indicates that general education teachers generally possess the ability to recover from difficulties and continue performing their responsibilities despite stressful classroom situations. The highest mean was observed in the statement "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times" with 3.92, described as high. However, some indicators were rated moderate, suggesting that certain teachers still experience difficulty coping with stressful events and setbacks. Overall, the findings imply that respondents have positive resiliency but may still need support in stress management

Table 2. Level of Personal Attributes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education in Terms of Self-Esteem

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	4.21	Very High
2*	At times I think I am no good at all.	3.15	Moderate
3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	4.19	High
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	4.15	High
5*	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	3.79	High
6*	I certainly feel useless at times.	3.81	High
7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	4.19	High
8*	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	3.38	Moderate
9*	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	4.23	Very High
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	4.44	Very High
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.96	High

Table 2 reveals that the respondents have a high level of self-esteem, as shown by the aggregate weighted mean of 3.96. The highest-rated indicator was "I take a positive attitude toward myself" with a mean of 4.44, described as very high. This suggests

that teachers generally value themselves and recognize their capability as professionals. Most indicators were rated high to very high, showing positive self-regard and confidence. However, some moderate ratings indicate that a few respondents may still experience self-doubt. Overall, the findings imply that teachers possess healthy self-esteem that may support inclusive teaching.

Table 3. Level of Personal Attributes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education in Terms of Optimism

S/N Indicators	WM Verbal Description
1 In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.	4.00 High
2* It's easy for me to relax.	3.83 High
3 If something can go wrong for me it will.	2.96 Moderate
4 I am always optimistic about my future.	4.33 Very High
5 I enjoy my friends a lot.	4.42 Very High
6 It's important for me to keep busy.	3.79 High
7* I hardly ever expect things to go my way.	3.19 Moderate
8 I don't get upset too easily.	3.62 High
9* I rarely count on good things happening to me.	3.21 Moderate
10 Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.	4.63 Very High
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.80 High

Table 3 shows that the respondents have a high level of optimism, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.80. The highest-rated item was "Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad," with a mean of 4.63, described as very high. This indicates that teachers generally maintain positive expectations despite uncertainties and challenges. Most indicators were rated high to very high, suggesting a constructive outlook toward life and work. However, moderate ratings on some negative statements show that a few teachers may still experience doubts. Overall, optimism may help teachers remain motivated in inclusive classrooms.

Table 4 shows that the respondents have a positive attitude toward inclusive education, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.52. The highest-rated item was the willingness to participate in a consultant teacher model, with a mean of 4.21, described as very positive. This indicates that teachers value collaboration with special education teachers in addressing learners' needs. Several items were neutral, suggesting some uncertainty about full inclusion, especially for students with autism. Overall, the findings imply that teachers generally support inclusion, particularly when collaboration and professional support are available.

Table 4. Level of Attitudes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education

S/N Indicators	WM Verbal Description
1 All students with autism should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.	3.38 Neutral
2 It is seldom necessary to remove students with autism from regular classrooms in order to meet their educational needs.	3.25 Neutral
3 Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with autism should be eliminated.	2.46 Negative
4 Most or all regular classrooms can be modified to meet the needs of students with autism.	4.10 Positive
5 Students with autism can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	3.08 Neutral
6 Inclusion is a more efficient model for educating students with autism because it reduces transition time, i.e., the time required to move from one setting to another.	3.75 Positive
7 Students with autism should not be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will require too much of the teacher's time.	3.35 Neutral
8 I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with autism in regular classrooms because they often lack the academic skills necessary for success.	3.12 Neutral
9 I have doubts about the effectiveness of including students with autism in regular classrooms because they often lack the social skills necessary for success.	3.13 Neutral
10 I find that general education teachers often do not succeed with students with autism, even when they try their best.	2.92 Neutral

S/N Indicators		WM	Verbal Description
11	I would welcome the opportunity to team-teach as a model for meeting the needs of students with autism in regular classrooms.	4.17	Positive
12	All students benefit from team teaching; that is, the pairing of a general and a special education teacher in the same classroom.	4.19	Positive
13	The responsibility for educating students with autism in regular classrooms should be shared between general and special education teachers.	4.15	Positive
14	I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a consultant teacher model, i.e., regular collaborative meetings between special and general education teachers to share ideas, methods, and materials, as a means of addressing the needs of students with autism in regular classrooms.	4.21	Very Positive
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.52	Positive

Table 5. Test of Relationship Between the Personal Attributes and Attitudes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Education

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Resiliency and Attitudes	0.231	Negligible Positive	0.099	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Self-esteem and Attitudes	0.317*	Weak Positive	0.022	Reject Ho	Significant
Optimism and Attitudes	0.416*	Weak Positive	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant

Significant at  $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed.

Table 5 presents the relationship between teachers' personal attributes and their attitudes toward inclusive education. Results show that resiliency had a negligible positive relationship with attitudes, with an r-value of 0.231 and a p-value of 0.099, which is not significant. This means resiliency was not strongly related to teachers' attitudes. Meanwhile, self-esteem showed a weak positive and significant relationship with attitudes, with an r-value of 0.317 and a p-value of 0.022. Optimism also showed a weak positive and significant relationship, with an r-value of 0.416 and a p-value of 0.002. Thus, higher self-esteem and optimism are associated with more positive attitudes toward inclusion.

**Discussion**

Table 5 shows that resiliency, self-esteem, and optimism have positive relationships with teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education, although the strength and significance of these relationships differ. Resiliency obtained an r-value of 0.231 with a p-value of 0.099, indicating a negligible positive but not significant relationship. This means that although more resilient teachers may tend to show slightly more favorable attitudes toward inclusion, the relationship is not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful. Thus, resiliency alone may not directly influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. On the other hand, self-esteem and optimism showed significant relationships with attitudes toward inclusive education. Self-esteem had an r-value of 0.317 and a p-value of 0.022, while optimism had an r-value of 0.416 and a p-value of 0.002. Both results indicate weak positive but significant relationships, meaning that teachers with higher self-esteem and stronger optimism are more likely to have positive attitudes toward inclusive education. These findings suggest that teachers who believe in their own ability and maintain positive expectations may be more open to accepting, supporting, and teaching learners with diverse needs in regular classrooms.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the results demonstrated that participants, who were primarily female, extensively educated, and possessing varied specializations and classroom experience, exhibited elevated degrees of resilience, self-worth, positive outlook, and favorable perspectives toward inclusive education. Nevertheless, the investigation identified no statistically significant association between participants' individual characteristics and their perspectives toward inclusive education. This indicates that although individual characteristics remain valuable for educators' general welfare and professional effectiveness, they may not constitute the principal factors determining perspectives toward inclusion. The results emphasize the multifaceted nature of elements that can shape educators' viewpoints and conduct in inclusive classroom settings and highlight the necessity for a comprehensive approach to

cultivating favorable perspectives and practices. Comprehending these elements proves essential for establishing effective intervention strategies and support mechanisms that enable mainstream classroom educators to develop inclusive educational settings for all learners, including those with exceptional needs.

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