LACK OF TEACHER'S COMMITMENT TO THE CHALLENGE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

The Lack of Teacher's Commitment to the Challenge of Inclusive Education Associated with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

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Abstract

Inclusive education aims to provide equal opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs (SEN). However, the lack of teacher commitment to implementing inclusive practices poses significant challenges, including resistance to change, insufficient classroom adaptations, and limited collaboration with stakeholders. These issues often stem from insufficient training, overwhelming workloads, negative attitudes, and inadequate institutional support. This paper explores the consequences of insufficient teacher commitment to SEN inclusion and proposes strategies to address these barriers. Emphasizing professional development, promoting positive attitudes, and fostering institutional and collaborative support are identified as key solutions to enhance teacher engagement and ensure the success of inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, special educational needs (SEN), teacher commitment, professional development, inclusive practices, institutional support, diversity in education.

Resumen

Este artículo se enfoca en la educación inclusiva que busca garantizar igualdad de oportunidades para todos los estudiantes, incluyendo aquellos con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE). Sin embargo, la falta de compromiso docente para implementar prácticas inclusivas representa un desafío significativo, manifestándose en resistencia al cambio, adaptaciones insuficientes en el aula y colaboración limitada con las partes interesadas. Estos problemas suelen originarse en una formación insuficiente, cargas de trabajo abrumadoras, actitudes negativas y falta de apoyo institucional. Este artículo analiza las consecuencias de la falta de compromiso docente frente a la inclusión de estudiantes con NEE y propone estrategias para superar estas barreras. Se destacan como soluciones clave la formación profesional, la promoción de actitudes positivas y el fortalecimiento del apoyo institucional y la colaboración para garantizar el éxito de la educación inclusiva.

Palabras clave: Educación inclusiva, necesidades educativas especiales (NEE), compromiso docente, desarrollo profesional, prácticas inclusivas, apoyo institucional, diversidad en la educación.

Introduction

Inclusive education aims to provide equitable opportunities for all students, including those with special educational needs (SEN). However, successfully implementing this approach relies heavily on teacher commitment. Inadequate preparation, limited resources, and negative attitudes among educators pose significant barriers, particularly in countries like Ecuador, where socio-economic and structural challenges complicate the adoption of inclusive practices.

Valenzuela (2019) discusses how teacher attitudes and training directly influence their willingness to adopt inclusive strategies. Without comprehensive preparation, educators may feel overwhelmed by the diverse needs of their students, leading to resistance. This issue is amplified in Ecuador, where rural schools often lack resources and specialized training. A 2020 study found that over 60% of Ecuadorian teachers in rural areas felt unprepared to work with SEN students, largely due to insufficient training opportunities and limited access to educational materials (Sharma et al., 2020).

In urban centers like Quito, some schools have attempted to implement inclusive policies with mixed results. A case study in 2021 revealed that while certain private institutions could allocate resources for teacher training and individualized learning plans, public schools struggled with overcrowded classrooms and inadequate support staff (Frontiers in Psychology, 2021). This disparity highlights the systemic challenges that need addressing. Based on Frontiers there are many understandings of inclusive education and it comes always to professional debates.

Efforts to address these gaps have included initiatives by Ecuador's Ministry of Education, such as the "Educación Inclusiva" program. However, implementation has been uneven, particularly in regions with high poverty levels. Teachers report that while

the program provides valuable guidelines, practical support, like funding and materials, is often missing. For example, a teacher in Guayaquil noted that despite attending workshops on inclusive strategies, large class sizes and limited time hindered her ability to apply them effectively.

Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2020) advocate for sustained professional development to empower educators. This includes training in classroom management techniques that prioritize inclusive practices and collaboration with specialists. Furthermore, community engagement, such as involving parents and local organizations, has shown promise in Ecuador, where familial support often supplements gaps in formal education.

Valenzuela (2019) also emphasizes the role of attitude change in fostering inclusivity. Cultural perceptions of disability in Ecuador have historically stigmatized SEN students, making teacher attitudes a critical factor in the success of inclusive education. Educators with exposure to positive, inclusive experiences are more likely to adopt these principles in their classrooms.

Ultimately, fostering teacher commitment requires addressing structural and cultural barriers through targeted policies, adequate funding, and consistent professional support. By addressing these areas, Ecuador can move closer to achieving the goals of inclusive education and ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Literature Review

Inclusive education has gained prominence globally as a means to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities. Central to this endeavor is teacher commitment, which significantly impacts the successful implementation of inclusive education practices, particularly for students with SEN. This

literature review explores key challenges and variables influencing teacher attitudes and commitment, with a focus on evidence from studies conducted since 2019.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion

Teacher attitudes toward inclusive education remain pivotal. Studies indicate that while many educators support the idea of inclusion, actual implementation is hampered by concerns about insufficient resources, lack of training, and increased workloads. Research by Supriyanto et al. (2019) highlights that teachers with greater access to training and resources tend to develop more positive attitudes and higher self-efficacy, which are critical for successful inclusion. Conversely, inadequate support often results in resistance to adopting inclusive practices.

Specific barriers, such as managing diverse needs within a single classroom, were consistently identified in global studies. For example, Warnes et al. (2022) reported that teachers in multiple countries ranked resource limitations—spanning funding, staffing, and infrastructure—as their primary concern. This concern outweighs even fears of reduced academic standards or increased workload, underlining the systemic nature of challenges in inclusive education.

Impact of Training and Professional Development

Professional development is essential for fostering teacher commitment. Research consistently shows that training tailored to inclusive education enhances teachers' confidence and skills. Subban and Sharma (2022) found that educators with prior exposure to specialized training in managing SEN students reported significantly higher levels of commitment and perceived effectiveness. Additionally, the timing and quality

of training matter; both pre-service and in-service programs have been shown to influence long-term attitudes and practices (Supriyanto et al., 2019).

In Ecuador, for instance, national policies promoting inclusive education have revealed gaps in teacher readiness. Despite progressive legislation, classroom realities often highlight a mismatch between policy and practice, with educators citing insufficient support from school administrators and policymakers as a key obstacle (Galovic et al., 2020).

Teacher Concerns and the Role of Systemic Support

Concerns about inclusive education extend beyond the individual teacher level and are tied to broader systemic issues. Teachers often express anxiety about their capacity to provide high-quality instruction while meeting the diverse needs of students with SEN. Miesera et al. (2019) linked these concerns to reduced willingness to adopt inclusive practices, especially when teachers feel unsupported. Additionally, teachers are less likely to view inclusion favorably when they perceive it as a threat to classroom harmony or academic outcomes.

In response, many studies advocate for holistic support systems, including collaboration with special education professionals, access to teaching assistants, and individualized learning plans. These strategies not only alleviate teacher concerns but also promote a more sustainable commitment to inclusive practices.

Case Studies in Ecuador

Ecuador has made strides in implementing inclusive education policies, yet challenges persist. Teachers in under-resourced regions report significant difficulties adapting to inclusive models. A study by Sahli Lozano et al. (2022) documented teachers in rural

Ecuador struggling with limited access to specialized training and infrastructure, leading to high levels of frustration and burnout. Programs like in-service workshops and collaborative teaching models have shown promise but require scaling to meet national demands.

Taking into consideration this information it is notable the need for a multifaceted approach to strengthen teacher commitment to inclusive education. Providing adequate resources, training, and systemic support are essential for fostering positive attitudes and ensuring successful implementation. While progress has been made, particularly in policy frameworks, the experiences of teachers in contexts like Ecuador highlight the ongoing need for targeted interventions to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Setting

This study was conducted at a private bilingual high school located in Guayaquil, Ecuador, a major urban center in the coastal province of Guayas. The school accommodates approximately 500 students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, spanning grades 7 to 12. The institution integrates an inclusive education model, prioritizing accessibility for students with learning disabilities, behavioral challenges, and varying linguistic abilities. Classes operate during the day, with an emphasis on bilingual education—offering 10 hours of English instruction per week alongside other subjects taught in Spanish.

Research Design

The research employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the efficacy of inclusive educational practices within bilingual environments. Quantitative data, including test scores, were combined with qualitative feedback from teachers and students. The

strategies analyzed included scaffolded learning, peer tutoring, and the use of assistive technologies for students with special educational needs (SEN). The central research question was:

How do inclusive strategies in bilingual education impact the academic and social integration of students with SEN in an urban school setting?

Sampling

Using stratified random sampling, 350 students from grades 7 to 10 were selected. This cohort reflected the school's diversity, encompassing students with SEN (15% of the sample) and a mix of low, intermediate, and advanced proficiency in English and Spanish. Ages ranged from 11 to 16, and the group included neurodiverse students as well as those with mild to moderate physical disabilities.

Instruments

Diagnostic Assessments

Pre- and post-intervention assessments measured academic progress in mathematics, bilingual literacy, and collaborative learning skills. These evaluations were administered over a 10-week period, aligning with the use of targeted inclusive strategies.

Teacher Reflection Logs

Teachers maintained logs documenting the challenges and successes of implementing inclusive methods, offering qualitative insights into their efficacy.

Student Focus Groups

Focus group discussions with 40 students explored their perceptions of inclusivity in the classroom, engagement levels, and social integration experiences.

Results

Academic Performance

Table 1 The quantitative data revealed improvements in bilingual literacy and collaborative learning among both SEN and non-SEN students:

Grade	Average Pre-Test Score	Average Post-Test Score	Improvement (%)
7th Grade	48	68	41.67%
8th Grade	51	71	39.22%
9th Grade	55	74	34.55%
Overall	**51.3**	**71.0**	**38.41%**

SEN students showed comparable progress to their peers, particularly when assistive technologies and peer support were employed.

Social and Emotional Integration

Qualitative data from focus groups indicated improved social cohesion, with 87% of SEN students reporting a greater sense of belonging in the classroom. Teachers noted reduced behavioral issues and increased engagement among previously withdrawn students.

Feedback Theme Percentage Reporting Positive Change

Improved Peer Relationships 84%

Increased Confidence in Participation 79%

Enhanced Teacher-Student Interactions 83%

Discussion / Conclusion

This study confims the positive impact of inclusive teaching practices in bilingual education settings. Scaffolded learning, assistive technologies, and peer tutoring proved effective in addressing the academic and social needs of diverse learners. The results indicate significant gains in bilingual literacy and collaborative problem-solving, highlighting the role of inclusive methods in fostering both academic and emotional growth.

Teachers noted that the integration of assistive technologies, such as speech-to-text software, facilitated greater participation among SEN students. Similarly, peer tutoring enhanced empathy and teamwork across all students, creating a more inclusive classroom environment.

These findings align with global research advocating for the importance of teacher preparation and resource allocation in implementing inclusive strategies (Ainscow, 2020; Sharma et al., 2021). Future studies should examine long-term outcomes of bilingual inclusive practices, particularly in resource-constrained contexts, to identify scalable models for broader application.

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