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Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Impact Inclusion Classrooms Have on Nondisabled Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Well-Being

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MA, Walden University, 2017

BS, Shippensburg University 2013

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Social Psychology

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Abstract

Inclusive educational settings were developed in the United States to help encourage and facilitate grade-level and appropriate social, emotional, and academic interactions for all students with the assistance of their teachers regardless of aptitude, skill, or disability. The purpose of this quantitative research study was to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to students with special educational needs (SEN) and special education needs and disability (SEND) students. Ajzen's theory of planned behavior was used to guide the study to determine whether there is a relationship between the independent variable, teachers' attitudes about inclusion classrooms and the dependent variables, teachers' perception of nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being for SEN and SEND students. Data were collected using two surveys; Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TAIS) questionnaire and the Attitudes toward Teaching All Students (ATTAS-mm) questionnaire and analyzed using a linear regression model. Participants included 78 teachers from school districts in a mid-Atlantic state, in inclusive classroom settings, Grades K–5. The results indicated that teachers' attitudes reflected that inclusion classrooms can have a negative impact on nondisabled students' emotional and academic well-being; however, they believed there was not a social impact on nondisabled and SEN/SEND students. Positive social change may result from the findings of this study that help inform interested parties of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education in regards to its impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents (Thomas and Lori), my sister (Kylee), my husband (Ben), my sons (Sawyer and Zander), and our loving dog (Keeko). You all have been the support system that has encouraged and pushed me to persevere beyond what I believed I was capable of accomplishing.

To my beloved parents, words cannot express the gratitude I have for you both for being the individuals I most aspire to model my life after. You taught me how to push myself, raise my own children, and have the capacity to care for others beyond measure. You are both my heroes in every shape and form. I love you beyond words.

To my sister, Kylee, you have been my pace car, encourager, tough love expert, and best sibling bar none. Without you, I would not be where I am today. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and I love you endlessly.

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Finally, I would like to thank myself for deciding on this goal years ago. Thank you for maintaining the drive, focus, and motivation to finally be able to say, “Yes, I am a Doctor!!”

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Inclusion classrooms are categorized within educational pedagogy as a classroom in which all students, regardless of aptitude, capacity, or skill, are welcome (Gaines & Barnes, 2017). It is a holistic approach that is built on the concept that being in an inclusive educational environment will better prepare students with special needs for later in life. There are numerous reasons and theories as to why this classroom style came to fruition, but one common theme was that it ensured the socialization deemed vital for proper development for special educational needs (SEN) students (Knight, 1999).

The passage of the Public Law 94-142, which is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 1975), further emphasized the thought that the separation of SEN and special education needs and disability (SEND) students delayed their social development, as well as inhibited their ability to be exposed to grade-level academic materials (Rogers, 1993; Winzer, 2000; Winzer, 2009). Inclusion stemmed from a desire to help SEN and SEND students and their social, emotional, and academic well-being (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Monsen et al., 2014).

Regular education teachers have been charged with the task to create a holistic inclusive educational environment since this educational movements' inception, including differentiated instruction. The inclusive academic setting is to be comprehensively implemented; however, limited research, training, preparation, understanding, or regard for teachers' beliefs or attitudes toward its influence has impacted its application (McGhie-Richmond & Haider, 2020). Research investigating teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and how their structure impacts the

social, emotional, or academic well-being of the nondisabled student has also been limited.

Further examination and study of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students offer beneficial outcomes and encourages positive social change. Examining teachers' attitudes about this topic may result in the opportunity for reflection and proper integration of holistic inclusive educational practices, and encourage the evolution and progression for the least restrictive learning environment (LRE) for all populations located within the same classroom setting. Examining this topic may result in opportunities for open discussions about what is beneficial or detrimental within the inclusive education framework.

Background

Inclusive education has become a foundational basis of government policies; however, educators have continued to question its application and effectiveness during the course of its development and implementation (Monsen et al., 2014). The expansion of inclusive education has progressed from the mere identification and separation of SEN and SEND students (Savich, 2008; Sieber, 2019) to the development of the inclusive classroom setting rooted in IDEA (1975).

Even though the progression and modifications of inclusive education have continued to dictate many states' and school districts' educational settings, educators have continued to express confusion and frustration regarding the application, differentiation, and understanding of inclusion (Mintz et al., 2020; Peacock, 2016). While

numerous studies have highlighted teachers' attitudes toward the benefits and disadvantages of inclusion, they often have revolved solely around the examination of SEN, SEND, emotionally disturbed (ED), learning support (LS), autistic support (AS), gifted/seminar, and other specialized populations (Bochiș et al., 2020; Schwab, 2017; Woolfson, 2018). Little research has offered an examination of teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion and the nondisabled student. Due to the confusion and misunderstanding of inclusion, teachers are often underprepared or not adequately trained to properly establish a truly inclusive environment for all students within their classroom setting (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Mintz et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

Inclusion classrooms consist of students with different academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs and require teachers that are able to navigate, differentiate, and properly educate within such instructive settings. Academic differences include the need for varied presentation, response, setting, timing, scheduling, and organization skills accommodations, as well as assignment and curriculum modifications (Harbour et al., 2021). Diverse social needs within an inclusion classroom can include understanding and recognizing social cues, proper interpretations of others' behaviors, as well as facilitating positive interactions with others (McClelland et al., 2017). Diverse emotional needs also impact teachers' instruction and include lessons regarding emotional knowledge, emotional regulation, perception taking, and empathy (McClelland et al., 2017). Finally, behavioral needs are also diverse within inclusive classrooms. Such behavioral needs may include students with trauma, anxiety, depression, anger, or other

internal/external factors that impact and influence their actions and behaviors (Harbour et al., 2021).

Within inclusion classrooms, the teacher must differentiate, accommodate, and integrate various requirements, curricula, and rigor to meet the needs of each student and offer enrichment to the same group of children. With today's current educational, social, and emotional climate regarding online, in-person, and now hybrid (both online and in-person) teaching models, inclusion classrooms have taken on a new structure, thereby further driving the teacher to make more accommodations, differentiation, and enrichment for students, specifically those with special education needs (Michaeli et al., 2020). SEN students, in particular, are a population that can often require the teacher of record to fill out behavioral tracking sheets for emotional support students, follow Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act plans daily for learning support students and students with other learning disabilities, and offer enrichment activities to gifted or seminar students, while also being required to meet the needs, expectations, and goals of the nondisabled child. This can be a challenging undertaking for even the most seasoned educator.

IDEA (1975) requires that children and youth with disabilities, 3- to 21-years-old, must be provided a free and appropriate public-school education. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2020) revealed that data for the 2017–2018 school years showed a slight decrease in the number of those with disabilities and present in the nondisabled education classroom (13.7 %); yet, a new trend of more students being diagnosed with health impairments increased from 1.1% to 2.0% and those diagnosed

with autism increased from 0.4% to 1.4%. These numbers indicate a rise in academic, social, emotional, mental, and physical health disorders, as well as an increase in the demand of support(s) required for these students. Because the goal for each child is to be educated in the least restrictive environment (Sieber, 2019), inclusion classrooms have become the norm.

With such demand and rigor required from the teacher for SEN students, it can be difficult to meet the needs and expectations of the nondisabled child. Such needs include: communication, interaction, cognitive and learning, social, emotional, and mental health, as well as sensory and/or physical needs (Bochiș et al., 2020; Eldar et al., 2018; Schwab, 2017; Varvisotis et al., 2017; Woolfson, 2018) Teachers in inclusive classrooms are expected to pinpoint the individual needs of each student; however, this demanding task, with little training or guidance, can impact how effectively they are able to accommodate, differentiate, and teach according to each child's individual needs (Bemiller, 2019). Because nondisabled students do not have IEPs or other documentation specifying specific modifications or accommodations needed, they have the potential to have their own needs overlooked. These students also often witness or experience emotionally disturbed students' outbursts, increased special attention or treatment given to those with more needs or disabilities, and can end up feeling neglected, traumatized, or excluded themselves. The teachers facilitating these inclusive classrooms are then expected to accommodate, moderate, and differentiate for these diverse populations. However, without understanding their perceptions and/or feelings of how regular students'

experience inclusion, it is unknown how this impacts teachers' ability to effectively instruct both nondisabled and SEN/SEND students.

Teachers are the individuals tasked with this difficult mission every school day to ensure differentiation occurs and to help support each student and the new expectations that coincide with the inclusion classroom, as well as the educational job they were originally enlisted to undertake. This, coupled with the new reality of online, in-person, and hybrid instruction, has become a daunting reality for educators (Michaeli et al., 2020). There is now an increase in teachers succumbing to the stress and demand of this job and attitudes toward this occupation have been negatively impacted and affected (Mintz et al., 2020).

Because teachers engage every day with students of all needs, abilities, and levels, research has been conducted to gain a better understanding of their thoughts surrounding inclusion classrooms, their benefits, and disadvantages (Mintz et al., 2020; Seiber, 2019; Woolfson, 2018). It has already been reported that teachers' attitudes and beliefs of their effectiveness within inclusion classrooms are strongly impacted by their perceived ability to reach and maintain the support and differentiation needed for each child (Mintz et al., 2020; Woolfson, 2018). However, the majority of this research surrounds and supports inclusion classroom structure and its impact on SEN students (Knight, 1999; Mintz et al., 2020; Sieber, 2019; Woolfson, 2018). It is also important to investigate teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the impact all-inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled student. In this study, I investigated the impact inclusion classrooms can have on the nondisabled student's social, emotional, and academic well-being and

success within the nondisabled classroom setting would offer further insight into the issue.

Purpose

Inclusion classrooms have become the preferred option for the regular education classroom structure in the past 10 years (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016), yet little attention has been paid to teachers' attitudes on the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. Although inclusion classrooms, as well as teachers' attitudes toward them, have been researched previously, the variables (social, emotional, and academic well-being) that I investigated and their impact on nondisabled students are still unfolding. Inclusion classrooms and teachers' attitudes toward them have been studied concerning the impact they have on SEN students (Knight, 1999; Sieber, 2019), but there has been mixed support as to if they are favorable for SEN students (Mintz et al., 2020), let alone the nondisabled student.

Regular education teachers are typically the primary service provider of education to students in inclusive classrooms; therefore, their attitudes on how inclusion classrooms impact the nondisabled student population within their nondisabled classroom offers a subjective response to this type of teaching and learning structure. Research on the benefits and advantages has been predominantly directed toward the special education student population (Knight, 1999; Sieber 2019). Teachers have also vocalized the disadvantages of this style of teaching due to the challenges faced with differentiation for SEN students, individualized plans and expectations, as well as making accommodations necessary for the nondisabled students (Özokçu, 2018; Savich, 2008).

Due to the concentration of research regarding inclusion classrooms that has focused primarily on the benefits and advantages for the SEN student and population, further consideration, and investigation need to occur to examine teacher's attitudes toward the impact this style and structure of teaching within an inclusion classroom has on the nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. It is not yet known whether inclusion classrooms impact nondisabled students on a social, emotional, or academic level, or what teachers' attitudes are toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students (Bemiller, 2019; Sieber, 2019).

My study advanced the existing literature through an examination of teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. Because educators are the individuals that have direct contact and connections with their students within inclusive classrooms, it is important to understand their attitudes regarding the potential benefits or drawbacks of this educational model, and what their beliefs are regarding its impact on the nondisabled student. I used a quantitative approach with survey data about teachers' attitudes on the impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled population and developed a deeper understanding of the influence this classroom structure has on their social, emotional, and academic well-being is presented. The data that I collected offered deeper insight into the relationship between teachers' impressions and attitudes toward inclusion related to the impact it has on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to students with special needs within an inclusive classroom setting.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' social well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$1): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$2): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion

classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$3): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Theoretical Framework

I used Ajzen's (1988) theory of planned behavior (TPB) to better understand the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. Ajzen's (1988) theory postulates that there is a link between one's beliefs and their behavior(s), as well as attitudes, subject norms, and perceived behavioral control are all combined to shape an individual's behavioral intentions and actions. Therefore, it can be useful in understanding how teachers 'attitudes, subject norms, and perceived behavior(s) help to shape their behavioral intentions and actions, as considered by the teacher and could offer further understanding to see if teachers believe inclusion

classrooms impact the nondisabled child. I used Ajzen's (1988) TPB to guide this study in understanding teachers' attitudes toward the inclusive education classroom structure and offer understanding of teachers' opinions and attitudes regarding the diverse student population within their classroom setting, and/or if they refrain from behaviors or actions in line with inclusive educational practices and/or expectations. Gaining information regarding teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education can help offer insight as to if they have a more positive or negative outlook on the impact inclusion has on the diverse populations within their classroom setting and are willing to adjust their teaching behavior according to their beliefs.

Nature of the Study

In this quantitative, nonexperimental descriptive study, I used the survey and questionnaire method to measure teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. I focused on three major impacts (social, emotional, and academic well-being) of inclusion classrooms on nondisabled students, as observed by teachers, which was consistent with Ajzen's (1988) TPB.

The source of data was two survey questionnaires. Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TAIS) questionnaire (Monsen et al., 2015) measures teachers' attitudes toward inclusion teaching. This questionnaire is an 8-point Likert scale ranging from *very strongly agree* (*AVS*) to *very strongly disagree (DVS)* across four sections and was adapted from Larrivee and Cook's (1979) Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORMS) and Monsen et al. (2014) Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusion Scale. The

TAIS questionnaire includes four sections: demographics, willingness to include, adequacy of support, and attitudes toward inclusion. Higher scores on the TAIS questionnaire indicate the respondent's attitudes and beliefs are highly supportive of inclusion, as well as the four components identified in this scale, whereas low scores suggest the respondent's attitudes and beliefs are more supportive of a traditional regular education structure and classroom model, as well as the four components of this scale.

The Attitudes toward Teaching All Students (ATTAS-mm) questionnaire (Gregory & Noto, 2018) is used to teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and teaching. This instrument uses a 9-item Likert scale ranging from *agree very strongly (AVS) to disagree very strongly (DVS).* The scores acquired from the ATTAS-mm questionnaire offer the opportunity for comparisons of differences in attitudes by type of classroom structure (regular vs. inclusion) to be made. This questionnaire also offers the ability to consider teachers' attitudes concerning Fishbein and Ajzen's (1972) documentation of the major components to influence ones' attitudes (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) to three subscales: believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms (cognitive), developing personal and professional relationships with others (affective), and creating an accepting environment for all students to learn (behavioral), as well as Ajzen's (1988) TPB that links an individual's beliefs to their behaviors or actions.

Participants were teachers that are in school districts in a state in the U. S. Middle Atlantic that are in inclusive classroom settings in Grades K–5. Inclusion classroom populations include nondisabled students, SEN students, and SEND students to ensure

compatibility with the inclusion classroom setup, structure, and model. The teachers surveyed for this study included those that educate within inclusion classrooms that have the following SEN and SEND populations: gifted/seminar students, LS students, and ES students, students with IEPs, as well as students with 504 plans, along with nondisabled students. Teachers included in this research survey and questionnaires were those from novice level to tenured status.

Definitions

Inclusion: An academic model wherein special needs students spend most, if not all, of their time amongst non-special needs students within a general education classroom setting learning academic and social skills (Brennan, 2019). For this study, inclusion, inclusive education, and inclusion classroom are used interchangeably.

Individualized education plan: Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as well as 504 plans, are options for students to receive legal documentation specifying their individual educational needs and goals specific to their disabilities (Varvisotis et al., 2017).

Least Restrictive Environment: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is a federal law requirement stating that students with disabilities are to receive their education, to the maximum extent possible, with nondisabled peers (McCabe et al., 2020).

Assumptions

I assumed that the teachers that currently work in inclusive education classroom settings participating in this study would provide honest answers about their attitudes toward inclusion and its impact on nondisabled students. I assumed that the data analysis

and interpretation of the results would clearly and concisely portray participants' responses appropriately and accurately.

Scope/Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to elementary general education teachers in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic that are in inclusive classroom settings. The participants were selected from Grades K–5, general education teachers that teach in inclusion classrooms. Due to only elementary education teachers participating in this study, the results are not generalizable to middle or high school educational settings.

Limitations

Due to the quantitative research scope and sequence of this study, there were some limitations to the study. Time constraints due to working hours for teachers, as well as only having the allotted 180 school days to conduct research was a limitation of this study. Due to a variety of inclusion classrooms, structure(s), and proper implementation, as well as the SEN population(s) described in participants' questionnaires, generalization threats can transpire.

Challenges and barriers that were encountered included lack of teacher participation and potential conflict(s) of interest for teachers due to work demand or lack of time to complete surveys. Teacher participation and completion of the questionnaires in their entirety also proved to be a unique and complex barrier. Many teachers did not complete the questionnaires in its entirety and I was forced to exclude their responses from my findings.

Significance

Educational institutions have steadily increased the development and structure of the inclusion classroom over the past two decades and it has become the primary design of the classroom structure seen today (Shipley, 1995; Woolfson, 2018). Online, in-person, and hybrid classroom structures and teaching models have also offered significant consideration to be made for the operational and organizational inclusion classroom setting and configuration (Michaeli et al., 2020). In addition to research focusing primarily on inclusion classrooms and the original intent of offering diversity through academic, social, emotional, and communication needs of SEN students (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2020), advantages and disadvantages of this classroom structure for SEN students has also been the primary population of consideration.

Numerous studies have investigated teachers' attitudes toward the benefits and disadvantages inclusion classrooms have for SEN students, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of teachers' attitudes toward the positive or negative impact inclusion classrooms have on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of the nondisabled population. Research has also been conducted to examine how educators can be offered more training, collaborative opportunities, and various ways to support the diversity within the inclusion classroom setting (McGhie-Richmond & Haider, 2020); however, their attitudes on this research problem in consideration with the nondisabled student has little research or statistical backing. The intent for my study was to increase the awareness and gather data regarding the attitudes of teachers concerning the impact

inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled student' social, emotional, and academic needs compared to students with educational needs.

My study sought to expand what is known about the inclusive classroom experience by adding the teachers' attitudes regarding the servicing of non-SEN students' social, emotional, and academic needs compared to SEN and SEND students in that setting. My study was also intended to increase awareness and focus on the needs of nondisabled students within inclusion classrooms. The results from this study can promote social change and provide data that offers support to the professional practice of the educational system.

Summary

In this quantitative study, I focused on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students. The purpose of this study was to investigate if regular education teachers working within an inclusive educational setting feel that inclusion has an impact on nondisabled students. The research questions aligned with the purpose of this study. Ajzen's (1979) TPB was the theoretical framework that helped guide this study. Two questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers that work in inclusion classrooms. My research study contributes to positive social change by highlighting teachers' attitudes and if they believe inclusion classrooms impacts the social, emotional, and academic well-being of nondisabled students.

In Chapter 2, I examine and discuss the research studies, as well as the theoretical frameworks that provide a review of literature related to the key variables and ideas from

current, peer-reviewed resources that disclose the confusion, challenges, and advantages of inclusive education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The modern structure of the current classroom setting has changed from its traditional form. Diverse learning abilities within the United States are mirrored within the contemporary, inclusive classroom populations (Jin et al., 2019). Curriculum and instruction have also shifted and are now guided by these classroom structural changes (McMullen & Alschuler, 2018). Teachers are expected to adjust, adhere, and fully comply with the differentiated instruction necessary to accommodate for those with learning, social, emotional, language, and various other disabilities, styles, and backgrounds within one classroom setting, even though little to no training is offered to make such accommodations (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Monsen et al., 2014). While investigations have been conducted regarding teachers' attitudes toward those with disabilities or special education needs, as well as their social, emotional, or academic well-being (Bemiller, 2019; Peacock, 2016); Woolfson, 2018), little research has been conducted to investigate teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and the impact this classroom structure has on the social, emotional, or academic well-being of the nondisabled student compared to SEN students.

In this chapter, I provide synthesis and summary of the literature regarding Ajzen's (1988) TPB, legislation, mandates that have motivated changes for inclusion classroom setting, and factors that impact nondisabled students within inclusion classrooms. These include (a) forms and impact of differentiated instruction; (b) teachers' attitudes toward inclusion; (b) social, emotional, and academic well-being of special educational needs; SEN students, SEND students, and nondisabled students; (c) teacher

training and attitudes regarding inclusion classrooms setting and structure; and (d) advantages and disadvantages of inclusion. I reviewed SEN students and SEND student's needs, as well as the requirements, accommodations, and expectations made for individualized educational plans. I examine previously conducted research studies that provide evidence supporting the need for more research to be conducted concerning teachers' attitudes regarding the social, emotional, and academic impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students. The gap in the literature is also detailed and justifies the proposed quantitative study design of the research study. I used the following databases for searching literature between 1970 and 2021: Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), EBSCOHOST, EBSCO ebooks, and Google Scholar. Keywords I used in the database searches were: *integration, inclusion classrooms, inclusive education, teacher's attitudes toward inclusion, inclusive strategies, differentiated instruction, the social impact of inclusion, social learning theories, behavioral theories, the emotional impact of inclusion, academic impact of inclusion,* and *special education.*

Theoretical Foundation

Integration was the original concept and idea that ensured students with disabilities were offered to extend the ability to attend nondisabled classrooms with additional accommodations or arrangements made for them (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Winzer, 2009). The overall school structure and schedule, however, remained largely unchanged (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Winzer, 2009). The integration educational method mandates that distinct requirements for so-called outstanding students in the

regular education setting be set, predominantly those traditionally categorized as disabled, through approaches such as withdrawal, remedial schooling, and/or mainstreaming (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Winzer, 2009). However, the inclusion education method was later developed as a different desired structural change to the classroom and curriculum configuration to be reactive to all students' learning requirements, regardless of ability level (Winzer, 2009). Ideally, inclusion would offer a school-wide change to improve the overall educational system for all students. Allan and Slee (2008) indicated that while inclusive education had historical and political origins, there has been controversy, misperception, and dissatisfaction with the classifications and philosophies that have propelled its progress.

Teachers' attitudes toward integration were not widely discussed or considered during this new educational structural change (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Winzer, 2009). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion have not been openly conferred or deliberated extensively either, but the expectations of teachers have only continued to grow with the persistent efforts of offering inclusion to the varying diverse learning, emotional, behavioral, and physical populations of today (Winzer, 2009). The lack of training, support, or even understanding of how to holistically incorporate inclusion within an inclusion classroom setting continues to baffle and confuse teachers and other educational professionals (Allan & Slee, 2008).

Many teachers, even when asked about their thoughts and opinions about inclusive education, will not openly and honestly share their attitudes. Response bias has been recorded and described as a limitation to numerous studies that have researched the

topic of inclusive education (Hsien et al., 2009; Winzer, 2009). Teachers often want to ensure that their employers and the public know that they are doing and trying their best, so when asked about potentially offensive or multicultural sensitive topics, politically correct answers and response bias have been recorded (Hsian et al., 2009). This impacts the validity and reliability of research conducted on this topic and calls into question, what teachers' attitudes are toward inclusive education, specifically, its impact on the nondisabled student's social, emotional, and academic well-being.

Due to the confusion of this educational movement, there are multiple theoretical perspectives concerning teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education that are used to try to help clarify and create a better understanding of inclusion education, its expectations of teachers and students, as well as accommodations that should be made for these diverse populations. These philosophies include Ajzen's (1988) TPB. Exploration of these theoretical frameworks highlights the identification of inclusion education stemming from the 1980s due to frustration with integration.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's (1988) TPB links an individual's beliefs to their behaviors or actions. This theory postulates that there are three core components: attitudes, subjective norm(s), and perceived behavioral control, which, together, shape the behavioral intentions of that individual. Ajzen developed this theory to improve the predictive power of Fishbein's (1985) theory of reasoned action by including perceived behavioral control, which explains that if people evaluate the suggested behavior as positive (attitude) and if they think their significant others want them to perform the behavior (subjective norm), this

results in higher intention (motivations). Attitudes, from a social learning perspective, are similar to human qualities, and are better understood as a result of the interaction between personal-, environmental-, and task-/activity-based factors and are all contributed to behavioral intentions, thereby resulting in actual behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Hutzler et al., 2019).

Due to the confusion and misunderstanding of inclusion, teachers are often underprepared or not adequately trained enough to properly establish a truly inclusive environment for all students within their classroom setting (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Mintz et al., 2020). This lack of understanding further exacerbates teachers' frustration and attitudes toward inclusion and can create unnecessary social, emotional, or academic barriers for all students (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Bemiller, 2019; Mintz et al., 2020).

Consideration of teachers' personal, environmental, and task/activity-based factors can contribute and lead to potentially negative attitudes and behaviors regarding their diverse populations, expectations of them as a teacher, and their lack of training or understanding of how to handle various situations overcome learning and social obstacles regarding students while maintaining the academic rigor necessary for regular and advanced student populations (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Hutzler et al., 2019). My research study targeted teachers' attitudes toward inclusion education.

By gaining further understanding about teachers' attitudes toward this classroom structure, expectations and accommodations, it can open up opportunities of understanding teachers' intentions to engage in a particular activity or situation regarding the diverse student populations within their classroom setting. Insight into teachers'

attitudes toward inclusion classrooms can also offer understanding of whether they complete or refrain from behaviors or actions in line with inclusive educational practices and expectations (Azjen, 1991; Simpson Reeves et al., 2019). Ajzen's TPB theoretical framework offered the opportunity to see how teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms reflected a potential impact on the nondisabled population and their social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

My research study further considered and studied teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the impact it has on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. I believe additional investigations need to be conducted to evaluate teachers' beliefs about their nondisabled students and if they are socially interacting with students of all abilities. Teachers' attitudes toward the emotional response and impact for nondisabled students, whether in regards to potential feelings of neglect toward their academics, personal well-being, or traumatic experiences witnessed and experienced within the classroom also require further exploration. Finally, I believe additional inquiry needs to occur to examine how teachers believe inclusive education impacts nondisabled students' academic growth or if their education is being impacted or faltering because more attention, remediation, or advance curriculum-based instruction is required for SEN, SEND, behavioral/emotional, or gifted populations within the same classroom setting.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Development of Inclusion: State & Federal Mandates

Before the 1970s and inclusion, most schools in the United States did not have inclusive policies. Students with disabilities were often not permitted to attend school because they were thought to be difficult or unable to be educated (Savich, 2008). As time progressed, however, students with mild disabilities were offered the opportunity to attend regular schools, but they were separated and segregated from the rest of the student population and offered instruction from a specially trained teacher. It was thought that if students with disabilities were included within the nondisabled classroom, the regular education teacher would invest too much time and energy attending to their individual social, emotional, and educational needs, that there would little time or energy left for the remainder of the class (Savich, 2008).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guaranteed civil rights to all disabled individuals and required appropriate accommodations for disabled students within schools. This initiated the inclusion movement. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA; 1975) was created and further launched the platform for special education. This act guaranteed that any educational institution that received funding would be guaranteed educational rights and encouraged those states to develop programs for individuals with disabilities. The EAHCA (1975) was amended and revised to create IDEA (1997). This act created the opportunity and mandate that all schools would develop and provide a free and quality public education for all students within the least restrictive environment possible. IEPs were included for all special-education students to

help inform parents, teachers, districts, and others working with that SEN and SEND student of their accommodations, recommendations, SDIs, and any other pertinent information regarding their educational needs. Now, however, IEPs and 504 plans often detail the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of special-education students.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) required states to administer tests to students. Students were expected to demonstrate academic progress and performance on these examinations in exchange for additional funding for educational assistance. As of 2013, inclusive education is still powerfully sanctioned by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and most classrooms across the United States use this classroom and social structure within their districts and schools. In 2015, a new education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was passed as a replacement for the NCLB Act and offered numerous modifications to the educational system and structure for students. However, one component that was not modified was the provisions related to the standardized tests administered periodically for students (ESSA, 2015). Although controversies and even confusion about inclusion are still widely known and acknowledged, inclusion education is widely accepted and endorsed as the educational norm.

Forms and the Impact of Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction comes in a variety of forms for different populations of students and their specific needs. Teachers must accommodate for these various populations and differentiation enables their ability to interact with the current curriculum

on their level (McMullen & Alschuler, 2018). IEPs, as well as 504 plans, are options for students to receive legal documentation specifying their individual educational needs and goals specific to their disabilities (Varvisotis et al., 2017). Students with 504 plans and IEPs typically have Specific Designed Instruction plans (SDIs) and other accommodations that must be made for the teacher to follow within their daily classroom instruction and are agreed upon by parents, school psychologists, intervention specialists, teachers, and principals. Parents can become easily confused with the technical, legal, and educational jargon used within these plans and can feel overwhelmed while agreeing upon educational items for their child that they do not fully comprehend (Varvisotis et al., 2017). Often, teachers are included in these meetings, but can be allotted little input into what types of accommodations are made; however, they are expected to adhere and amend their teaching to make these accommodations work within their classroom (Varvisotis et al., 2017).

The impact of differentiated instruction has been investigated, but without knowing if a teacher is administering accommodations with absolute fidelity, it is unclear as to how effective or to what extent these accommodations and the differentiated curriculum offered to impact the targeted populations (Varvisotis et al., 2017). These recommended plans and accommodations are often agreed upon without true consideration of the restrictions teachers have within their classrooms and the variety of populations they have to accommodate for (Varvisotis et al., 2017). These accommodations may include, but are not limited to: chunking assignments, offering extra time or assistance on the assignments or tests, special or preferential seating,

offering breaks, offering or eliminating extra assignments for students, creation, and implementation of modified work for the diverse populations within that room depending on ability level, larger print copies of each piece of work and text required of the student, test items being read aloud, small group instruction, guided notes for instructional lessons, and so on (Varvisotis et al., 2017). While some of these items are manageable, most are difficult or unrealistic to ask of a teacher for numerous students that have 504 plans, IEPs, visual or hearing impairments, ESL students, autistic students, and students with behavioral, social, or emotional disorders. Consideration of teachers' attitudes toward the increased demand for modifications to the regular education curriculum and instruction needs to be investigated, as well as if they believe it is impacting the nondisabled student's academic well-being.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Students and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

SEN students and SEND students have been at the forefront of the concerns of the educational system for years (Gyasi et al., 2020). Including these populations within the regular educational setting offered SEN and SEND student a semblance of normalcy to their educational careers compared to those that came prior. However, much of the teacher's attention, energy, and focus are then enveloped around these populations due to concern, legal responsibilities, and professional purposes and requirements (Gyasi et al., 2020; Mintz et al., 2020; Peacock, 2016). Between this population, those with emotional and behavioral disturbances, learning support, gifted/seminar, language barriers, and students with social and behavioral issues, the teacher's focus is often pulled in different

directions. The nondisabled population then suffers due to the increase in demands, accommodations, remedial work, or advanced work needed.

Research continues to find that even though the inclusion of SEN and SEND students have been prevalent and have evolved over the last several decades, teachers' knowledge of special education, students with disabilities, and how to accommodate for them is very limited (Gavronskaya et al., 2021; Gyasi et al., 2020). The complex nature of inclusive education is a multidimensional process and has been made even more intricate with distance teaching and learning (Gavronskaya et al., 2021). The confusion and complexity of inclusive education can be felt by SEN and SEND students. While SEN and SEND student populations reported positive feelings and emotions of being incorporated into the nondisabled classroom settings, negative emotions were felt daily due to less support offered during cooperative learning activities that included peers (Bochiş et al., 2020). This highlights the discomfort level for SEN students is also increased when they are in the nondisabled classroom setting because materials, curriculum, and social interactions can be above their comprehension, comfort, and/or ability level(s).

Inclusion classrooms have become the normal classroom structure; however, with the modern advances of technology and issues that have arisen due to the increased necessity of online learning while also making accommodations for these populations of students, the expectations and requirements have increased further (Gavronskaya et al., 2021). The demands and expectations of teachers to differentiate, reteach, and offer more advanced curriculum for varying populations within the same classrooms are such a high

demand that many teachers feel the effects of such requirements. With the lack of understanding of pedagogical and technological issues that have been further exacerbated by distance learning, teachers' understanding and effectiveness with making and adhering to the accommodations, modifications, and specified individualized goals of SEN and SEND students have truly perplexed the teaching realm (Gavronskaya et al., 2021). This further highlights the need for exploration to occur regarding teacher's attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

Emotionally Disturbed (ED) and Gifted Populations

SEN and SEND populations are a large portion of the inclusion classroom today. However, other populations of students that are necessary to mention are those with emotional and behavioral disorders or disabilities, as well as those that have advanced learning capabilities. These student populations have their requirements and expectations necessary to accommodate for their own special needs, as well. ED children are children that have an inability to learn that is unexplained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors (Eldar et al., 2018). ED children typically require behavior plans, chunking assignments, frequent breaks, and the allowance for violent outbursts to occur with little to no consequence (Eldar et al., 2018).

Due to the unexplained natural and root of the issues that render an ED child unable to learn, this places them in a position where they can become frustrated. These frustrations and the inability to communicate them with others properly often cause violent or explosive outbursts to occur (Eldar et al., 2018). New rules and requirements

from the federal level have now made it possible for ED students to exhibit these explosive behaviors in front of their peers without removal (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network; PaTTAN, 2018). Only after they have completed this violent or explosive behavior are they able to be escorted from the room. Students within that room are expected to evacuate for their safety and be escorted to a different room or part of the school building until the ED student can be removed.

Teachers are also limited on how and if they can protect themselves and their students if such an occurrence happens within their classroom setting. Legal mandates offer numerous options and abilities for ED students to acquire consequences on their behavioral actions and are often free and clear to return to the nondisabled classroom setting soon after an incident occurs (PaTTAN, 2018). However, this type of behavior may have an impact on the other students within the same classroom setting. The impact these behaviors can have on the teacher and their ability to nurture, facilitate, and encourage appropriate relationships among all students, and ultimately educate every child within the least restrictive environment (LRE) can be challenging.

Students that are identified as gifted or in seminar classes are also part of the inclusion classroom. They require an accelerated curriculum in whatever subjects they have been identified as gifted in, and teachers are, once again, expected to make these accommodations and modifications to the curriculum while also offering the other students in the room instruction on their own, individual ability levels (Kaya & Tortop, 2020; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2013). The accommodations and modifications made by teachers require time, energy, and effort to ensure that all students are being taken care of

on their ability level. However, gifted students and their parents often feel that they become more of the "teacher" in the educational setting because educators often task them with helping other students that do not fully understand the concepts or curriculum being taught (Kaya & Tortop, 2020; Saunders et al., 2013). This can be challenging for gifted students and hinder their abilities or desires to perform to their maximum potential within the regular education setting.

Social, Emotional, and Academic Well-Being of Students

The social well-being of all students has dominated the forefront of research in recent years due to the increase in children with social and emotional issues. The investigation, time, and energy have gone into investigating how students are interacting and coping with new stresses and other factors alongside peers. Online learning and virtual interactions have also included a technological element that is further impacting their social interactions and understanding of their peers (Mirzawati et al., 2020). It has been shown to impede their ability to relate to one another and has hindered social interactions for students (Deniz, 2010; Mirzawati et al., 2020). Increased risks of cyber bullying and the anonymity that a screen offers have created a controversial dynamic, as well (Deniz, 2010). Inclusion can impact the social well-being of a variety of populations of students within the classroom setting. It can be difficult to relate to peers that are on a higher academic level within the classroom setting (Klang et al., 2020; Zindler, 2009). However, research has indicated that outside of the classroom setting, peer interactions vary little in regards to academic abilities (Schwab, 2017). Students that feel different or may have SEN and SEND, behavioral, or other learning disabilities have indicated that

they have self-confidence issues within the classroom, which they feel impacts their desire or ability to perform better (Bochiș et al., 2020). However, little research investigates how nondisabled students feel socially within the inclusion classroom setting compared to SEN and SEND students. It is important to further investigate their social well-being regarding inclusive education.

The emotional well-being of all students has also dominated research recently, especially with COVID-19 restrictions, and new expectations for education and interactions of peers, teachers, and staff. The online learning atmosphere shocked many teachers and students when the implementation became necessary to try to contain the spread of this virus and keep everyone safe and at home. Many students experienced different types of social and emotional isolation that have never been experienced before (Bochiș et al., 2020). Teachers have been experiencing emotional burnouts while more expectations and accommodations than ever have been required of them with little to no training on how to use the technology that has been required to use during this time (Luisa et al., 2020; Suh, 2018). Investigation of the teachers' attitudes toward the emotional well-being of students is always imperative and investigating the emotional climate and well-being of nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students is just as vital. Many students with learning, social, emotional, or behavioral disorders or disabilities experience increased concern or attention, but it is just as important to investigate teachers' attitudes toward those students that often go unseen or overlooked.

Differentiation of instruction still had to continue to occur during the COVID-19 quarantine to try to ensure the continuity and academic well-being of students. Again,

students with IEPs, and behavioral support plans were targeted as more important because of the legal obligations that teachers and staff face to correctly adhere to accommodations, SDIs, and other requirements (Varvisotis et al., 2017). These academic responsibilities required of the teacher to ensure the necessary adjustments can often lead to a curriculum that is less challenging or "watered down." This can impact the potential that gifted and nondisabled students are not receiving the necessary curriculum and instruction they need or desire. It is vital to gather teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward the inclusion classrooms setting, requirements, and accommodations they must make for the other populations within their classroom and see if they believe this is impacting the academic well-being of the nondisabled student.

Online Learning Environments and Inclusion

Online learning has become a necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has forced educational professionals and students to adapt and adjust to a new way of teaching and learning. It has also made it necessary for teachers within inclusion classrooms to differentiate and accommodate to a further extent than ever before, while also figuring out how to teach, grade, and properly educate through the use of new and innovative technology and programs (Stenman & Petterson, 2020). Teachers' attitudes regarding virtual teaching and learning have been primarily based on negativity and resentment over the course of this endemic; however, it has been found that with proper professional development and training, teachers feel more comfortable and confident when administering assignments and using technology (Stenman & Petterson, 2020). More demands and time spent learning the basics and even advanced technology has

forced many educators out of their comfort zone of being in person (Stenman & Petterson, 2020). It has also required numerous hours invested outside of their designated workdays. IEPs, 504s, and other special educational documents and accommodations specified within these documents have called into question the legal requirements and ramifications of not being able to adequately follow such high demands within the confines of an online learning environment (Stenman & Petterson, 2020). This has begun to further highlight the mandates and requirements of teachers and inclusive education as a whole. It has also further emphasized the need to look at teachers' attitudes regarding the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students and their social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

Teacher Training and Attitudes toward Inclusion

Teachers are offered various training to help them become accustomed to new programs, technology, curriculum, and so on. This can occur during the school year for teachers, but it can also be required of them over their summer vacations. For certain schools around the United States that incorporate inclusion classroom structures, training is offered on how to administer and differentiate curriculum, co-teaching techniques with special education teachers, as well as how to create a socially, emotionally, and academically friendly environment (Forlin & Sin, 2017). However, in other schools that have the same style and structure for inclusion, teachers are offered little to no training. This hinders their understanding, ability, and willingness to differentiate and accommodate the diverse populations within their classroom (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Woolfson, 2018).

The lack of training and feeling of unpreparedness can impact the attitude(s) teachers have toward the whole concept of inclusion. It was primarily found that a teacher's beliefs of the capabilities, the effectiveness of their teaching, as well as support offered for their students, as well as themselves, impacted a teacher's belief in the impact their teaching had and their attitude toward inclusion classrooms and SEN/SEND students (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Woolfson, 2018). Teachers' attitudes are impacted when it comes to some common issues or themes regarding inclusion: collaboration opportunities, share responsibilities, extra planning time, attitudes toward co-teaching, student success, basis for administrative decisions, as well as professional development opportunities (Peacock, 2016; Woolfson, 2018).

Inclusive Education in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2021) and the Bureau of Special Education (2021) collaboratively and collectively work with school districts, educators, agencies, and other stakeholders across Pennsylvania to ensure that students with special needs and disabilities are receiving and have access to quality educational services, supports, and opportunities. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's (2021) vision statement is to:

> To do their best, students must feel safe at school. A healthy and safe environment can help students thrive, and every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression should be provided the opportunity to learn – free from discrimination, fear, or harassment. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021)

Pennsylvania Department of Education's (2021) mission is to offer equal opportunities for all students, regardless of abilities within schools in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. However, the LRE for nondisabled students has become complex, challenging, and unknown as to if it even exists. Most accommodations that are made or offered to students within the classroom are targeted to assist those with SEN, SEND, IEPs, 504s, or behavioral support plans. Teachers are struggling to understand what inclusive education entails and what their role and requirements are. The need to understand teacher's attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on the nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students is necessary to help with this struggle.

Negative Effects on Teachers: Stress and Teacher Burn-out

Stress is a normal part of any job; however, teachers are experiencing even more stress than before. Due to the high demand inclusion requires from teachers, extra planning time not included in their regular day or schedules, new online teaching requirements and expectations, curriculum requirements, and so on, teacher's stress levels have increased drastically (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Standardized testing and scores being evaluated by districts can impact teachers and their employment status and, therefore, add increased strain and stress on teachers to have their students perform well (Hughes, 2006). Having an inclusive classroom can add even more stress and demand due to low-performing students, such as SEN and SEND populations (Hughes, 2006). New expectations of incorporating social-emotional learning lessons, accommodations involving inclusion, curriculum training, and writing, and other job demands have caused

many teachers to rethink their profession and even quit educating altogether (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). This exodus of teachers is causing a teacher shortage around the United States and is felt by students and teachers alike (Luisa et al., 2020; Suh, 2018).

Teacher burn-out is defined as the collective feeling and symptoms of fatigue, depression, boredom, anxiety, regret, stress, frustration, and anxiety, as well as other negative symptoms about and exacerbated by their teaching profession (Luisa et al., 2020; Suh, 2018). Teacher burn-out can impact a teacher to the extent that they may decide to ultimately quit the teaching profession. The United States has been noticing an increase in teachers quitting or resigning from their jobs for numerous reasons, but inclusion is one issue that has impacted teachers greatly (Rosenberg, 2020; Suh, 2018). Understanding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion offers insight into how to alleviating this issue and offering support, training, and other opportunities for teachers to feel better equipped to manage all of the expectations on them. Examining teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms regarding nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students offers insight into how to help them consider, plan, and provide appropriate curriculum, instruction, and energy toward their nondisabled population that is typically overlooked.

Advantages of Inclusion

There are numerous advantages of inclusion. This type of educational setting offers students of any ability the opportunity to learn with peers of their age (Savich, 2008; Sieber, 2019). Developmentally, this is appropriate for students and offers

additional opportunities for social interactions and experiences. Neither students that nondisabled nor have special-educational needs have the opportunity to make social connections with those that may be academically, socially, or emotionally different than they are and vice versa (Savich, 2008; Sieber, 2019). Social interactions are vital for appropriate, social development and students with behavioral issues, in particular, benefit greatly when interacting with peers of the same age. Inclusive education offers this opportunity to develop friends, as well as opportunities for growth and compassion toward those that are different from the nondisabled child.

Inclusion classrooms also offer a variety of emotionally stimulating interactions and experiences for all students. It encourages the heterogeneous grouping of students, many going through similar developmental social and emotional experiences (Savich, 2008; Sieber, 2019). This can offer mutual emotional support from peers, as well as further awareness of student interaction and experiences for teachers. The emotional development of students is necessary for children to become emotionally stable adults (Sieber, 2019). Emotional growth and examination of a child's actions and reactions in different situations and scenarios can also offer teachers the opportunity to expand on classroom themes, rapport, and positive social and emotional climate within the classroom setting.

Inclusive education also offers students of all abilities to interact with the same curriculum. Differentiation should occur for each diverse population within the classroom, but the core instruction stems from the same curriculum. Offering instruction based on grade level curriculum offers the opportunity for all students to feel as though

they are on a similar academic level than they may be (Savich, 2008; Sieber, 2019). If the teacher has effectively modified the curriculum, then it should offer minimal distraction or awareness of other students that do not need or have their modifications. This type of curriculum and academic alignment takes planning, preparation, and time on the teacher's part, but can offer invaluable learning opportunities. Also, teachers that have a positive outlook on inclusive education often try to incorporate lessons within their curriculum that pertain to acceptance, positive interactions, and perseverance through any academic obstacle (Monsen et al., 2014).

Disadvantages of Inclusion

The investigation of the disadvantages of inclusive education is still occurring. However, numerous disadvantages have been documented since the beginning of this educational movement. Inclusion classrooms can impact the appropriate social interaction of students that require more stimulus and advanced curriculum, discussion, and interaction (Kaya & Tortop, 2020; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2013). Social isolation can occur through social barriers created due to inclusion (Deniz, 2010; Mirzawati et al., 2020). Social acceptance and difficulties relating to peers often occur in inclusion classrooms which, in turn, can impact self-confidence and self-efficacy in students (Deniz, 2010; Mirzawati et al., 2020). Nondisabled students can experience a stunted social experience with peers when interacting with those with SEN, SEND, or behavioral disorders (Deniz, 2010). This can hinder their social and academic progress. Difficulty interacting, understanding, and even resistance to social interactions can also be experienced. Further examination of teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the social

implications' inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students is necessary to see if inclusive education is beneficial or detrimental to this student populations' social progress.

Inclusion classrooms can also impact the emotional experience and development of nondisabled students. They could have feelings of resentment or frustration when the attention and focus of the curriculum, instruction, and modifications are made to their education for those that are included in the nondisabled classroom (Kaya & Tortop, 2020; Saunders-Stewart et al., 2013). The goal of teachers is to create a positive, safe, and secure environment for students to feel social, emotionally, and academically accepted. Further investigation of how inclusion classrooms impact nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to SEN and SEND students could offer insight into if their self-efficacy and confidence are impacted.

Inclusive education and this style of classroom setting force many students to have a disrupted learning experience and environment, which impacts the natural educational and academic flow and progression (Kaya & Tortop, 2020). Offering students an academic LRE allows them to take academic risks that can stimulate and expand their growth as a student. Educational rigor is often decreased for students with learning disabilities and could be at the expense of the nondisabled student. Continuous disruption due to students with behavioral disorders or issues can also impact a nondisabled student's right to the LRE for learning. Investigating teachers' attitudes of the academic implications' inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social,

emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students offers further clarity to this concerning the topic.

Summary and Conclusions

I reviewed the literature centered on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion regarding the social, emotional, and academic well-being of SEN, SEND, and gifted students to emphasize the necessity of investigation to occur to gather teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusive education has on nondisabled students. Multiple theories consider the social, emotional, and academic implications of inclusive education and present a potentially useful perspective when considering teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students compared to SEN students.

Legal and state mandates have had historical and legal development of practices, procedures, and directives related to inclusive education. Confusion and frustration have and continue to occur regarding inclusive education based on these legal and state mandates, as well as the scrutiny behind what mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion mean and entail for teachers. Investigation of teacher training opportunities and attitudes regarding inclusion classrooms setting and structure were reviewed to consider how the limited amount of training can hinder teachers' attitudes toward this educational practice.

Inclusive education offers numerous advantages for student populations; however, disadvantages are also evident when using this educational structural model. SEN students and SEND students' needs have specific requirements, accommodations, and expectations made for individualized educational plans that teachers must adhere to and administer. Students with ED and gifted students also require further modifications and

advancement must be made for these populations to further differentiate a regular education curriculum.

Inclusive education has been investigated through the perspective of how it benefits SEN, SEND, ED, gifted, and other student populations with disorders or disabilities; however, more research needs to be conducted to investigate the nondisabled population. The nondisabled child is not considered often because they are typically midline or within the middle and on grade-level in all or most subjects (Bemiller, 2019). However, teachers often worry about this population and neglecting their educational needs in place of those that have more legal and pressing needs (Bemiller, 2019).

In Chapter 3, my quantitative study will be described according to teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classroom settings and their impact on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of the nondisabled population compared to students with special educational needs.

Chapter 3: Research Method

I conducted a quantitative research design approach to consider teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students.. The primary area of focus was elementary teachers in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic that are in inclusive classroom settings in Grades K–5.

I used two surveys for this research study, including the ATTAS-mm (Gregory & Noto, 2018) and the TAIS (Monsen et al., 2015). Through the use of these two surveys, I was able to gather teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and the integration of inclusive practices within a regular education setting. I was able to gather teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and if they believed it had an impact on nondisabled students compared to SEN students. I used the simple linear regression model test to analyze the findings of the ATTAS-mm and TAIS surveys' results.

Research Design and Rationale

I focused on the attitudes of teachers in regards to the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students for this study. Conflicting attitudes and even confusion regarding inclusion classrooms represent a major issue with inclusive education. With further expectations, demands, and rigor placed on the teachers that are expected to holistically implement curriculum and instruction within an inclusive classroom, it is imperative to gather their thoughts, ideas, and attitudes regarding how they believe this educational style and model

impacts the nondisabled students compared with SEN students within the same inclusive setting.

Research Questions

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' social well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$1): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$2): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$3): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

The use of a quantitative research approach offered me the ability to study and cultivate the procedures and techniques used to measure human behavior, as well as other attributes (Creswell, 2012). By using a quantitative research approach, I was able to seek an understanding of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and its impact on nondisabled students.

I investigated teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and its impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN

students because of the confusion surrounding inclusion and its desired framework. The frustration educators are feeling due to differentiation expectations, as well as the lack of training offered for teachers to feel comfortable creating, developing, and implementing inclusive educational practices, lessons, and activities are also of great concern (Arnaiz Sánchez et al., 2019; Bemiller, 2019; Mintz et al., 2020). I chose to use a quantitative methodology approach and the surveys used were chosen to offer the opportunity for educators to efficiently contribute their attitudes toward inclusive education. I also chose the quantitative research approach because it offered the opportunity to sample a larger population of educators identified as working within inclusive classrooms to gather a greater number of opinions regarding this topic. My research study also offered the opportunity for randomization to occur when recruiting and sampling participants, as well as offers the advantage for generalizability.

I used this data collection tool because it offered the ability to collect data from a wide range of educators that teach in inclusive classrooms located in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic. The questionnaires I selected offered the opportunity for busy educators to answer questions in a manner that was more convenient and flexible, but still offered data necessary to further understand and consider regarding this topic that also impacts them.

I used a simple linear regression to analyze the collected data as it attempts to model the relationship between a predictor variable and a response variable by fitting a linear equation to the observed data. I used this test to assess the hypothesis that the population means for the dependent variables are the same for all levels of a factor,

across all groups (Green & Salkind, 2014). I selected this design because it examined possible connections between the dependent and independent variable identified in this study. The independent variable is teachers' attitudes about inclusion, while the dependent variable will be the teachers' perception of nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students.

Methodology

Participant Population

The target population for this study was elementary teachers in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic that are in inclusive classroom settings in Grades K–5. Participants included in this study were those that have inclusive educational practices and classrooms. Inclusion classroom populations included nondisabled students, SEN students, and SEND students to ensure compatibility with inclusive educational structure and model. Teachers that participated in these surveys included those that educate within inclusive classroom settings that have the following SEN and SEND populations, as well as nondisabled students: gifted/seminar students, LS students, ES students, ED students, students with behavioral disorders, and students with IEPs as well as students with 504 educational plans.

Teachers that were included in this quantitative research study were those that range from novice level to tenured status. I contacted schools' principals before the questionnaires were sent out, as well as participant consent information.

Sampling Strategy

I used the criterion-based convenience sampling strategy and method for this research study, which provided a nonprobability sampling method offering the ability for easy contact based on the criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). Participants included those that meet the criteria and had agreed to participate. A priori power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) with a medium effect size of 0.15, an alpha level of 0.05, and a desired power of 0.80 was used to estimate the desired sample size to be 77 participants that fit the criteria discussed.

Participant Criteria

Participants were educators that currently teach within an inclusive classroom setting. Both novice and tenured teachers from the elementary level Grades K–5 were included as participants.

Participant recruitment

I first contacted principals of school districts with known inclusive populations in regard to permission for teachers to participate in this research study on their own time. When I obtained the necessary permissions, a second email detailing information regarding the survey, informed consent information, and the link to SurveyMonkey were provided to principals to forward to their teachers.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Plan

I used two questionnaires as the instrumentation of this study. I transcribed the questionnaires to the hosting site SurveyMonkey and access links sent electronically to participants. I secured informed consent via SurveyMonkey before the participants began

the survey, as well as participant demographic information. The ATTAS-mm demographic forms were collected and provided basic respondent information regarding educator's current role, gender, highest degree acquired, years of experience as an educator, community and school type, socioeconomic status of the school, as well as other basic inclusion education questions. I did not gather any identifying information in the actual survey, which preserved participant anonymity as results were downloaded as a de-identified data set. The TAIS (Monsen et al., 2015) questionnaire I used required permission to use the survey, which was granted by the instrument author to use this research instrument for this study and took 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The ATTAS-mm (Gregory & Noto, 2018) questionnaire required permission, which was granted by the instrument author to use this research instrument for this study and took 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Questionnaires

The ATTAS-mm (Gregory & Noto, 2018) questionnaire measures teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and teaching. This instrument uses a 9-item Likert scale ranging from *agree very strongly (AVS)* to *disagree very strongly (DVS)*. The scores I acquired from the ATTAS-mm questionnaire offered me the opportunity for comparisons of differences in attitudes by type of classroom structure (regular vs. inclusion) to be made. This questionnaire I used also offered the ability to consider teachers' attitudes concerning Fishbein and Ajzen (1972) documentation of the major components to influence ones' attitudes (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) to three subscales: believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms (cognitive),

developing personal and professional relationships with others (affective), and creating an accepting environment for all students to learn (behavioral).

I used the TAIS (Monsen et al., 2015) questionnaire to measure teachers' attitudes toward inclusion teaching. This questionnaire uses an 8-point Likert scale ranging from *very strongly agree* (*AVS*) to *very strongly disagree (DVS)* across four sections and was adapted from Larrivee and Cook's (1979) Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORMS) and Monsen et al. (2014) Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusion Scale. The TAIS questionnaire provided four sections taking into consideration: demographics, willingness to include, adequacy of support, and attitudes toward inclusion. Higher scores on the TAIS questionnaire indicated the respondent's attitudes and beliefs are highly supportive of inclusion, whereas low scores suggest the respondent's attitudes and beliefs are more supportive of a traditional regular education structure and classroom model. Analysis of this data offered understanding and data of how teachers' attitudes toward inclusion teaching may impact their attitudes toward how inclusion classrooms may impact nondisabled students compared to SEN students.

Email follow-up

The initial survey timeframe given was 2 weeks. A follow-up e-mail was sent out to the principal to send to teachers 5 days before the due date of the survey. An extension of 1 week was offered due to lower participation than expected.

Data Analysis Plan

I used a descriptive data analysis plan for this research study to provide a general summary of the participant demographics. The data I collected was analyzed using a

simple linear regression model to see if there was statistically significant differences regarding the proposed hypotheses regarding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on the social, emotional, and academic well-being of nondisabled students compared to SEN students. I used SPSS v28 software to facilitate data analysis.

Reliability

According to Gregory and Noto (2012) reliability of the ATTAS-mm was assessed and confirmed that it had the overall unstandardized Cronbach alpha for the entire ATTAS-mm as 0.833 and verified that the ATTAS-mm had dependable values regarding Fishbein and Ajzen (1972) three subscales regarding attitudes (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) components. According to Monsen et al. (2015) it was found that reliability analyses of the TAIS discovered Cronbach's coefficient of 0.86 for the seven items of Component 1 and 0.80 for the five items of Component 2, signifying good reliability. This information coupled with a value of 0.76 together the four items of Component 3 and for the four items of Component 4, signifying moderate reliability.

Construct Validity

Construct validity of the ATTAS-mm (Gregory & Noto, 2012) was acquired through a panel of experts, as well as the alignment with cognitive psychology literature that offered further confirmation that the ATTAS-mm is a reputable and valid instrument. Many of the subscales, as well as the full instrument, exceeded the 0.8 value for alpha, further offering good internal reliability (Gregory & Noto, 2012). Monsen et al. (2015) demonstrated the validity of the TAIS through the use of two large, independent samples

that were collected in England and New Zealand. Monsen et al. (2015) found consideration between the factors of section 4 of the TAIS and the subscales of My Class Inventory (MCI) significantly predicted students overall satisfaction of their classroom setting. Monsen et al. (2015) also found that factors of sections 1, 2, and 4 correlated with teachers' willingness to include students with varying difficulties within their classroom. The principal components analysis (PCA) was also used to test the reliability and validity, as well as the underlying organization and dimensionality of items in section 4 and was used to determine reliability and validity of emergent scales.

Ethical Procedures

In consideration of ethical issues that could be a factor in this study, professional standards (American Psychological Association, APA, 2021) and university documents guiding the proper research process and procedures (Walden University Center for Research Quality, 2018j; Walden University Center for Research Quality, 2018l; Walden University Center for Research Quality, 2018m) were referenced and considered throughout the research study. I used and referenced additional guidelines and research navigational tools regarding methodology (American Psychological Association, APA, 2021: Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network; PaTTAN, 2018). Finally, I reviewed guidelines and standards regarding the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE; 2021) and the Walden International Review Board (IRB) approval was granted before research begins.

Treatment of Participants

Participants were ensured that their information provided would not be distributed or released in any way that indicates their personal information or answers provided. Participants were encouraged via e-mail communication to answer truthfully because the answers provided are to help ensure the progression and investigation of teachers' true attitudes and outlooks on the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled student's social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to students with special educational needs.

Informed consent

I gathered informed consent before teachers filled out the questionnaire via SurveyMonkey. Teachers offered consent to participate in this research study by using the provided link to enter the study. I gathered basic demographic information at the beginning of the survey. To help encourage honest responses, I ensured participants that their information would not be replicated, reproduced, or given to other parties due to ethical and confidentiality agreements and procedures. After informed consent was given, I asked participants' to answer each question according to their true attitudes and beliefs felt about the topic.

Confidentiality

I ensured confidentiality regarding participants' personal information and answers to inquiries asked on the questionnaire and hopefully encouraged participants to answer survey questions truthfully. Questionnaire information and answers provided by participants has a password-protected document and is kept on a secured laptop at my

place of residence. I ensured teachers were not referred to by name in the dissertation and I took care to reduce any chance that demographic or contextual details do not offer an opportunity for participants to be identified. No personal interaction occurred between the myself and participants. I asked principals of the participating schools to distribute the study information and other correspondence to teachers that met the inclusion criterion, as well as distribute the link for the questionnaires.

Ethical concerns-Data

All digital data that I collected is being kept on a computer and backup drive. I am the only individual who has the password to be able to access these devices. After completion of this research study, following Walden University research protocol, I will store the data for five years before being erased. I will ensure secure erasing occurs to completely overwrite and delete all of the stored information. Any physical paperwork that was created or used for this research study is being stored in a locked security box located in my house. The papers I used will be destroyed after their use and the specified timeframe for holding on to records has been met and will either be shredded or burned. I will keep all documents for five years for this research project before being destroyed.

Summary

I used a quantitative research design to help create and administer this research study to the appropriate population indicated. The goal of my research study was to gain a better understanding of teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students.

Through the proper permission, documentation, organization, and administration of my research study, data were collected from qualified teachers that work within the elementary school setting and engage in inclusive educational practices with diverse student populations. I ensured instrumentation and the distribution of the questionnaires was properly consented to and offered to the approved participants. Data collection occurred and offered confidentiality, reliability, and validity to my research study. I deliberated and reflected upon ethical considerations to ensure consistency and cogency was transparent and any necessary reporting will occur. Finally, I received the appropriate IRB approval before the research study commencing and offered further justification and trustworthiness to my research study.

In Chapter 4, I will offer analysis of the data collected from this research study, as well as offer an examination of the results collected. Through my collection and analysis process, further understanding and opportunities for research to occur regarding teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN students.

Chapter 4: Results

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental descriptive study was to examine teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. I collected data through the use of SurveyMonkey and included teachers that are currently teaching in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic that are in inclusive classroom settings in Grades K–5. Chapter 4 includes (a) the analysis of the survey data collected from the ATTAS-mm (Gregory & Noto, 2018) and the TAIS (Monsen et al., 2015); and (b) the findings from this study.

The research questions and hypotheses tested for this study were:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' social well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$1): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$2): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$3): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, I obtained and was granted permissions from the (a) Walden University's Institutional Review Board to conduct my study (ID # 02-23-22-0515555); (b) the creators of the ATTAS-mm and TAIS research instrument authorized its use (Appendix A & B); and (c) school principals offered consent to forward the survey link to teachers that met the inclusion criterion. I collected data through the use of SurveyMonkey and included teachers that are in school districts in a state in the U.S. Middle Atlantic that educate within inclusive classroom settings in Grades K–5. I included a description of inclusion classroom populations that were part of the criterion to participate in this study to principals to forward via e-mail to teachers prior to survey completion. Inclusion classroom populations that were part of the criterion to participate in this research study included nondisabled students, SEN students, and SEND students to ensure compatibility with the inclusion classroom setup, structure, and model.

The teachers surveyed for this study included those that educate within inclusion classrooms that currently have the following SEN and SEND populations: gifted/seminar students, LS students, and ES students, students with IEPs, as well as students with 504 plans, along with nondisabled students. Teachers included in this research survey and questionnaires were those from novice level to tenured status.

I first contacted principals of school districts in regard to permission for teachers to participate in this research study on their own time. When I obtained the necessary permissions a second email detailing information regarding the survey, informed consent information, and the link to SurveyMonkey were provided to principals to forward to

their teachers. As soon as teachers entered the link, they were offered further information regarding informed consent and asked to continue to the survey if they did offer their consent. I collected data over a 6-week period from March 2022 through April 2022 and roughly 338 school districts were contacted out of 500. The data that was collected did not include teacher identifiers.

Due to low participation rates, I sent a second reminder email to principals to forward onto teachers as a final opportunity to complete the survey if they desired. After the 6-week recruitment period ended, I extracted the data collected from SurveyMonkey, loaded to SPSS v.28, and analyzed. Originally, 116 participants began the survey in SurveyMonkey, but due to incomplete survey responses 38 responses had to be deleted. Despite a low response and completion rate, the completed response rate exceeded my identified sample size of 77 needed for an alpha of .05 and desired power level of (.8) for statistical significance obtained through G*Power. The results of this study are presented below.

Descriptive Demographics

Teachers that were included in this study were those that confirmed through the ATTAS-mm demographic online survey completion that they taught in inclusion classrooms and were a certified teacher in Grades K–5, $N = 78$. Of the responses received, 20.3% were certified kindergarten teachers, 18.9% were certified first grade teachers, 16.2% were certified second grade teachers, 18.9% were certified third grade teachers, 10.8% were certified fourth grade teachers, and 14.9% were certified fifth grade teachers. Of the 78 participants included, 4 teachers chose not to disclose their current

teaching position. Of the 78 participants, 7.7% identified as male teachers and 92.3% identified as female teachers. All teachers were certified with a bachelor's degree or above (20.5% bachelor's degree, 44.9% master's degree, 33.3% masters +30 degree, and 1.3% doctorate degree).

Descriptive demographic information disclosed by participants is detailed in Table 1 below. The demographic information included participants': years of teaching experience, description of their community, socioeconomic status of the community in which they work in, number of college courses completed in special education, and their experience working with individuals with disabilities in schools and/or human service agencies.

The ATTAS-mm and TAIS surveys were completed on a Likert Scale. Descriptive statistics of the TAIS Section 2: (M = 2.28, SD = .99), TAIS Section 3: (M = 4.45, SD = 1.34), TAIS Section 4: (M = 3.99, SD = .53) and the ATTAS-mm (M = 3.27, SD = .75) are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Respondents

Variable	Category	*n*	%
Current Role	Certified Kindergarten Teacher	15	20.3
	Certified 1st Grade Teacher	14	18.9
	Certified 2nd Grade Teacher	12	16.2
	Certified 3rd Grade Teacher	14	18.9
	Certified 4th Grade Teacher	8	10.8
	Certified 5th Grade Teacher	11	14.9
Gender	Female	72	92.3
	Male	6	7.7
Highest	Bachelors	16	20.5

Variable	Category	*n*	%
Degree	Masters	35	44.9
	Masters +30 (6th year)	26	33.3
	Doctorate	1	1.3
Years' Experience	0-4 years	3	3.8
	5-9 years	9	11.5
	10-14 years	11	14.1
	15-19 years	21	26.9
	20 years or more	34	43.6
Special Education College Courses Completed	None	0	0
	1-3	47	60.3
	4 or more courses	31	39.7
Experience Working with Individuals with Disabilities	Minimal (1 hour or fewer per month)	6	7.7
	Some (2-10 hours per month)	12	15.4
	Considerable (11-80 hours per month)	29	37.2
	Extensive (more than 80 hours per month)	31	39.7
Community of Work	Rural	32	41.6
	Suburban	39	50.6
	Urban	6	7.8
Socioeconomic Status	Lower Income (income/education in lowest 20%)	33	42.3
	Middle Income (income/education in middle 60%)	43	55.1
	Higher Income (income/education in highest 20%)	2	2.6

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Variables

	ATTAS-mm	TAIS: Section 2	TAIS: Section 3	TAIS: Section 4
Mean	3.27	2.28	4.45	3.99
SD	.75	.99	1.34	.53

Results of the Statistical Analysis

I screened the dataset for normality and how the data were distributed with the use of simple linear regression. The assumptions were met and there was a linear relationship with TAIS and ATTAS-mm scores which were normally distributed. I conducted a simple linear regression test for each hypothesis. The normal probability plot also illustrated this linear relationship for each hypothesis.

The following are the results of the hypothesis tests. I conducted a simple linear regression to test the following hypotheses.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' social well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$1): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

I used a simple linear regression to test if the predictor variable (teachers' attitudes about inclusion) significantly predicted the response variable (teachers'

perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs). I checked for outliers by looking at the standardized residuals. The minimum (-1.342) and maximum (2.991) values for standardized residuals did not exceed -3.29 or +3.29 respectively (Green & Salkind, 2014). I examined the Durbin-Watson for the average teacher attitude toward inclusion and the average score regarding a scale item on the TAIS survey regarding teachers' perceptions of social interactions between SEN and SEND students compared to nondisabled students. The Durbin-Watson score was (2.197) meaning there was independence of residuals. This is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.039[a]	.002	-.012	1.659	.002	.116	1	76	.734	2.197

The tolerance level and variance of inflation factor (VIF) met the collinearity assumption by having a tolerance level greater than 0.1 and a VIF level of less than 10 (Green & Salkind, 2014). The prediction equation for RQ1 is (y = .121x + 2.592). The coefficients information is illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4

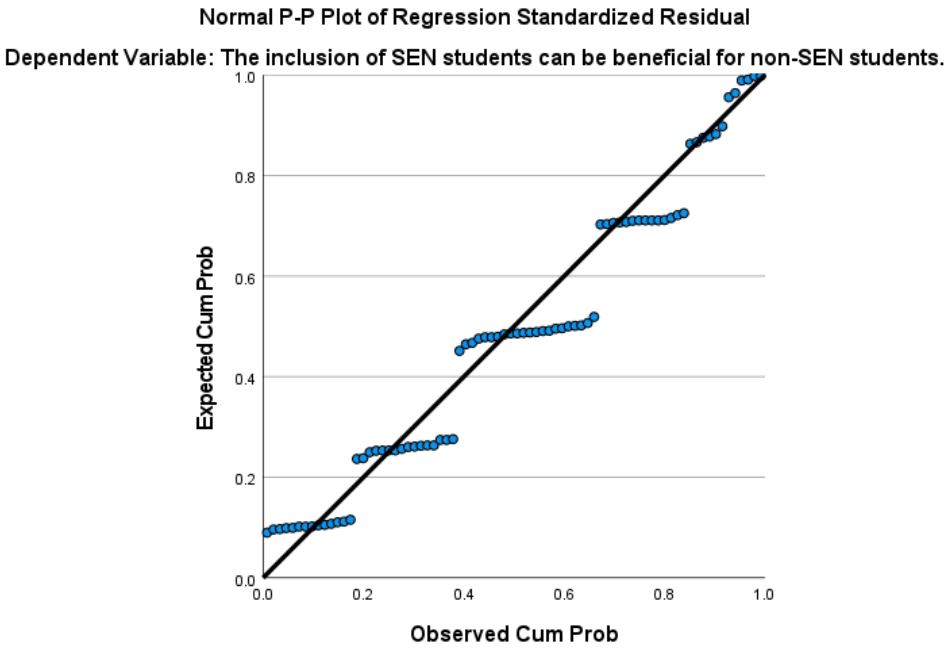
Coefficients

					95% Con. Inv. for B		Collinearity Statistics	
Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Standard Error	t	Sig.	L	U	Tolerance	VIF
1								
(Constant)	2.592	1.433	1.809	.074	-.261	5.446		
Overall Mean	.121	.355	.341	.734	-.586	.829	1.000	1.000

A test for assumptions for the linear relationship of the dependent variable was checked using the normality p-plot of standardized residuals. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The dependent variable regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs is normally distributed in the histogram illustrated in Figure 2 below. Finally, the scatterplot illustrated in Figure 3 below shows that there is no pattern and it is elliptical, so all assumptions have been met.

Figure 2

Histogram of ATTAS-mm

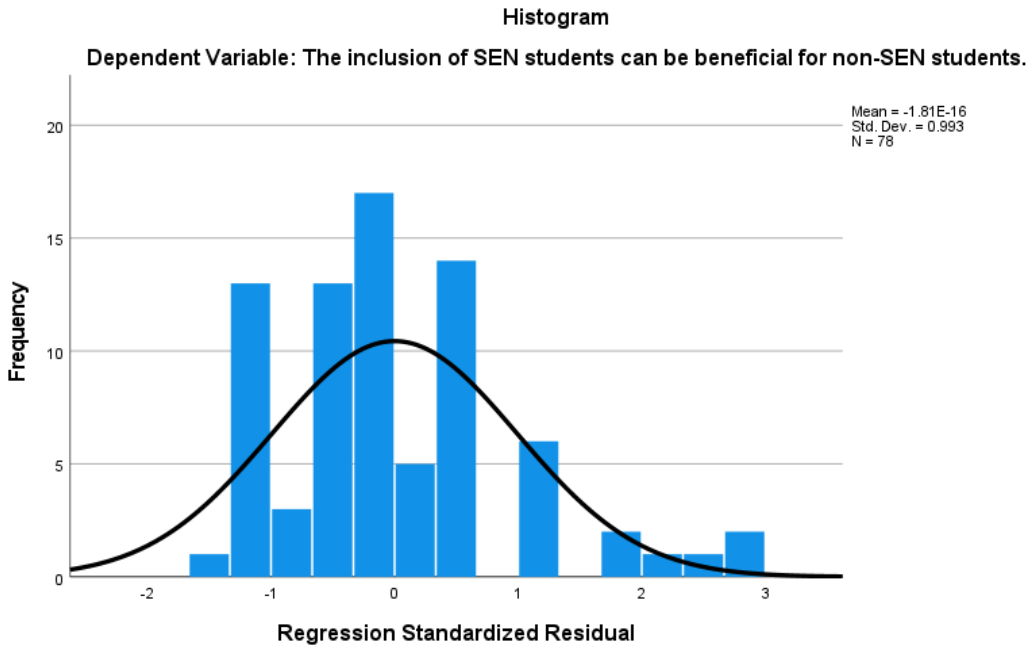
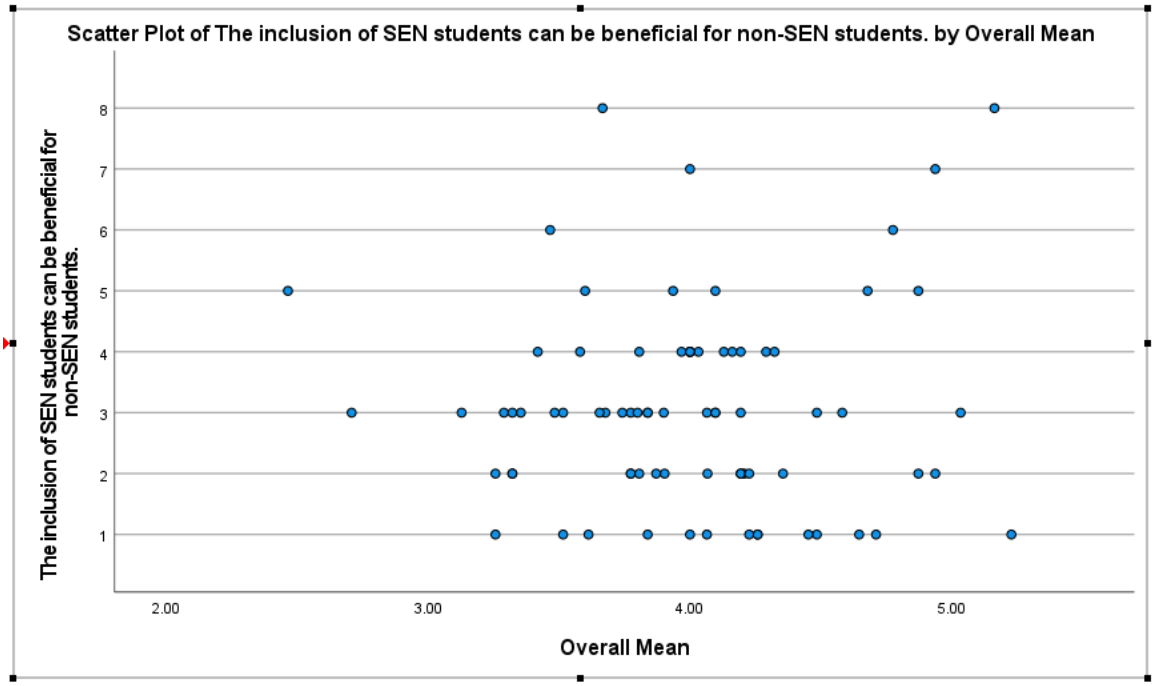


Figure 3

Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residuals



Pearson Correlation Results

I conducted a Pearson correlation test with the ATTAS-mm overall mean and TAIS survey question(s). There was no significant correlation between the ATTAS-mm overall mean of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the TAIS survey question(s) regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs. The overall regression was not statistically significant (R^2 = [.002], F(1, 76) = .116, p > .001). I found that teachers' attitudes about inclusion did not significantly predict teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs (β = .121, p > .001). A correlation matrix of Research Question #1 is illustrated below in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Teachers Attitudes about Inclusion and Perceptions of Impact on Non-SEN Students (RQ1)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2
1[a]	78	3.08	1.65	-	
2[b]	78	3.99	.532	.039	-

Note. 1[a] - The inclusion of SEN students can be beneficial for non-SEN students (TAIS Survey Instrument); 2[b] – Overall Mean of ATTAS-mm survey; correlation is not significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$2): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

I used a simple linear regression to test if the predictor variable (teachers' attitudes about inclusion) significantly predicted the response variable (teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs). A check for outliers was

examined by looking at the standardized residuals. Minimum (-2.999) and maximum (2.936) values for standardized residuals did not exceed -3.29 or +3.29 respectively (Green & Salkind, 2014). I examined the Durbin-Watson for the average teacher attitude toward inclusion and the average score regarding two scale items on the TAIS survey regarding teachers' perceptions of the impact emotional interactions between SEN and SEND students compared to nondisabled students. The Durbin-Watson score was (2.081) meaning there was independence of residuals. I tested for assumptions for the linear relationship of the dependent variable by using the normality p-plot of standardized residuals. This is illustrated in Figure 4. This is illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.631[a]	.398	.390	1.25478	.398	50.213	1	76	<.001	2.081

The tolerance level and variance of inflation factor (VIF) met the collinearity assumption by having a tolerance level greater than 0.1 and a VIF level of less than 10 (Green & Salkind, 2014). The predication equation for RQ2 is (y = 1.904x + -2.984). The coefficients information is illustrated in Table 7 below.

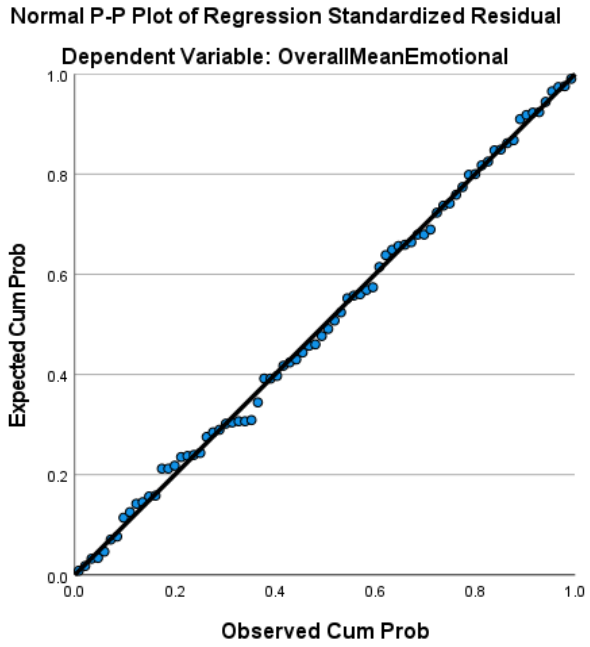
Table 7

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Standard Error	t	Sig.	95% Con. Inv. for B L	95% Con. Inv. for B U	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1								
(Constant)	-2.984	1.084	-2.754	.007	-5.142	-.825		
Overall Mean	1.904	.269	7.086	<.001	1.369	2.440	1.000	1.000

Figure 4

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The dependent variable regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs is normally distributed in the histogram illustrated in Figure 5

below. Finally, the scatterplot illustrated in Figure 6 below shows that there is no pattern and it is elliptical, so all assumptions have been met.

Figure 5

Histogram of Overall Emotional Mean

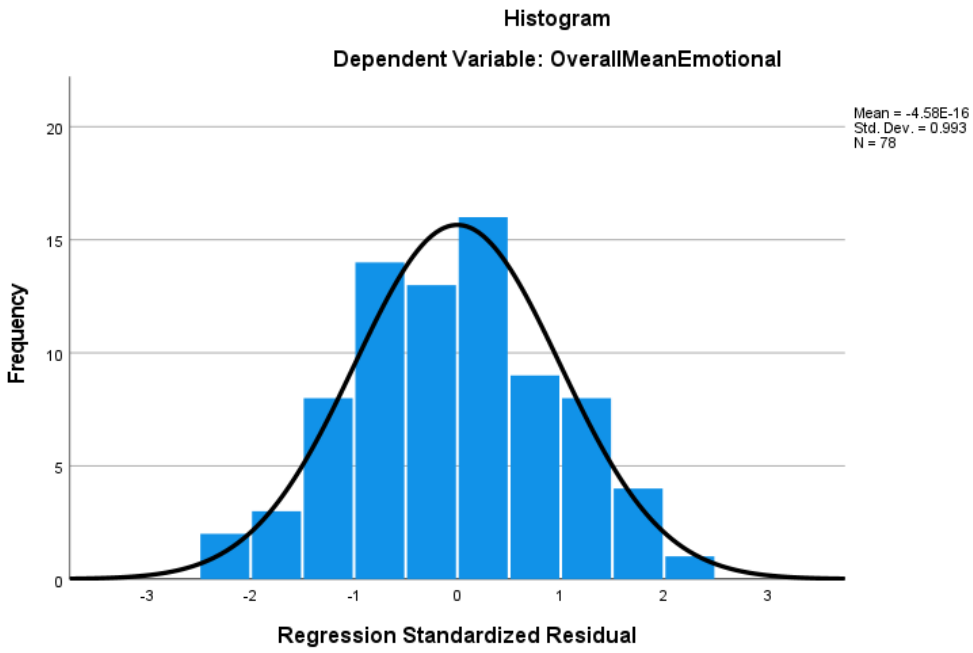
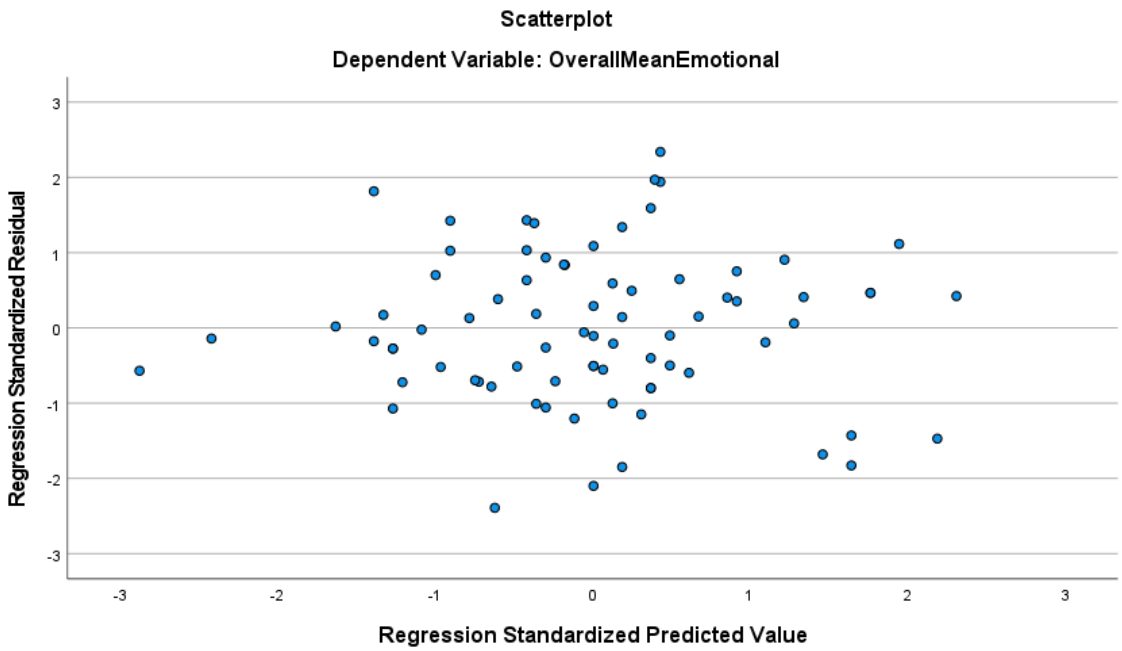


Figure 6

Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residuals



Pearson Correlation Results

I conducted a Pearson correlation with the ATTAS-mm overall mean and TAIS overall mean of questions (#5 and #15) regarding teachers' perceptions of the impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to the special education students' needs. There was a statistically significant correlation between the ATTAS-mm overall mean of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the TAIS survey question(s) regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs. The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = [.398], $F(1, 76) = 50.21$, $p < .001$). I found that teachers' attitudes about inclusion did significantly predict teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on

nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs ($\beta = 1.904$, $p < .001$). A correlation matrix of Research Question #2 is illustrated below in Table 8.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Teachers Attitudes about Inclusion and Perceptions of Impact on Non-SEN Students (RQ2)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2
1[a]	78	3.08	1.65	-	
2[b]	78	3.99	.532	.631**	-

Note. 1[a] – Overall Emotional Mean Score (TAIS Survey Instrument-Question #5 & #15); 2[b] – Overall Mean of ATTAS-mm survey; ** - correlation is significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$3): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and their perception of the impact inclusion

classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

I used a simple linear regression to test if the predictor variable (teachers' attitudes about inclusion) significantly predicted the response variable (teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs). A check for outliers was examined by looking at the standardized residuals. Minimum (-1.455) and maximum (1.014) values for standardized residuals did not exceed -3.29 or +3.29 respectively (Green & Salkind, 2014). I examined the Durbin-Watson for the average teacher attitude toward inclusion and the average score regarding two scale item on the TAIS survey regarding teachers' perceptions of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. The Durbin-Watson score was (1.775) meaning there was independence of residuals. A test for assumptions for the linear relationship of the dependent variable was checked using the normality p-plot of standardized residuals. This is illustrated in Figure 7. This is illustrated in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	.812[a]	.660	.655	.54131	.660	147.338	1	76	<.001	1.775

The tolerance level and variance of inflation factor (VIF) met the collinearity assumption by having a tolerance level greater than 0.1 and a VIF level of less than 10 (Green & Salkind, 2014). The predication equation for RQ3 is (y = 1.407x + -1.940). The coefficients information is illustrated in Table 10 below.

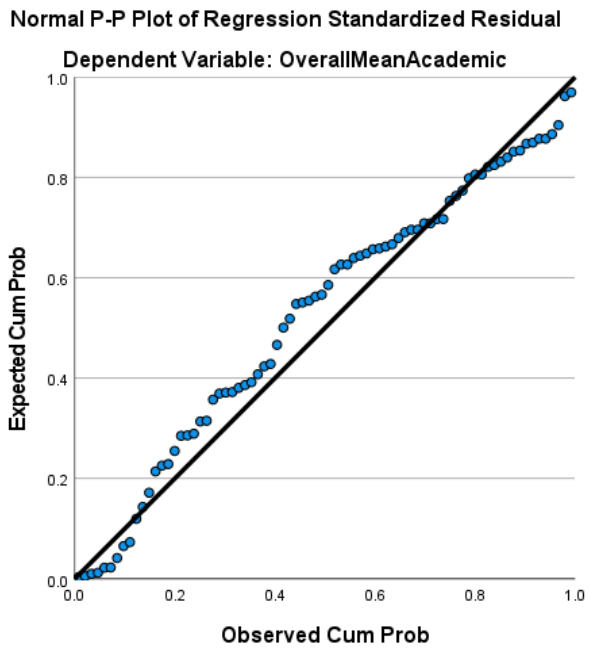
Table 10

Coefficients

					95% Con. Inv. for B		Collinearity Statistics	
Model 1	Unstandardized B	Coefficient Standard Error	t	Sig.	L	U	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-1.940	.467	-4.150	<.001	-2.871	-1.009		
Overall Mean	1.407	.116	12.138	<.001	1.176	1.638	1.000	1.000

Figure 7

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The dependent variable regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs is normally distributed in the histogram illustrated in Figure 8 below. Finally, the scatterplot illustrated in Figure 9 below shows that there is no pattern and it is elliptical, so all assumptions have been met.

Figure 8

Histogram of Overall Academic Mean

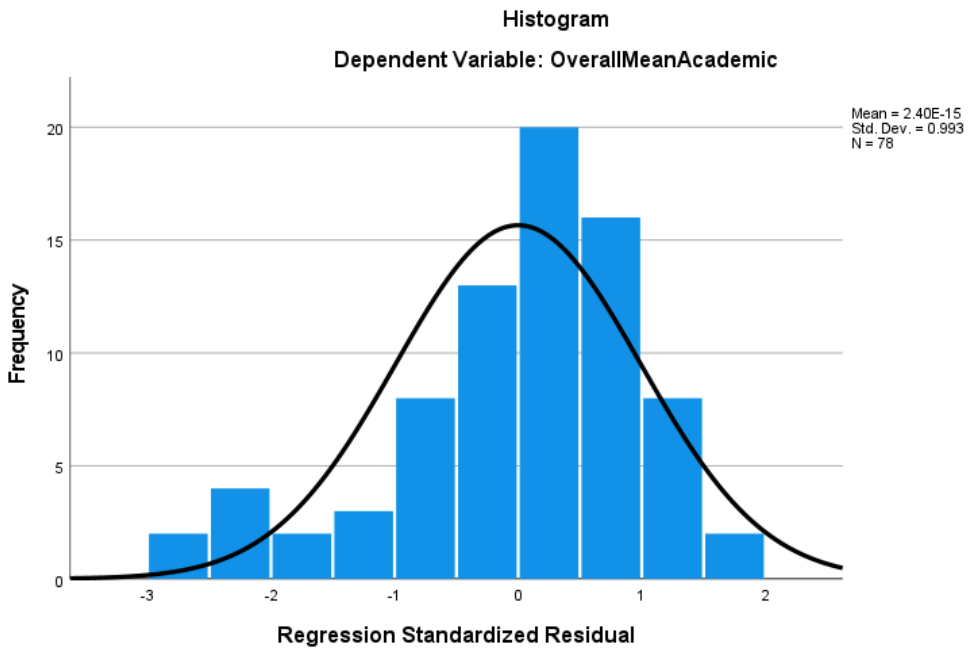
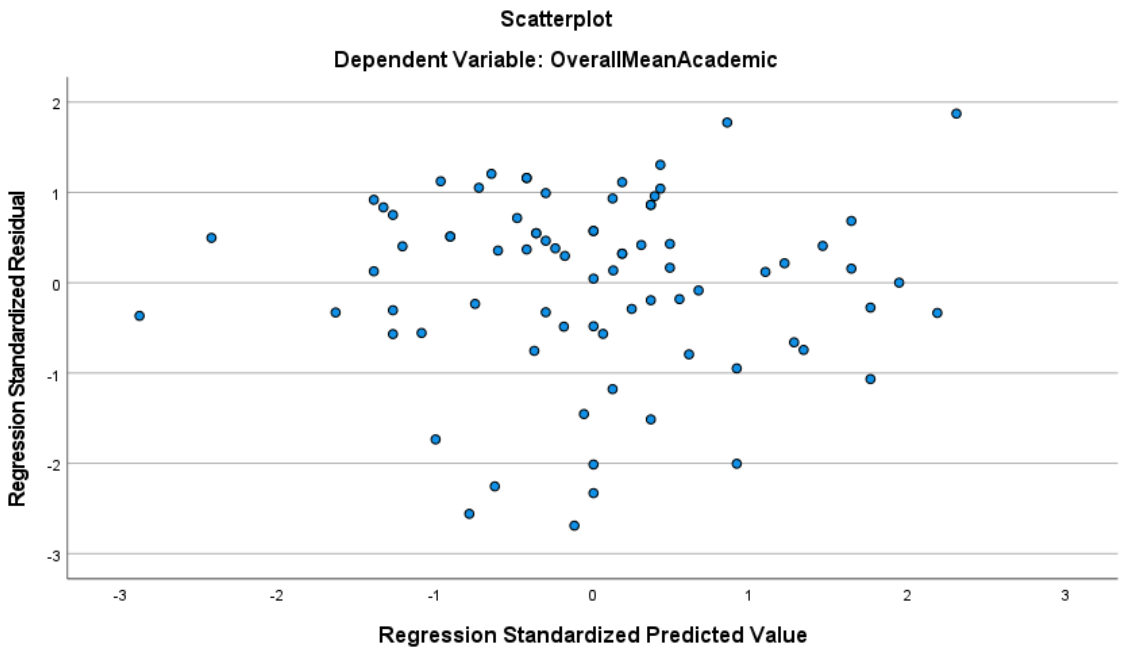


Figure 9

Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residuals



Pearson Correlation Results

I conducted a Pearson correlation with the ATTAS-mm overall mean and TAIS overall mean of questions (#2, 7, 11, 13, 17, 20, and 29) regarding teachers' perceptions of the impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to the special education students' needs. There was significant correlation between the ATTAS-mm overall mean of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and the TAIS survey question(s) regarding teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs. The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = [.660], F(1, 76) = 147.33, p < .001). I found that teachers' attitudes about inclusion did significantly predict teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on

nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs ($\beta = 1.407$, $p < .001$). A correlation matrix of Research Question #3 is illustrated below in Table 11.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Teachers Attitudes about Inclusion and Perceptions of Impact on Non-SEN Students (RQ3)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2
1[a]	78	3.08	1.65	-	
2[b]	78	3.99	.532	.812**	-

Note. 1[a] – Overall Academic Mean Score (TAIS Survey Instrument-Question (#2, 7, 11, 13, 17, 20, and 29); 2[b] – Overall Mean of ATTAS-mm survey; ** - correlation is significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the data analysis and the results of the hypothesis tests. I used a simple linear regression for each research question and a Pearson correlation was conducted. The assumptions were met for each research question. I found that there was no significant correlation with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion ATTAS-mm score and the TAIS scale items regarding the social impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students. However, I did find significant correlation with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion ATTAS-mm scores and the TAIS scale items regarding the emotional and academic impact inclusion classrooms have on the nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of the simple linear regression model for association results for each of the three research questions, the limitations of the research

study, and the how the findings filled a gap in the literature surrounding inclusive education and teachers' attitudes toward the impact it has on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. I also discuss further research opportunities, as well as how positive social change can occur.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Discussion

Inclusion classrooms are characterized within educational pedagogy as a classroom environment in which all students, regardless of learning abilities or preferences, identify, or education are intended to feel supported, a sense of belonging, accepted intellectually, as well as academically (Gaines & Barnes, 2017). It is an all-inclusive approach that is built on the concept that being in that type of comprehensive learning environment will better prepare students with special needs with social and developmentally appropriate interactions with peers regardless of differences. There are many explanations and philosophies as to why this classroom style was developed, but one common theme that stemmed from its creation was to help guarantee the socialization considered dynamic and necessary for appropriate growth for SEN and SEND students (Knight, 1999).

While the benefits of developmentally appropriate socialization and interaction between SEN and SEND students has been researched extensively (Bemiller, 2019; Peacock, 2016; Woolfson, 2018), limited studies and research have considered the social, emotional, or academic implications for nondisabled students. The majority of literature that discusses inclusion revolves around SEN and SEND students and their personal needs. However, a gap exists where further observation and studies need to be conducted in relation to how these inclusive environments impact nondisabled students and their personal needs. There is limited knowledge on how these classroom settings impact the social, emotional, and academic well-being of the nondisabled student. I conducted a

quantitative examination to identify teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

I used Ajzen's (1988) TPB to help guide this study and its intention in understanding teachers' attitudes toward the inclusive education classroom setting, as well as their attitudes pertaining to the diverse student population within their classroom setting. Through the use of the ATTAS-mm and TAIS questionnaires, I asked teachers to consider their attitudes and behavior and/or actions to assess if they are aligned with the inclusive educational practices and expectations. Teachers' attitudes, whether positive or negative, toward inclusion and their own inclusive classroom structure impacts educators' instructional delivery to diverse student populations and their willingness to adjust behaviors according to those beliefs. My research study helped reveal that along with the desire for teachers to have more extensive training regarding SEN populations within their classroom setting; they also desired more support from special educational needs services.

I used SurveyMonkey and SPSS v.28 data systems to complete this study. Participants were novice to tenure level status teachers in Grades K–5. The teachers who participated were first granted permission to complete the survey on their own time by the principals of their schools and the survey link, informed consent information, and inclusion criterion was forwarded by principals. Completion and responses were anonymous and had no teacher identifiers. The participant's responses were measured with the use of TAIS and ATTAS-mm questionnaire.

The study included three research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' social well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$1): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$1): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' emotional well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$2): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$2): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact inclusion

classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What is the relationship between teachers' attitudes about inclusion and their perception of the impact it has on nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to students with special education needs?

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$3): There will be no relationship between teacher attitudes about inclusion, as measured by TAIS and ATTAS-mm, and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$3): There will be a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and their perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs.

The results I collected indicated that teachers' attitudes showed there was minimal social impact for nondisabled students within an inclusion classroom setting. However, results did indicate that teachers' attitudes suggested there was a significant relationship between TAIS and ATTAS-mm scores related to the emotional and academic impact inclusion classroom settings have on nondisabled students.

Interpretations of Findings

The social and emotional impact of classroom settings has been a topic of discussion, interest, and even contention amongst researchers and educators (Winzer, 2009). Understanding how the internal social and emotional dynamic of a classroom

setting helps educators, in particular, gather invaluable information about their students and their interactions. This information then offers opportunities for further curriculum and instruction opportunities to enhance academic rigor in the LRE. However, the implementation of inclusion classrooms has created an issue for many state officials, mandates, and educational institutions when it comes to its definition and, thereby, proper implementation for all students (Mintz et al., 2020; Peacock, 2016). This has since created a divide within inclusive education on, not only the very structure and foundation of inclusion, but also the social, emotional, and academic impact it has on students within the inclusive learning environment.

In the scholarly literature related to the topic of inclusion classrooms, a major theme of focusing on SEN and SEND students continuously prevailed as the prominent area researched (Bemiller, 2019; Peacock, 2016; Woolfson, 2018). Literature regarding the nondisabled student and inclusion has not been as readily available. This gap in the literature creates an issue when considering the impact these learning environments have when considering all students within them. One potential way of addressing this issue was to consider teachers' attitudes toward the factors of the social, emotional, and academic impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students. As a result, I created the research questions for this research study to focus on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and investigate the relationship between the IV, teachers' attitudes about inclusion classrooms and the DVs, teachers' perception of nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

I found that the data collected and analyzed from this research investigation provided answers to all three of my research questions. RQ1 examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on the social well-being of nondisabled students in comparison to SEN and SEND students. Although not statistically significant and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, my results revealed that there was no relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in respect to social interactions for all students and peer interactions. My findings continue to sanction research that highlights the necessity for social interactions for all students regardless of their academic setting.

RQ2 examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on the emotional well-being of nondisabled students in comparison to SEN and SEND students. My results indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have regarding nondisabled students' well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. I could determine there was a relationship between teachers' attitude scores toward inclusion and its emotional impact on nondisabled students' social well-being within inclusion classroom settings. I found that teachers' attitudes about inclusion did significantly predict teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' emotional well-being in comparison to special education students' needs. The information I gathered helps propel and prompt research to further

investigate the emotional impact, and potentially to what extent, inclusion has on nondisabled students.

RQ3 examined the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on the academic well-being of nondisabled students in comparison to SEN and SEND students. My results indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have regarding nondisabled students' academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. I could determine there was a relationship between teachers' attitude scores toward inclusion and its impact on nondisabled students' academic well-being within inclusion classroom settings. I found that teachers' attitudes about inclusion did significantly predict teachers' perception of the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' academic well-being in comparison to special education students' needs. My findings help further confirm previous research that has suggested that there is an academic impact for nondisabled students within inclusion classrooms, but further consideration of to what extent is still necessary.

Research investigating the impact inclusive education has on nondisabled students is very limited. Much of the research regarding inclusion highlights the social, emotional, and academic benefits for the SEN and SEND populations (Bochiș et al., 2020; Schwab, 2017; Woolfson, 2018). However, teachers have stressed the desire to include students regardless of academic strengths or limitations, but often fail to have proper training, resources, or support to meet these goals (McGhie-Richmond & Haider,

2020). In comparison to other studies, the responses to my study highlighted these very same truths; however, it is important to highlight that the examination of the impact these inclusive educational environments do have an impact on nondisabled students' emotional and academic well-being. So, while teachers strongly agree with the benefits of social interaction for all populations of students within this diverse educational setting, they also note that it can impact nondisabled students' progress, as well.

Limitations

In this research study, I examined teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. One of the limitations of this study was that the inclusion criterion only included Grades K–5 teachers, so the results would only be applicable to elementary school settings that had inclusion classroom settings. Other limitations to consider were that the sample size and response rate was lower than expected. I also limited the scope of this study to just one state in the Middle Atlantic, so expanding participation opportunities to other states and school districts that offer inclusive classroom settings would help gain a larger sample size to offer further generalization. The surveys offer anonymity which helped encourage more honest responses; however, the number of questions did deter some participants from completing the survey in its entirety and had to be deleted from the dataset.

Recommendations

While research related to inclusive education is expanding and researched quite thoroughly, the limited scope of examining the positives or negatives in relation to SEN

and SEND populations excludes a large number of vital individuals that deserve the same research and consideration. Research regarding the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students is sparse. Teachers' attitudes regarding this topic are also limited. I recommend further inquiry into the examination of this classroom setting and structure, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in general, as well as the depth of their knowledge of inclusion. Upon my own research, discovering that many teachers around the world still struggle with the idea and implementation of holistic inclusion practices and procedures is in direct correlation with the school districts in which they work and the lack of knowledge, training, or resources regarding this topic for educators to pull from (McGhie-Richmond & Haider, 2020). I believe examining the root of the inclusion classroom and the expectations of it regarding a clear definition and understanding of what is best practice for all students within the same diverse classroom setting would help teachers navigate this issue with more confidence.

I also believe further inquiry regarding teachers' attitudes toward training and resources that they feel would be beneficial regarding inclusion and their student populations would help pinpoint additional issues of the disconnect many educators are feeling. This additional information would, hopefully, create a more cohesive plan for inclusion and its proper implementation between educators, administrators, and policymakers; thereby, creating a more cohesive form of curriculum, instruction, and support for all students.

Finally, further research regarding nondisabled students and their personal attitudes and perceptions regarding their own classroom environment and experience

would be invaluable. Examination of nondisabled students' attitudes regarding their own social, emotional, and academic well-being within an inclusive educational setting would connect the researcher directly to the source in which they desire to examine. Use of a mixed method approach and a longitudinal study could offer a variety of options regarding data collection and the examination of students' experiences over the course of a few years. Also, parent and/or guardian inquiries asking their input and attitudes toward the inclusive educational setting their child interacts in daily would be an interesting and intriguing addition. Whether through online surveys and/or in-person discussions or interviews, this research opportunity would hopefully produce helpful results that could help encourage further exploration or change in the educational realm.

Implications

The findings of my study have implications for positive social change. As inclusion and diversity continue to expand and evolve in the educational classroom setting, the importance of relevant and related research to help further understanding and implementation of new strategies, skills, and practices is also necessary. Although official guidelines and mandates are set in place to provide nondisabled, SEN, and SEND students with proper placement, legal protection, and resources, teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion and their own understanding, biases, and abilities to properly implement inclusion practices can influence the inclusion classroom structure and set-up (Cambra & Silvestre, 2003; Winzer, 2009). Understanding teachers' attitudes toward the impact these inclusion classrooms have regarding the diverse populations within their classroom setting is imperative.

My study, along with numerous other studies, confirm teachers' continued validation of the need for social interaction within classroom settings (Winzer, 2009). The social opportunities afforded by inclusion classroom settings are a contributing factor in helping students create proper and age-appropriate social interactions that benefit nondisabled, SEN, and SEND students alike. Using this information to help enhance and improve the social interactions between all students within such diverse settings will encourage stronger peer relationships and interactions.

A practical implication focuses on the potential emotional and academic impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students. My findings should inform educators, administration, and other educational stakeholders that inclusion classroom settings can have an impact on the emotional and academic well-being of nondisabled students compared to SEN and SEND students. For this reason, trying to understand, identify, and ultimately improve the emotional and academic engagement, standards, and well-being of all students within the same classroom setting would be beneficial. By identifying teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion has on nondisabled students and their social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students, current practices and procedures can also be enhanced, misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding inclusion can be addressed, training and professional development could be offered, and students' needs can be highlighted in an effort to fill the gaps between theory and practice.

Conclusions

The purpose of my study was to explore possible relationships between teachers' attitudes toward the impact inclusion classrooms have on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students. My research study has added to the body of knowledge involving teachers' attitudes who within K-5 inclusive classrooms, by indicating that while the social interactions experienced by all peers within an inclusion classroom are beneficial, from their perspective they do have an emotional and academic impact on the nondisabled student compared to the SEN and SEND student. While inclusive education is a common classroom structure within general education now, it is important to understand the impact it has on all students within that classroom setting. Federal mandates, stakeholders, and officials share similar beliefs that all children, no matter skill or ability have the right to be in educated in the LRE (McCabe et al., 2020). Many educators concur with these thoughts and ideas; however, misconceptions and misunderstanding of how to define and execute these inclusive practices so that all students are receiving curriculum and instruction within the LRE has been a continuous area of contempt and frustration (McCabe et al., 2020).

While some training and courses are offered to help educators understand the basics of inclusion, many teachers that are not certified in special education can find themselves overwhelmed and frustrated as to assist and meet all of the needs within a diverse classroom environment. Because research previously conducted has thoroughly investigated the impact inclusion classrooms have on SEN and SEND students, studies have continued to highlight and emphasis these populations (McGhie-Richmond &

Haider, 2020). However, learning how inclusion classrooms and education impacts nondisabled students, as well, is imperative to progress further with this educational style and structure. Improving teachers' understanding, offering skills, trainings, and strategies is a starting point, but identifying specific areas that inclusive education impacts students is vital for continued progress and progression. By using this information provided in my study, administrators and school districts will have a better understanding of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion classrooms and their impact on nondisabled students' social, emotional, and academic well-being compared to SEN and SEND students.

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Appendix A: Permission Letter for ATTASmm

Hello Dr. Gregory,

My name is Kristee Knouse and I am a doctoral student at Walden University completing a dissertation in the Social Psychology program. I am writing to ask written permission to use the Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTASmm) in my research study. My dissertation is focused on investigating teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and your survey would work beautifully in my research. My research is being supervised by my professor, Dr. Stephen Hampe, Walden University.

This instrument would be neither altered nor modified from its original format and would be administered to teachers in schools that have inclusive education. I would like to use this survey and transcribe the questions included into SurveyMonkey for easier accessibility and participation from teachers.

I would appreciate, with your permission, to be able to administer this survey to the desired population and ask if there are any supplemental materials, such as- standard instructions for administering the test, the test questionnaire, and the score procedures, if there would be any way you could include them in your response e-mail, or direct me to a resource that includes them?

In addition to using this instrument, I also ask your permission to reproduce it in my dissertation appendix. The dissertation will be published in the Walden University Dissertation and Thesis database.

I would like to use [and reproduce] your survey under the following conditions:

- I will use the survey only for my research study and will not sell or use it for any other purposes.
- I will include a statement of attribution and copyright on all copies of the instrument. If you have a specific statement of attribution that you would like for me to include, please provide it in your response.
- At your request, I will send a copy of my completed research study to you upon completion of the study and/or provide a hyperlink to the final manuscript.

If you do not control the copyright for these materials, I would appreciate any information you can provide concerning the proper person or organization I should contact.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions (or if you have any questions), please indicate so by replying to me through e-mail.

Sincerely,
Kristee Knouse

Appendix B: Permission Letter for TAIS

Hello Dr. Boyle,

My name is Kristee Knouse and I am a doctoral student at Walden University completing a dissertation in the Social Psychology program. I am writing to ask written permission to use the Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion Scale (TAIS) in my research study. My dissertation is focused on investigating teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and your survey would work beautifully in my research. My research is being supervised by my professor, Dr. Stephen Hampe, Walden University.

This instrument would be neither altered nor modified from its original format and would be administered to teachers in schools that have inclusive education. I would like to use this survey and transcribe the questions included into SurveyMonkey for easier accessibility and participation from teachers.

> I would appreciate, with your permission, to be able to administer this survey to the desired population and ask if there are any supplemental materials, such as- standard instructions for administering the test, the test questionnaire, and the score procedures, if there would be any way you could include them in your response e-mail, or direct me to a resource that includes them?

In addition to using this instrument, I also ask your permission to reproduce it in my dissertation appendix. The dissertation will be published in the Walden University Dissertation and Thesis database.

I would like to use [and reproduce] your survey under the following conditions:

- I will use the survey only for my research study and will not sell or use it for any other purposes.
- I will include a statement of attribution and copyright on all copies of the instrument. If you have a specific statement of attribution that you would like for me to include, please provide it in your response.
- At your request, I will send a copy of my completed research study to you upon completion of the study and/or provide a hyperlink to the final manuscript.

If you do not control the copyright for these materials, I would appreciate any information you can provide concerning the proper person or organization I should contact.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions (or if you have any questions), please indicate so by replying to me through e-mail.

Sincerely,
Kristee Knouse

Appendix C: ATTASmm Permission Letter

Gregory, Jess L.
Fri 6/4/2021 2:06 PM

To: Kristee Knouse

Good morning, while I can't give you permission to use the TATIS because of psychometric issues we have found with it I can give you permission to use the ATTASmm. I will send those files later in the day, if you don't receive it by 1 o'clock this afternoon please email me again as a reminder to send them.

Jess L. Gregory, Ed.D.

Appendix D: TAIS: Permission Letter

James Boyle
Sun 6/27/2021 10:19 AM
To: Kristee Knouse
Cc: Jeremy Monsen ; Monsen et al (2015) Psychometric properties of the revised Teachers' Attitude Toward Inclusion Scale[1].pdf
304 KB

Dear Kristee

Many thanks for your email.

Please find attached a copy of the questionnaire and a copy of the paper with the scoring instructions. Sections 1-3 provide contextual information and Section 4 contains the scale items which are used to score the teachers' attitudes to inclusion.

The scale is multi-dimensional, so you can derive scores for each respondent for each of four 'dimensions', or factors. These are: (1) problems of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes; (2) social benefits of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes; (3) implications of inclusion for teaching practice; and (4) implications for teachers addressing the needs of children with SEN.

Table 1 (p. 68) in the paper details the 7 items which load on to factor (1) above; the 5 items which load on to factor (2) above; the 4 items which load on to factor (3); and the four items which load on to factor (4).

As there are unequal numbers of items for the four factors, mean scores are used. For example, the score used for factor (1) is the mean score for the 7 items above, and the score used for factor (2) is the mean score for the 5 items above etc. etc. for the remaining two factors.

The instrument is not yet fully standardised, but criteria of >1 SD for a 'high' score and <1 SD for a 'low' score based on mean scores for each dimension from the dataset of 93 participants in the published paper yield the following cut-offs:

(1) problems of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes: 'high' score > 5.97; 'low' score < 3.26

(2) social benefits of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes: 'high' score > 6.84; 'low' score < 4.16

(3) implications of inclusion for teaching practice: 'high' score > 5.29; 'low' score < 2.43

(4) implications for teachers addressing the needs of children with SEN: 'high' score > 5.49; 'low' score < 2.46

You could, of course, calculate your own cut-off scores from your own samples to identify individuals with relatively ‘high’, ‘’average’ and ‘low’ scores.

Hope this is helpful and we would be delighted to learn of the findings from your thesis.

With all best wishes

Jim Boyle