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Education, Reflection, Development**TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO INCLUSION SCALE VALIDATION
QUESTIONNAIRE**

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Abstract

The teacher's attitudes toward the instructional process and the students, the social representations with which he operates, the way he perceives the students, his self-knowledge, his conception of the world and life, the satisfactions and personal dissatisfaction, constitute what specialists call the "hidden agenda" of the teacher or the implicit curriculum. In inclusive school practice, the attitude of the teacher occupies the main place. Measuring attitudes in inclusive schools is the starting point in building any counselling and training tools and strategies for teachers working with children with Special Educational Needs. The result of this research was to explore the applicability of the questionnaire Teacher's Attitude to the Scale of Inclusion (TAIS) in a Romanian version in a sample outlined by teachers and to validate it. Using the analysis of the main components, a four-factor structure was built for the "attitudes to inclusion" section of the revised scale: problems of including children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream classes; inclusion of SEN students in mainstream classes, and social benefits for all; implications of inclusion in teaching practice; and implications for addressing the needs of children with SEN. Outlining the indicators, and the guiding elements that influence the attitude are essential in completing and outlining the programs for modifying and even improving the attitude. In conclusion, the updated and revised scale for teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (TAIS) shows the promise of being a reliable and valid measure for both research and applied purposes toward.

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Keywords: Inclusive education, special educational needs, scale development, teacher attitude

1. Introduction

Many authors have stressed that transforming schools into inclusive settings/environments requires strategies that align with the needs of their students and the development of teaching proposals to stimulate and encourage the participation of all students (Florian, 2021). While the majority of teachers tend to agree with the idea of inclusion, its implementation in regular schools presents substantial challenges for them, as they are required not only to change their teaching methods according to the special needs of students with SEN but also to establish and maintain a high standard of teaching (Vrășmaș & Vrășmaș, 2021). Unfortunately, even teachers who adopt a positive attitude towards inclusion cannot overcome the problems related to its implementation, due to the lack of understanding of the issues involved and the lack of relevant teaching methodologies.

This research aims to shape teacher attitudes toward inclusion for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in South Muntenia, Romania.

Educational policy signs of progress (UNESCO, 2000; United Nations, 2007) have been placed during the last 25 years of inclusive education (IE) on the global education agenda. Teachers' competencies need to be reinforced to adopt inclusive education. According to the Profiles Enhancing Education Review (PEER) website by the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report), less than 3 % of countries have adopted an "inclusive education law" that promotes teacher training while 10% have an education law that ensures inclusion for all but does not explicitly mention teacher training on inclusive education. (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020)

The number of Students with SEN within general education classrooms has risen tremendously over the last 25 years. (OECD, 2010) Research shows that teachers in inclusive classes often express dissatisfaction with the way the education system addresses their lack of basic knowledge and techniques for teaching special education. Moreover, teachers worldwide feel that they are left to face inclusion on their own, without proper training, as evidenced by research studies conducted around the globe; for example, studies have been conducted on the situation in France (Jury et al., 2021), India (Hazarika, 2020), Ghana (Issaka et al., 2022), Finland (Saloviita, 2019), Indonesia (Qandhi & Kurniawati, 2018). A quarter of teachers in 48 education systems report encountering difficulties that prevent them from fully embracing inclusive policy. (UNESCO, 2020)

The success of inclusive schools depends to a large extent on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their professional knowledge of "special education".

This research presents the Romanian version of the Teacher Attitude to Inclusion Scale (TAIS). The TAIS is a questionnaire based on Larrivee and Cook's (1979) Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORMS) (Monsen et al., 2015).

2. Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education

According to Carl Gustav Jung, attitude is a psychological position that is why, due to its complicated character, related to the development of the personality as a whole, as a self, "does not depend on instinct". Attitude is the manner to be in one situation (Sillamy, 1996, p. 37). Attitudes were defined as a relatively enduring and general evaluation of an object, person, group, issue, or concept on a

dimension ranging from negative to positive. Attitudes provide summary evaluations of target objects and are often assumed to be derived from specific beliefs, emotions, and past behaviors associated with those objects (APA, n.d.) In the scales of attitudes there are several characteristics: direction, degree, intensity, coherence, effectiveness, projection. Attitude is a learned predisposition to respond favorably or not to the object of the attitude in question, according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1977). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education include their emotions, beliefs, and behaviors, and they can have a powerful influence over behavior. The subject has been at the center of research in recent years and shows an evolution towards acceptance of different situations, towards tolerance and inclusion in India (Hazarika, 2020), Australia (Page et al., 2020), Greece (Mouchritsa et al., 2022), China (Fu et al., 2021). Social indicators indicate that an inclusive education system determines an inclusive society (Monsen et al., 2015). Inclusive education is a major challenge for the education system and means efforts to build an entire system to live well-being for all children (Yada & Savolainen, 2017). According to Singh (2020), such marks can notify strategies to implement educational policies to encourage full inclusive education across Europe. Inclusive education is considered a multidimensional concept that involves the confirmation of values related to the valorization of differences and diversity, consideration of fundamental human rights, and equal learning opportunities. Inclusive education requires the flexibility of the education system for it to be appropriate to the requirements of any student. It involves a continuous effort to identify and eliminate barriers to children's access to education, participation in the educational process, as well as the realization of academic and social strategies. In Europe there are only a few educational systems that have segregated education (Sentenac et al., 2022), the tendency being to be included in mainstream education. These researches have influenced a large number of articles on the topic of attitudes of teachers or those who want to become trainers towards inclusive education. The solution of measuring teachers' attitudes in training and promoting a positive attitude towards inclusion since the initial training has led to significant influences in increasing school performance, self-esteem, learning, and success in school (Monsen et al., 2015). The attitude of teachers is composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral parts and redetermines the quality of the integration process (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005).

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During the last 20 years, globally, the policy of the developments (UNESCO, 2000; United Nations, 2007) has put inclusive education (IE) on the agenda to adapt and adopt reforming steps. Teachers need to be scaffolded to adopt and adapt inclusive education. According to the Profiles

Enhancing Education Review (PEER) website by the GEM Report, less than 3 % of countries have adopted an “inclusive education law” that promotes teacher training while 10% have an education law that ensures inclusion for all but does not explicitly mention teacher training on inclusive education (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020).

3. Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze the attitude of teachers to inclusive education
- ii. To analyze the attitude of teachers toward inclusive education taking into account:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Level of studies
 - c. Teaching degree
 - d. Age
 - e. Length of teaching experiences

4. Hypotheses

Starting from the mentioned objectives, we have formulated three working hypotheses, which express correlational relationships between variables. We did not use descriptive hypotheses, the number of which could be inexhaustible, but it was preferred to carry out an exploratory approach, without prior enunciating provisional statements. However, following the stages of the research methodology, we have formulated the following correlational hypotheses:

H1: A teacher’s attitude to Inclusive Education is influenced by the level of teaching, age, gender, level of studies, length of teaching experiences

H2: A teacher’s attitude to Inclusive Education is influenced by the “level of administrative support received” and “availability of supportive services.”

H3: The teacher’s attitude to Inclusive Education is influenced by the type of student difficulty (physical, social, behavioral, learning, or emotional).

The first two hypotheses take into account the influence of the teacher and the involvement of the school staff in the preparation of the student on his school performance, and the third presupposes the existence of a significant positive correlation between the type of student difficulties. To achieve the objectives and to test the hypotheses, the method of sociological research used was the questionnaire.

5. Method

This research presents the Romanian version of the TAIS Teacher Attitude to Inclusion Scale (TAIS). The TAIS is a questionnaire based on Larrivee and Cook’s (1979) Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORMS) and it includes four different sections. Each section is scored with a scale having eight points (Monsen et al., 2015).

The first section of the questionnaire includes demographic data: age, gender, level of degree, qualification, and school. The second section aimed to identify the willingness to include children with SEN (visual, social, emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties) using a Likert scale of one to eight

points. The third section includes two variables to assess the adequacy of support “level of administrative support received” and “availability of supportive services.” Larrivee and Cook’s (1979) Items were adapted for the Romanian context. Section 4 has 31 items to measure teachers’ attitudes toward including SEN children within t mainstream schools.

In the same manner in Larrivee and Cook’s (1979) first questionnaire, item response bias was correctly measured by the introduction of special questions so that a “positive attitude” is mirrored by an agree answer for 12 items (items{ 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 21, 26, 28, and 30) and a disagree answer for the remaining 19 items (items: 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29). This scale was coded so that a high score would indicate a more positive attitude toward inclusion a low score would indicate a more negative attitude toward inclusion. My Class Inventory—Short Form (Fraser et al., 1982) is used to limit the result of teacher attitude on the classroom learning environment that teachers provide for their pupils, conversing to both student and teacher scores.

5.1. Participants

A random sample of schools from the South Muntenia, Romania was invited to take part, with 200 schools initially contacted, and responses received from 324 teachers. Incomplete responses were not found, and the sample consist of 324 teachers (292 females, 32 males) date provided in Table 1. The statistical analysis was done through the jamovi program, version 1.6.23, available free of charge, on the internet, for research (The jamovi project, 2022).

Table 1. Gender

Gender	Total Number	Total Percentage
Woman	292	90
Man	32	10
Total	324	100

The mean age of teachers was 40 years old, and teachers had a mean of 20 years of teaching experience illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Age

Age	Total Number	Total Percentage
<25	8	2,5
26-35	27	8,3
36-45	130	40,1
46-55	124	38,3
>56	35	10,8
Total	324	100

Table 3. Teachers’ level of education

Teachers’ level of education	Total Number	Total Percentage
High school	5	1,5
Diploma	154	47,5

Postgraduate/Master	150	46,3
Doctoral	14	4,3
Post-doctoral	1	0,4
Total	324	100

The number of teachers with a diploma is almost the same as those with a Master's 154 and 150 in Table 3.

Table 4. Teachers' degree

Teachers' degree	Total Number	Total Percentage
Debutant	46	14,2
II degree	35	10,8
I degree	231	71,3
Doctoral	12	3,7
Total	324	100

Table 4 shows respondents' answers to the question "What is your teaching degree?" The majority of teachers who have responded to this questionnaire have an Ist degree and more than 20 years of teaching.

Table 5. Length teaching experiences

Table 5. Length teaching experiences	Total Number	Total Percentage
Under 1 year	6	1,9
2-5 years	17	5,2
6-10 years	32	9,9
11-15 years	32	9,9
16-20 years	47	14,5
up 20 years	190	58,6
total	324	100

The number of teachers with 6-10 years of teaching who had completed is equal to those with 11-15 years and the percentages in equal in Table 5.

Table 6. SEN student / pupil contact

SEN student / pupil contact	Total Number	Total Percentage
Yes	230	71,2
No	93	28,8
Total	324	100

One-third of teachers had SEN pupil contact. See above Table 6. Of those only 212 have attended special education courses as is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. SEN courses

Attended SEN courses	Total Number	Total Percentage
Yes	230	71,2
No	93	28,8
Total	324	100

After regression analyses to investigate the influence of teacher's length of years teaching, age, gender, degree, experience, and attendance at special education courses upon Anderson-Rubin factor scores from Principal Component Analysis.

1. Many of the things teachers do with non SEN students in a regular classroom are appropriate for SEN students
2. The needs of SEN students can best be served through special, separate classes
3. A SEN child's classroom behaviour generally requires more patience from the teacher than does the behaviour of a non SEN child
4. The challenge of being in a regular classroom will promote the academic growth of the SEN child
5. The extra attention SEN students require is to the detriment of the other students
6. Inclusion offers mixed group interaction which fosters understanding and acceptance of differences
7. It is difficult to maintain order in a normal classroom that contains an SEN child
8. Normal classroom teachers possess a great deal of the expertise necessary to work with an SEN child
9. The behaviour of SEN students sets a bad example for the other students
10. Isolation in a special class has a negative effect on the social and emotional development of an SEN child
11. The SEN child probably develops academic skills more rapidly in a special classroom than in a regular classroom
12. Most SEN children do not make an adequate attempt to complete their assignments
13. Inclusion of SEN children requires significant change in regular classroom procedures
14. Most SEN children are well behaved in the classroom
15. The contact regular students have with SEN students may be harmful
16. Regular classroom teachers have sufficient training to teach children with SEN
17. SEN students monopolise the teacher's time
18. Including the SEN child in the regular classroom promotes his or her social independence
19. It is likely that an SEN child will exhibit behaviour problems in a normal classroom setting
20. Diagnostic-prescriptive teaching is better done by special education teachers than by normal classroom teachers
21. The inclusion of SEN students can be beneficial for non-SEN students
22. SEN children need to be told exactly what to do and how to do it
23. Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the SEN child
24. Increased freedom in the classroom creates too much confusion
25. The SEN child is socially isolated by non- SEN students
26. Parents of an SEN child present no greater problem for a teacher than those of a non SEN-child
27. Inclusion of SEN children necessitates extensive retraining of regular classroom teachers
28. SEN students should be given every opportunity to function in the regular classroom setting where possible
29. SEN children are likely to create confusion in the regular classroom
30. The presence of SEN students promotes acceptance of difference in the part of the non-SEN students

Figure 1. Attitude to inclusion Items

All 30 items in Figure 1 were coded into regression analyses in Table 8.

Table 8. Final Component Loadings Teachers' Attitude Toward Inclusion Scale Following Direct Oblimin Rotation in Jamovi

	Factor Loadings				Uniqueness
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	
30	0.686				0.530
17	0.642				0.556
9	0.622				0.572
25	0.617				0.531
7	0.607				0.524
15	0.597				0.562
26	0.533				0.704
24	0.499				0.525
12	0.450				0.700
5.	0.414				0.595
19	0.412		0.338		0.526
13	0.408			-0.332	0.465
23					0.801
6		0.708			0.469
29		0.690			0.413
4.		0.657			0.404
18		0.610			0.547
10		0.578			0.597
21		0.509			0.422
22		0.507			0.656
1.		0.472		0.389	0.611
28		0.422		-0.387	0.653
27					0.906
2.			0.742		0.387
20			0.555		0.440
11			0.551		0.574
3.			0.514		0.639
16				0.701	0.497
8				0.646	0.530
14		0.367		0.378	0.603

Note. 'Principal axis factoring' extraction method was used in combination with an 'oblimin' rotation

In Table 8 we can see that four factors have been taken out. The items on the scale have been sorted by their factor loadings on the four extracted factors. The column “Uniqueness” refers to the amount of variance in that item unexplained by the factors. The mirror of these values is what is more commonly/conventionally reported and they are known as commonalities (amount of variance in an item that is explained by the factors derived). For example, the communality for “The presence of SEN students promotes acceptance” would be $1 - .530 = .470$.

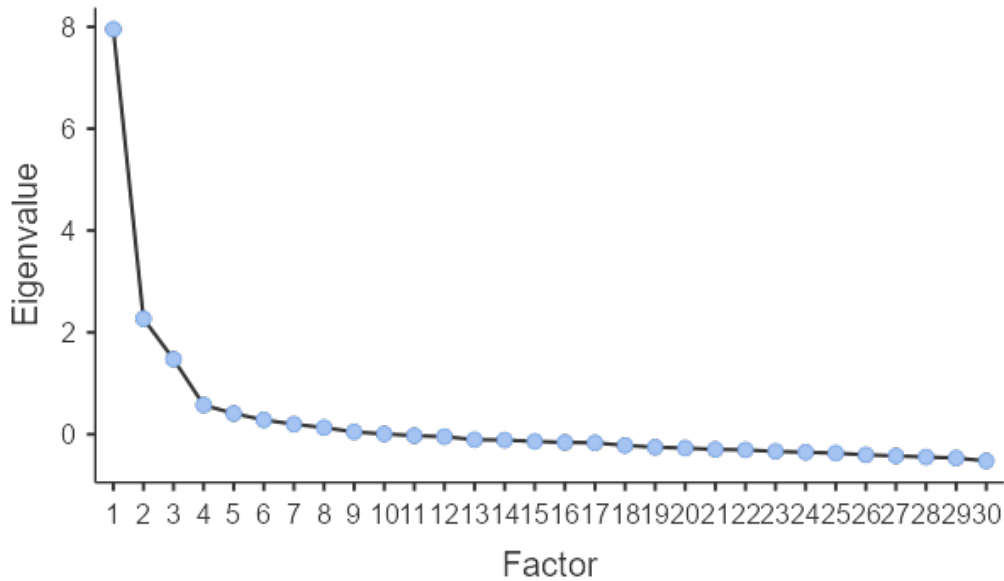


Figure 2. Eigenvalues. Scree Plot

Is obvious in this scree plot, Figure 2, that all 4 factors mentioned before were extracted correctly. The correlation matrix tells us that four factor created from our items are correlated positively as is correlated in Table 9.

Table 9. Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix				
	1	2	3	4
1	—	0.739	0.418	0.4921
2		—	0.529	0.2717
3			—	-0.0614
4				—

Factor (F) 1. regarding “difficulties of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes” was interrelated with teachers’ “willingness to include” children with gifted difficulties and physical difficulties but was not correlated with willingness to include children with behavioral difficulties, physical difficulties, or hearing difficulties.

F 2 regarding “social benefits for all of inclusion of SEN pupils in mainstream classes” was significantly “correlated with teachers’ willingness to include” children with hearing difficulties,

emotional difficulties, physical difficulties, visual difficulties, learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties, and multiple difficulties, but was not correlated with teachers' willingness to include gifted children.

F 3 regarding "implications of inclusion for teaching practice" was not significantly correlated with teachers' "willingness to include" any of the categories of problems.

F 4 regarding "implications for teachers addressing the needs of children with SEN" was significantly correlated with teachers' "willingness to include" children with behavioral difficulties and learning difficulties, but was not correlated with any of the other types of difficulties.

6. Conclusion

The attitude of teachers depends on professional experience. Teachers with 20-30 years of experience have a bigger level of the "willingness to include" SEN students in mainstream classes. Level of preparation of teachers influences attitude toward inclusive education. Type of deficiency sensory and physical disabilities and emotional, social and behavioral disabilities has a big influence on teachers' attitude to include students with SEN.

Is important to scaffold teachers' competencies by support, counselling, and training courses to a positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Positive attitudes toward the inclusion of children with special educational needs are essential for its successful implementation.

Thus, a high internal consistency was obtained for the 4 scales of the instrument, the Cronbach alpha coefficients being included in the range of 0.73–0.963. The factorial analysis showed a 4-factor solution, similar to the original variant of the instrument. The present study represents the first study of translation and adaptation of the TAIS Questionnaire to Romanian teachers, investigating its psychometric properties. The study, however, has certain limits. Thus, the sample, although diverse, does not fully correspond to the stratification existing at the national level based on gender, age, education, experience, and geographical distribution. At the same time, the large gender disproportion of the sample (about 10% men and 90% women) may have influenced, to some extent, the scores obtained (for socio-cultural reasons, women may be more disposed to the use of certain attitudes, compared to men), so caution is recommended in generalizing the results on other populations. Also, the conduct of a single study, with relatively acceptable values of the adequacy of the 4-factor model, is not sufficient to confirm the model; several studies are needed, on various lots, to carry out the factorial analysis, as well as to obtain indicators with increasingly better values for the adequacy of the chosen model.

The tool can be harnessed in future studies, which could focus both on investigating its properties at the national level for a better understanding of teachers' attitudes in implementing inclusive education.

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