

## Investigating Early Childhood Teachers' Perceptions and Readiness in Implementing Inclusive Pedagogy in the UAE

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### INTRODUCTION & AIM

Inclusive education aims to ensure that all children have equitable opportunities to participate and learn alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms. Although the UAE has introduced policies that support inclusion, challenges remain in translating these policies into effective classroom practices (Alborno, 2017).

To address this gap, this study explored Early Childhood Education teachers' readiness to implement inclusive pedagogy for students of determination in the UAE.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in implementing inclusive pedagogy.
- Investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes, intentions, and concerns regarding inclusive education.
- Explore the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy, intentions, and concerns toward implementing inclusive practices.
- Examine teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of inclusive education practices in the UAE.

### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Scale	Mean (SD)	Interpretation
Attitudes (TAIS) (Saloviita, 2015)	2.95 (0.38)	Positive
Self-Efficacy (TEIP) (Sharma et al., 2012)	4.86 (0.38)	High
Intentions (ITICS) (Sharma & Jacobs, 2016)	5.24 (1.00)	Somewhat likely
Concerns (CIES) (Sharma & Desai, 2002)	2.78 (0.46)	Very concerned

Correlation Analysis		
Predictor	Pearson's Correlation (r)	P-value
<b>Predictor: Teachers' Attitudes</b>		
Self-Efficacy	0.182	.000**
Intentions	0.278	.000**
Concerns	-0.185	.000**
<b>Predictor: Self-efficacy</b>		
Intentions	0.122	.000**
Concerns	-0.029	.000**
<b>Predictor: Intentions</b>		
Concerns	0.121	.000**

Notes: Significant using the Pearson's correlation test at \*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01

Teachers generally demonstrated positive attitudes, high self-efficacy, and willingness to implement inclusive practices. Attitudes, self-efficacy, and intentions were positively associated, whereas concerns were negatively related to attitudes and self-efficacy. Interestingly, intentions were positively associated with concerns, suggesting that teachers who expressed stronger intentions toward inclusion were also more aware of the challenges involved (Sharma & Sokal, 2015).

Interview findings revealed four themes: (1) Perceptions of inclusion, (2) Lack of training and professional development, (3) Parental resistance and cultural stigma, (4) Implementation challenges.

Teachers emphasized the importance of collaboration in supporting meaningful inclusion (Garcia-Melgar et al., 2022).

### METHOD

**Research Design:** Mixed-methods case study.

**Research Context:** 17 ECE teachers (Pre-K to Grade 2) from a private bilingual IB school in Ajman, UAE.

**Data Collection Tools:** Four survey scales and semi-structured interviews.

**Data Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and thematic analysis.

**Research Procedures:** Adapted Action Research Cycle.

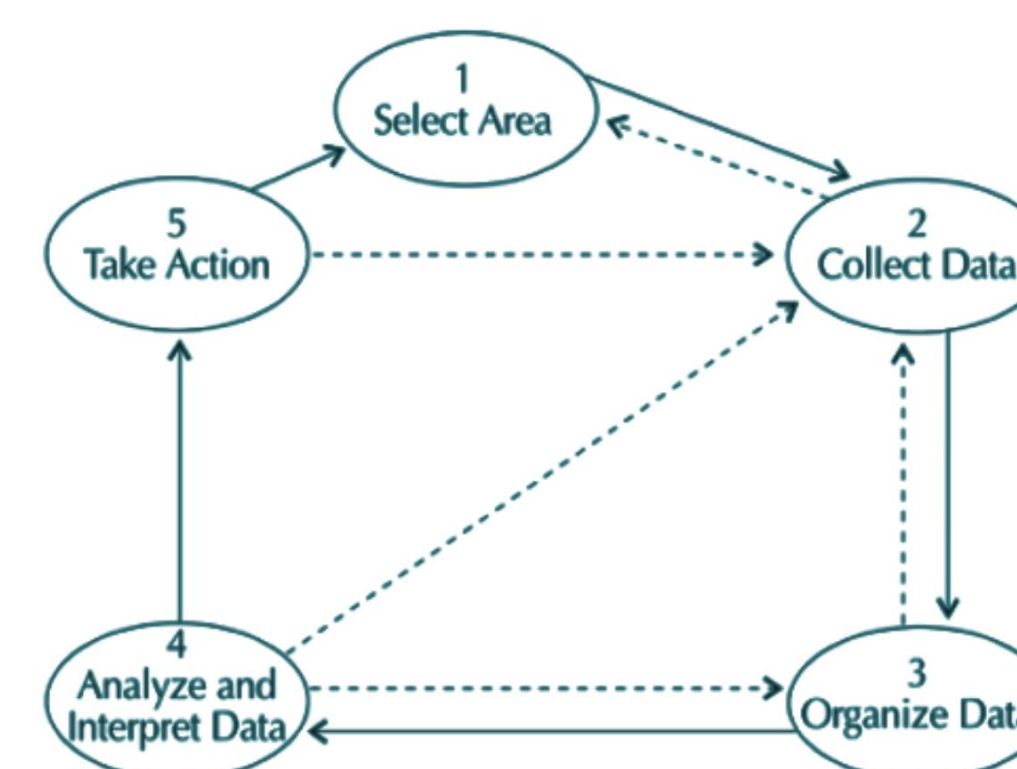


Figure 1: The Action Research Cycle (Calhoun, 1994, p. 2)

### CONCLUSION

Early Childhood Education teachers demonstrated positive attitudes and readiness toward inclusive pedagogy. Despite this, concerns regarding training and support remain. These findings highlight the importance of continuous professional learning to strengthen the implementation of inclusive practices (Franzen et al., 2024).

### FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

Future research should examine inclusive pedagogy across different educational settings and larger samples to better understand the support needed to promote effective inclusion in the UAE.

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