IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Attitude Towards Inclusive Education And Their Readiness For Inclusive Classroom Of Prospective Teachers

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Abstract

Descriptive-survey study was conducted to find out the relationship between Attitude towards Inclusive Education (ATIE) and Readiness for Inclusive Classroom (RIC) among the B. ED students of Cuddalore district. A sample of B. ED students from various colleges were randomly selected for the study. To collect the data, ATIE and RIC were used which was designed and constructed by the investigator. The data were analyzed using the statistical techniques like Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, ANOVA and Pearson's Product Moment The results revealed that the majority of B.Ed. students had a moderate level of ATIE and RIC. Male students demonstrated a significantly higher mean ATIE score compared to females. Additionally, students with college-educated mothers exhibited a more positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, no significant differences were found based on locality, fathers' education, or family income. Moreover, the Pearson correlation between ATIE and RIC showed no statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Key Words: Inclusive Education, Readiness, Attitude, B. ED students, Prospective Teachers

I Introduction

An inclusive classroom is an educational setting that values and accommodates diversity by providing equal opportunities and access to learning for all students, including those with diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles. The role of a teacher in an inclusive classroom is critical in ensuring that every student feels welcome, supported, and challenged to reach their full potential. Here are some key aspects of the teacher's role in an inclusive classroom: Inclusive education is a dynamic and evolving field, and teachers play a pivotal role in its successful implementation. By continuously improving their knowledge and practices, teachers can create classrooms where all students feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Research on attitudes and readiness towards inclusive education among B.Ed. students is vital for teacher preparation programs, identifying knowledge gaps, enhancing inclusive practices, implementing inclusive education effectively, understanding factors influencing attitudes, fostering inclusive school culture, impacting student learning outcomes, informing education policy, supporting inclusive education advocacy,

and continuous improvement in teacher education and practices.

I.(a) Research Questions

1. Is the level of ATIE of B. ED students is high?
2. Is the level of RIC of B. ED students is high?
3. Is there any significant difference in the ATIE among the B. ED students with regard to certain demographic variables?
4. Is there any significant difference in the RIC among the B. ED students with regard to certain demographic variables?
5. Is there any significant relationship between the ATIE and RIC among the B. ED students?

III METHODS

This descriptive-survey study was conducted to find out the relationship between ATIE and RIC of the B. ED students. The sample of the study comprised the 700 B. ED students of Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu, India. They wers selected by random sampling technique.

As the investigators aimed at collecting the data from the B. ED students in the Cuddalore District, the data were collected using (i) Personal data form,

The Personal Data collection form was used to collect the demographic information such as Gender, Location, Family Income, Education of Father and mother of the respondents.

(ii)ATIE (Attitude towards Inclusive Education) consists of 20 items, each rated on a five-point scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Participants indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement, and scores are assigned numerical values (e.g., 5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Undecided, 2 for Disagree, and 1 for Strongly Disagree). The total ATIE score is obtained by summing up the numerical values of all 20 items, ranging from a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 100.

(iii) RIC (Readiness for Inclusive Classroom) consists of 24 items, with each item scored on a three-point scale: Little, Somewhat, and More. Respondents indicate the extent to which they possess each characteristic or behavior related to readiness for an inclusive classroom. The scores are assigned numerical values (e.g., 1 for Little, 2 for Somewhat, and 3 for More). The total RIC score is calculated by summing up the numerical values of all 24 items, with scores ranging from a minimum of 24 to a maximum of 72.

Both the ATIE and RIC scales are used to assess the attitudes and readiness of B.Ed. students towards inclusive education, with the former focusing on their general attitudes and the latter on their specific readiness to create and manage an inclusive classroom environment. The scales provide valuable insights into B.Ed. students' perspectives and preparedness for promoting inclusive practices in their future teaching careers.

IV. Data Analysis and Interpretation

$H_0$1: The level of ATIE of B. ED students is low.

Table 1

Levels of ATIE of B. ED students

CLASS INTERVALS	LEVELS		FREQUENCY	%	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
Below 71	Low	M-1σ	113	17	Minimum = 20 Maximum = 100 Mean = 78.00 S.D = 7.41
72-84	Moderate	Between M-1σ to M+1σ	477	68	
85 and above	High	M+1σ	110	15	
Total			**700**	**100**	

From the Table-1 it is seen that the B. ED students whose scores are 71 and below has low level of ATIE, the B. ED students whose scores are between 72 and 84 have moderate level of ATIE and the B. ED students whose scores are 85 and above have high level of ATIE

From the Table-1 it is seen that maximum ATIE clusters around the moderate level of ATIE. To sum up the null hypothesis is rejected and the level of ATIE of B. ED students are moderate.

$H_0$2: The level of RIC of B. ED students is low.

Table 2

Levels of RIC of B. ED students

CLASS INTERVALS	LEVELS		FREQUENCY	%	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
Below 39	Low	M-1σ	131	19	Minimum = 24 Maximum = 72 Mean = 46.69 S.D = 7.54
40-54	Moderate	Between M-1σ to M+1σ	430	61	
55 and above	High	M+1σ	139	19	
Total			700	100	

From the Table-2 it is seen that the B. ED students whose scores are 39 and below has low level of RIC, the B. ED students whose scores are between 40 and 54 have moderate level of RIC and the B. ED students whose scores are 55 and above have high level of RIC

From the Table-2 it is seen that maximum RIC clusters around the moderate level of RIC. To sum up the null hypothesis is rejected and the level of RIC of B. ED students are moderate.

$H_0$3: There is no significant difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Gender

Table 1

Difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t-value	p-value
ATIE	Male	351	78.15	8.122	.535	.000
	Female	349	77.85	6.622		

The t-value is 0.535, and the p-value is 0.000. It is inferred from the Table 3 that the p-value is less than the 5% level of significance. Hence the respective null hypothesis is rejected ($p<0.05$). This suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean ATIE scores between males and females. The mean ATIE score is higher for males, indicating that their attitude towards inclusive education is greater than females. Possible reasons include socialization, educational background, prior interactions, empathy, beliefs, values, and awareness.

$H_0$4: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Locality

Table 4

Difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Locality

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	S. D	t-value	p-value
ATIE	Urban	190	78.65	6.959	1.41	.535
	Rural	510	77.76	7.562		

The t-value is 1.41, and the p-value is 0.535. It is inferred from the Table 4 that the p-value is less than the 5% level of significance. Hence the respective null hypothesis is rejected ($p>0.05$). This suggests that there is no statistical difference in the ATIE scores between the Urban and Rural groups.

$H_0$5: There is no significant difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Fathers' Education

Table 5

Difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Fathers' Education

Variable	Fathers 'Education	N	Mean	S. D	F-value	p-value
ATIE	Illiterate	379	78.24	7.591	1.444	.237
	School Education	149	77.09	5.905		
	College Education	172	78.27	8.116		

The F-value is 1.44, and the p-value is 0.237. It is inferred from the Table 5 that the p-value (0.237) is greater than 0.05. So, based on the given F-value and p-value, its concluded that there is no significant difference in the ATIE scores among the groups in terms of Fathers' Education

$H_0$6: There is no significant difference in the in the ATIE scores in terms of Mothers' Education

Table 6

Difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Mothers 'Education

Variable	Mothers' Education	N	Mean	S. D	F-value	p-value
ATIE	Illiterate	439	77.96	7.656	3.205	.041
	School Education	171	77.24	6.929		
	College Education	90	79.67	6.853		

The F-value is 3.025, and the p-value is 0.041. It is inferred from the Table 6 that the p-value (0.041) is less than 0.05. So, based on the given F-value and p-value, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the ATIE scores among the groups in terms of Mothers' Education. Mothers with a college-level education have a higher mean ATIE score indicating a more positive attitude towards inclusive education compared to the other groups. Mothers with a college-level education have a higher mean ATIE score due to their exposure to inclusive education concepts, higher educational attainment, awareness of inclusive practices, knowledge and training, supportive environment, empowerment, social and professional networks, and positive role models

$H_0$7: There is no significant difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Family income

Table 7

Difference in the ATIE scores in terms of Family income

Variable	Family income	N	Mean	S. D	F-value	p-value
ATIE	100001 to 150000	451	78.17	7.612	8.120	.000
	50001to 100000	188	76.47	7.025		
	10001 to 50000	31	82.84	5.728		
	Above 50001	30	80.00	5.186		

The F-value is 8.120, and the p-value is 0.00. It is inferred from the Table 7 that the p-value is less than 0.05. So, based on the given F-value and p-value, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the ATIE scores among the groups in terms of Family income. the mean ATIE scores for those whose Family income is in the range of Rs. 10001 to 50000 are greater than the other groups. This suggests that this specific group has a more positive attitude towards inclusive education compared to the other income groups, at least within the sample data.

$H_0$8: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Gender

Table 6

Difference in the RIC scores in terms of Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	t-value	p-value
RIC	Male	351	46.28	7.255	1.44	.003
	Female	349	47.10	7.813		

The t-value is 1.44, and the p-value is 0.003. It is inferred from the Table 8 that the p-value is less than the 5% level of significance. Hence the respective null hypothesis is rejected ($p<0.05$). This suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean RIC scores between males and females. the mean RIC scores for Female are greater than Male.

$H_0$9: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Locality

Table 9

Difference in the RIC scores in terms of Locality

Variable		Locality	N	Mean	S. D	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
RIC	Equal variances assumed	Urban	190	46.38	8.793	23.554	.000	-.651	698	.515
	Equal variances not assumed	Rural	510	46.80	7.029			-.589	283.733	.557

The results of Levene's test from the Table 9 for equality of variances indicate that there is a significant difference in variances for the variable RIC between the Urban and Rural groups. When equal variances are assumed, the Urban group (F = 46.38) and the Rural group (F = 46.80) exhibit significantly different variances (F = 8.793, $p < 0.001$). However, when equal variances are not assumed, there is no significant difference in variances between the Urban and Rural groups (t = -0.589, df = 283.733, p = 0.557)."

In this interpretation, it's essential to clarify that the Levene's test was performed for the variable RIC, comparing the Urban and Rural groups. The provided values for F, t, and p are specific to the test results for each group when assuming and not assuming equal variances.

$H_0$10: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Fathers' Education

Table 10

Difference in the RIC scores in terms of Fathers' Education

Variable	Fathers' Education	N	Mean	S.D	F-value	p-value
RIC	Illiterate	379	48.72	7.135	38.122	.000
	School Education	149	45.63	6.273		
	College Education	172	43.12	7.944		

The F-value is 38.12, and the p-value is 0.000. It is inferred from the Table 10 that the p-value is less than the significance level (alpha), which is typically set at 0.05, it indicates that the result is statistically significant. In this case, the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. There is a significant difference among the groups in terms of Fathers' Education. The mean RIC scores for individuals whose fathers are illiterate are greater than the other groups.

$H_0$11: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Mothers' Education

Table 11

Difference in the RIC scores in terms of Mothers' Education

Variable	Mothers' Education	N	Mean	S. D	F-value	p-value
RIC	Illiterate	439	47.29	7.425	8.197	.000
	School Education	90	47.56	8.144		
	College Education	171	44.68	7.204		

The F-value is 8.197, and the p-value is 0.000. It is inferred from the Table 11 p-value is less than the significance level (alpha), which is typically set at 0.05, it indicates that the result is statistically significant. In this case, the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant difference among the groups in terms of Mothers' Education. The mean RIC scores for individuals whose mothers are illiterate are greater than the other groups.

$H_0$12: There is no significant difference in the RIC Scores in terms of Family income

Table 12

Difference in the RIC scores in terms of Family income

Variable	Family income	N	Mean	Std Deviation	F-value	p-value
RIC	100001 to 150000	451	46.45	7.909	9.538	.000
	50001to 100000	188	48.37	6.673		
	10001 to 50000	31	45.48	7.206		
	Above 50001	30	41.00	2.491		

The F-value is 9.538, and the p-value is 0.000. It is inferred from the Table 12 p-value is less than the significance level (alpha), which is typically set at 0.05, it indicates that the result is statistically significant. In this case, the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant difference among the groups in terms of Family income. the mean RIC scores for those whose Family income is in the range of Rs. 50001to 100000 are greater than the other groups.

$H_0$13: There is no significant between ATIE vs RIC

Table 13

Relationship between ATIE and RIC

Variables	R value	LoS at 0.05
ATIE vs RIC	0.069	NS

From the Table 13 the p-value associated with the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.069, and it is greater than the common significance level of 0.05 (alpha), there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables. As the p-value is greater than the significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. In summary, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.069 and a p-value of 0.069, there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education and their Readiness for Inclusive Classroom at the 0.05 significance level.

V. Discussion

The mean ATIE score is higher for males, indicating that their attitude towards inclusive education is greater than females this result is contrary to the result of Timo Saloviita (2020) where female teachers felt slightly more positively towards inclusion than male teachers in Finland. And is similar to the findings of Nisha Bhatnagar & Ajay Das (2014) that the teachers who were more positive about inclusive education were male. Vinchail A. Siason found among Prospective Teachers from Southern part of the Philippines that the males were found to significantly manifest ‘better’ attitude towards Inclusive Education as compared to the females in the study

Rabi, N et.al., (2018), found that 59.32% participants were acquired knowledge about special education and inclusive education policy and 40.68% were not. 66.67% of participants understand the characteristics of student with special needs whereas 33.33% were not understand. Overall finding showed 25.00% participants were obtained readiness while 75.00% were not. It can be remembered that only 19% of the B. ED students are ready for Inclusive classroom setup. Nisha Bhatnagar & Ajay Das (2014) also found that the teachers in Delhi had positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs.in this study B. ED students possess moderate level of positive attitudes towards ATIE. Banoo, Nazia (2021) found that participants generally felt positive and confident towards including learners with special needs into their future classrooms. Amjad Islam Amjad et.a[, explored teachers’ mental and professional readiness for inclusive education in Pakistan, Male teachers’ readiness for inclusive education was higher than the female ones.in this study female readiness for inclusive education are greater than Male

VI. Conclusion:

The findings suggest that B.Ed. students generally possess a moderate level of positive attitudes towards inclusive education, with some gender differences observed. The role of educational background, specifically mothers' college education, seems to influence students' attitudes positively. However, more efforts are needed to enhance readiness for inclusive classrooms among B.Ed. students, as only a minority demonstrated high readiness. The study highlights the importance of continuous improvement in teacher education to foster inclusive practices and support diverse learners effectively.

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