

**Full Length Article**

## Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of general education teachers toward including students with Special Needs Education (SNE) in the regular classroom, and to find out relation of attitude with sex, age, educational background, educational level, teaching experience, and experience with special needs education and pre-service training in special needs and inclusive education. Teachers from three primary schools in Saja town, which is found in southern Ethiopia, participated in the study. Cochran's Survey of Teacher's Attitudes towards Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC) scale was modified (Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .89) and used. A total of 60 randomly selected teachers from three primary schools participated in completing the questionnaires. Quantitative methods of data analysis were employed to interpret findings. The overall mean of all respondents on the STATIC was 3.82 with 0.700 standard deviation. This mean showed that teachers participated in the study have slightly positive attitude toward inclusion. The study revealed significant difference among teachers' attitudes toward including students with Special Needs Education and some demographic variables, and experience, with person with disability knowledge and understanding about education of student with special needs education. However, no evidence was found for difference on teachers' attitude and characteristics like age, educational level, the numbers of years of teaching experience and experience with person with disability. The findings of this study trace that teachers' attitude play vital role for successful inclusion practices. Based on the findings, quality teachers training and further investigation on various aspects of the issue were recommended.

**Keywords:** /Attitude/ Inclusive education/Students with disabilities/

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

The enactments of international and local policies, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Education For All (EFA), Free Primary Education (FPE), United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006; Ethiopia ratified in 2010), Education sector Development programme III (ESDP III, IV AND V; GTP I and II), and recent trends like Full Inclusion Movement, have great effect on the inclusion of huge number of student with disabilities to the mainstream classes in national and international level. Inclusive education has been internationally recognized as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and quality education for all children, especially those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream education for reasons of disability, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics. Now days in Ethiopia, regular schools across the country are moving towards the philosophy of inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting (Jaffer & Abdulfettah, 2018)

Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusion is about making sure that each and every student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued. In inclusion every student is in regular education and regular classes. The focus is on how to develop regular school and classroom communities that fit, nurture, and support the educational and social needs of every student in attendance. An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met.

Researches show that a lot of factors can affect inclusion of student with disabilities, primarily teachers' attitude have been considered as the major factors to assure the success of inclusion of students with student with special educational needs (SNE) in to the general education system. An attitude is an expression of favor or disfavor toward a person, place, thing, or event. Garden once described attitudes as the most distinctive and indispensable concept. Anyone might have a positive or negative attitude toward something. At the same time, what he/she did might be the reflection of his/her attitude and our attitude directly or indirectly affects our action (Gardon, 1935).

One of the major arguments that have often been used in the debate about inclusion of students with SNE has been the attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion with special needs (Lampropolou & Padeliaou, 1997). Hence, teachers' positive attitude has been significant to include and respond the individual needs of student with SEN in regular education setting. In contrast to this, teachers negative attitude hinder successful inclusion of students with SEN in regular education setting.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Research conducted in the area of this study has been show that there are differences in teachers' attitude toward inclusion. Abate (2001) and Abebe (2001) found that the majority of regular education teachers had a negative attitude toward inclusive education. The actual implementation of inclusion in classrooms confuses and worries teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). In addition, Tesfaye (2005) find out that special education teachers have negative attitude toward inclusion of students with SEN. Teachers' negative attitude might be due to Lack of experience in an inclusion setting, Lack of experience dealing with severe and profound disabilities, Shortage of instructional aides, and lack of in-service and pre-service trainings. For example, meeting the individualized educational plan requirements of students with disabilities was found the factors to produce a lack of confidence of teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion would depend on teachers education, experience with students having special educational needs, class size, work load, and the availability of support.

Moreover, some research findings have indicated that regular education teachers are becoming more positive toward inclusion. Teachers are more and more positive or optimistic about inclusion of students with disabilities (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Some regular educators display 'an enthusiastic professional dedicated to the development and implementation of inclusive school practices. A study conducted in Addis Ababa revealed that the practices of inclusive education for the student with hearing impairment were found to be satisfactory (Tilahun, 2007). Furthermore, studies conducted in Ethiopia including Tibebu (1995), Abate (2001), Tesfaye, (2005) and Tilahun, (2007) indicates that the majority of teachers, who were participating in inclusive programs, showed strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, such as class size, inadequate resources, lack of adapted curriculum and lack of adequate training.

In the recent years, schools are experiencing an increased number of students with SEN in the general education setting. As inclusion has seemingly become the preferred place for students with SEN, teacher's attitudes toward including these students has become an important variable in creating a successful inclusive classroom. The attitudes of teachers may act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of inclusion. A positive teacher attitude toward inclusion may be the key to the success of including students with special needs (Cochran, 1998).

As cited in Thomas (2012), Familia-Garcia (2001), in a small sample study conducted in the New York City school system, assessed the attitudes of teachers toward including students with disabilities into general education classrooms. Of the special

education teachers surveyed, all reported positive attitudes concerning working in an inclusion setting, even if mandated (Familia-Garcia, 2001). However, among the general education teachers, half were willing to try the inclusion model while the other half refused to even attempt inclusion. These teachers also reported that inclusion would not work and eighty percent of them indicated they would change schools or retire if mandated to work in an inclusion setting (Familia-Garcia, 2001).

Studies carried out in Ethiopia on attitude of teachers towards inclusion revealed that there is mixture of attitudes possessed by teachers and other stakeholders. As cited in (Gezahegne & Yinebeb, 2010), Tadesse (2004) explored positive attitude while Anteneh (2007) found negative attitude of teachers towards inclusion due to availability of resources, knowledge about the practice of inclusion, among other several reasons.

In general, teachers' attitudes may determine the success of the implementation of inclusive education, and as such, it is important to explore the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. To date, in Ethiopia there has been acute shortage of a study conducted regarding teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The present study was designed to evaluate the status of teachers' attitude for students with disabilities who were educated in regular education settings.

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitudes of general education teachers toward inclusive education. The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine teachers' attitude about teaching students with special needs education in inclusive setting.
2. To find out the relationships between teachers' attitude and demographic factors such as age, gender, educational qualification, teaching experience, experience of teaching children with disabilities, contact with persons with disabilities, pre-service training on inclusive education)

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education**

Attitude is a broad concept, and covers more broad area when explored in the context of inclusive education. Triandis (1971) considers attitudes to be one's thoughts or ideas regarding one's feelings that influence behaviours related to a particular issue. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) define attitude as "an individual's viewpoint or disposition towards a particular object (a person, a thing, or an idea)". They consider attitude to be an individual's way of seeing and reacting to a social phenomenon, and assert that it

varies from person to person. An individual's ways of viewing the world and reacting to it are influenced by many different factors including the individual's beliefs, knowledge, emotions and their participation in social activities (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993).

Most of the research on attitudes revealed that school teachers can have a variety of attitudes such as positive, negative or neutral or both. Recent research reported that mainstream school teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are mixed (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). From the range of studies discussed here, most reported that teachers possess positive attitudes or views on inclusive education (Ali, Mustefa, & Jelas, 2006). If teachers have positive views on inclusion, then they value all children, whatever their needs, and interact with them accordingly (Whyte, 2005). Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006) used a self-rated questionnaire with teachers in Malaysia to measure teacher attitude.

## 2.2 Factors that Affect Teachers Attitude

Under this section factors related to training on inclusive education, knowledge and contact with Persons with disabilities, and years of experience of teachers are discussed.

**Training on inclusive education** - the effectiveness of inclusion is highly dependent upon preparing teachers for inclusive classroom environment. General education teachers must be comfortable and competent at adapting and modifying curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of all their students including students with disabilities (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). As general education teachers become more directly responsible for educating students with disabilities, many may feel unprepared to meet the specific needs of these students (Colling, Fishbaugh, & Hermanson, 2003). Freytag, (2001 ) presented her study on the impact of pre-service experiences on teacher efficacy and inclusion. She utilized the Teacher Efficacy Scale to survey 48 teachers from ten public schools in a large, metropolitan area in central Florida. Of the 48 teachers, 75% were general education teachers, 25% special education teachers, and all were considered beginning teachers with 0-4 years of experience. Freytag reported a higher confidence level in teaching ability and the global belief that educators can impact student learning among special education teachers when compared to general education teachers. However, she found no statistically significant difference between scores on the Teacher Efficacy Scale and the number of courses taken that addressed inclusion.

According to Villa et al. (1996), separate pre-service and continuing education programs for general and special education teachers have contributed to under prepared educators in skills and expectations for including students with special needs. The most profound need of teachers is their necessity for more and better professional development programs that are specifically designed to address implementation concerns about inclusion (Edmunds, 2000). In earlier research on teacher preparedness, (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999) identified a lack of trained personnel capable of

teaching students with special needs in an inclusive setting as the primary barrier to successful inclusion. Silva & Morgado (2004) stated that teacher's attitude toward inclusion is influenced by their training and experience. They found that the more training teachers receive in special education, they develop the more positive attitude toward inclusion. This is also supported by Brownell & Pajares (1999) who found that teachers who had taken special education courses or received in-service training used more effective instructional strategies and had greater job satisfaction than those teachers with no training in special education. The training prepares teachers to make the accommodations necessary for students with special needs education.

**Knowledge and contact with persons with disabilities** - according to (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996), general education teachers' attitudes and beliefs about instructing students with disabilities are learned and appear to be influenced by the amount of knowledge and contact the individual teacher has with regard to a particular individual or group with special needs and disabilities. (Keenan, 1997) argued that increasing the knowledge base of teachers about the integration of students with disabilities and ways to address their learning needs may be a means of minimizing negative attitudes towards inclusion. However, other studies have shown that even after completing staff development training, many teachers still question their ability to teach students with disabilities, and some doubt that if they will be provided with resources and support necessary for the programs (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

As cited in (Jones, Thorn, Chow, Thompson, & Wilde, 2000), Chow and Winzer investigated that “exposure to special needs students tends to increase teachers’ confidence levels” (p.628). It appears that teachers must be knowledgeable about the benefits of inclusion, as well as ways it can be successful without overwhelming them or burdening them with extra work. It also appears that their attitudes may become more positive with increased positive experiences with students with disabilities in their classroom.

**Years of experience** – this is one area that appears to have a positive effect on teachers’ attitudes is experience with inclusion. The experience may come from teaching in an inclusion setting for multiple years (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Similarly, in a co-teaching setting or direct experience working with a student who receives specialized services would help to develop positive attitude (Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996). Other factors including training and support need to be examined to determine the impact on teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion (Hastings & Oakford, 2003).

The majority of studies reviewed, agree that years of experience and experience working with students with special needs education results in more positive attitudes toward inclusion (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Having experience in teaching students with special needs education is one of the most influential factors in shaping teachers attitudes toward inclusion; and improves the teachers’ confidence and instruction

as well as their attitude toward inclusion (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, Nevin, & Chapple, 1996). Parasuram (2006) found that teachers reported the most positive attitudes toward inclusion after 1 to 5 years experience and 25 or more years of experience. The positive attitudes of the more novice group were attributed to an increased exposure to technology and changing attitudes while the more positive attitudes of the experienced group were due to their extensive classroom experience. The most negative attitudes were reported by teachers with between 15 to 20 years of experience.

### 3. Methods and Procedures

In this study a descriptive case study was designed to effectively examine general classroom teachers' attitude toward inclusion of students with SEN in general education setting. The research was carried out following quantitative approach based on a case study design with the use of questionnaire as the sole research instrument to investigate teachers' attitude toward inclusion as well as the possible correlation among variables. Three government primary school teachers were data source for the study. Geographically this study focused on south of Ethiopia. For the study, south Ethiopia selected purposely; this helped the researchers to reach important and nearby places. The study was carried out in three government primary schools in Yem special woreda. The schools were Saja Millennium primary school, Saja correction center primary school and Sambo primary school. A total of 60 randomly selected teachers participated in the study. Finally, 60 randomly selected teachers were participated to complete the questionnaire. Out of them 32 were males and 28 were females.

**Inclusion criteria:** participants of the study were included based on two criteria i.e., being a teacher in government school and full time teaching staff at the schools.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed including two sections with 35 items and sub-items. Section A describe the respondents' demographic information which comprised of 10 items including 2 sub-items of item 5, 3 sub-items of item 2 and 4 sub-items of item 1. This part also has two items with close ended answers.

Section B was modified from Cochran's (1998) *Survey of Teacher's Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms* (STATIC). The original STATIC (1998) contained 20 items with a six point Likert scale with a range of responses: 0= Strongly Disagree, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Not sure, but tend to disagree, 3 = Not sure, but tend to agree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. But the questionnaire used in this study consisted of 20 items with a six point Likert scale with a range of responses: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Based on the feedback of pilot test participants, sub-items 2 = Not sure, but tend to disagree and 3 = Not sure, but tend to agree of the original STATIC was modified to 'Neutral'.

STATIC is a 20-item survey instrument consisting of statements regarding including students with SEN in the general education classroom. Cochran indicated a consistent Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .89. When scoring STATIC, the examiner must first reverse code for items 3, 4, 7, 9, 13 and 15. Once these items are reversed coded, the sum of the twenty items for each subject could then be considered an index of their attitude toward inclusion. Individuals with higher scores are considered to have a more positive attitude toward inclusion, while lower scores are considered to have less positive or more negative attitudes toward inclusion (Cochran, 1998).

First, before selecting and developing the instruments, related literatures were reviewed. Next, considering the difficulty of the English language for the subjects, the items were translated into Amharic language which is teachers' mother tongue language,



before pilot testing. The translation has been done by the appropriate language experts. Then, instructors from special needs and inclusive education and psychology department of the Jimma University translated the items to Amharic language. Instructors from English department of Jimma University translated the Amharic version back to English. The difference appeared in the forward and backward translations was corrected by the translators jointly and rewritten accordingly.

The instruments were tested on a pilot study. It was carried out on 10 (6 male and 4 female) teachers at Jimma Mandera primary school. Respondents selected randomly; but none of them included in the main study. Here vague items, unclear idea or ambiguous items were corrected based on the feedback. Moreover, the experts reviewed and evaluated the questions' validity for measuring the variables that relate to the attitude of teachers for inclusion.

Finally, with a letter of permission from Jimma University research and post graduate coordinating office data collected by the researchers.

Based on the nature of basic questions and data collected, quantitative methods of data analysis were employed to interpret findings. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation & percentage. In order to determine teachers' attitude toward inclusion level and to find out the relationship that may exist between several demographic characteristics and teachers attitude level computed through t-test and ANOVA. The analysis of the data was done by using SPSS version 20 software package.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The collected data included 60 general education teacher's responses. Basically, the surveys were distributed to 75 teachers at three different schools and 60 were returned completed which represents an 80% rate of return. The analysis of the data was done by using a Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20 software package. Cochran's (1998) *Survey of Teacher's Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms* (STATIC) scale was modified for this particular study, used to determine the general education teachers' attitude toward inclusion.

The data were entered in two parts. The first part was comprised of 10 demographic information items relating to sex, age, education background, education level, teaching experience, and experience with special needs education and amount of pre-service training in special needs education to examine the relationships in attitude with respect to demographic characteristics of respondents. And the second was The STATIC portion which asked the respondents to rate 20 items that indicated their attitude toward inclusion using a five point Likert scale with a range of responses: (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree). Finally, descriptive and inferential statistics was used for analysis of the result.

The overall mean (M) of all respondents on all the statements of the STATIC was 3.82 with 0.700 standard deviation (SD). This mean indicates an attitude that falls between response numbers 3 and 4, that is between "Neutral" or "Agree", but leans heavily towards 4, which pertains to the response "agree" on the questionnaire scale. A response mean which lent towards 3 would be closer to "neutral". Higher scores indicate more favorable views towards inclusive education. Therefore, it could be interpreted that teachers participated in the study have positive attitude toward inclusion practice in general classroom situation (M=3.82, SD=0.700). The finding of this study was different to a study conducted in Ethiopian schools by Abate and Abebe (2001); they found that the majority of regular education teachers had a negative attitude toward inclusive education. However, the findings of this study was supported by various researchers such as Avramidis et al (2000), teachers are more and more positive or optimistic about inclusion of students with disabilities. Similarly, Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006) found that teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusive education in Malaysia, as teachers in Malaysia believe that inclusive education enhances social interaction and minimizes negative stereotypes. Large class size, inadequate resources, lack of adapted curriculum and lack of adequate training were the reasons provided by the teachers for not supporting IE in the study by Tibebu (1995), Abate (2001), Tilahun (1991) and Tesfaye (2005).

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants and Statistical Analysis

##### A. Gender, age and educational level of participants

The population of the study was comprised of 60 general education teachers in a small urban Saja school district. This sample comprises the data used for the analyses presented below. It can be interpreted from Table 4.1 below that the number of male teachers involved in the study is approximately the same as female teachers (Male 32 (53.3%), and Female 28 (46.7) which shows each sex almost comprises half of the sample). It could be concluded that the sample of this study is “adult population” since 25 (41.7%) of respondents are between 31 to 40 years old and 18 (30%) respondents were with 30 or less age. Comparatively, “aged participants” were less in number because age 40 and greater comprised 17 (28.3%) of the sample.

The majority of participants achieved a Diploma level in education n=33 (55%). Degree education level holder accounts n= 21 (35%) of respondents. Few number of participants were with certificate education level n=3 (5%); and same number of respondents were also with undescribed educational qualification level n=3 (5%). This is in line with the current trend that the policy assigns diploma for primary, degree for secondary, and so on.

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by sex, age and educational level

Characteristics	Group	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	32	53.3
	Female	28	46.7
	Total	60	100
Age range	<30	18	30.0
	31-40	25	41.7
	41+	17	28.3
	Total	60	100.0
Educational Level	Certificate	3	5.0
	Diploma	33	55.0
	Degree	21	35.0
	Other	3	5.0
	Total	60	100.0

### **B. Teachers' attitudes by gender**

Table 4.2 displays the data regarding the relationship between the general education teachers' attitudes by gender toward including students with SEN in to the mainstream setting. In order to test whether there is statistically significant difference in teachers' attitude toward inclusion of students with SEN due to gender difference independent sample t-test was computed. The result indicated that there was significant difference found between female and male teachers in relation to their attitudes towards inclusion ( $t=1.59$ ,  $p=0.024$ ). The female teachers are normally found more positive, and it could be their mother nature to lend the support for students with special needs education.

Table4.2 Teachers' attitude by gender

Variable	Group	N	Mean(M)	SD	t	sig
Sex of Respondents	Male	32	3.96	.557	1.59	.024
	Female	28	3.67	.818		

$p<0.05$

**C. Teachers' attitudes by age and educational level**

One way ANOVA was computed to examine teachers' attitude by their age and education level. The result indicated that there was no difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in terms of their ages ( $F=0.578$ ,  $p=0.564$ ), also of their highest education level ( $F=0.887$ ,  $p=0.453$ ). Table 4.3 shows the data of relationship of teachers' attitude by age and maximum education level.

Table4.3: teachers' attitude by age and educational level

Variable	Group	N	Mean(M)	SD	F	sig
Age of respondents	<30	18	3.68	.68	.578	.564
	31--40	25	3.90	.12		
	40+	17	3.87	.20		
Highest Educational Level	Certificate	3	4.38	.31	.887	.453
	Diploma	33	3.83	.74		
	Degree	21	3.71	.70		
	Others	3	4.00	.87		

$p<0.05$

#### ***D. Teaching experiences of participants***

The mean of the group indicates that teachers participated in the study have good teaching experiences ( $M=18.55$ ). Research out puts indicate that longer student teaching experiences, concurrent with coursework, led to better teaching and a more sustained commitment to the teaching profession. To determine teachers' attitude by their education experience One Way ANOVA was computed. The result showed that there was no significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in terms of their general teaching experience ( $F = 1.597, p= 1.03$ ). The finding of this study was contradictory with earlier studies. The majority of studies reviewed though reported a positive relationship between teacher attitudes and years of experience (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006). The sample size of the study might be the major factor of the contradiction.

Table4.4: teaching experience of participants

Characteristics	statistics	
	N	60
Teaching Experience	Mean	18.55
	Std. Deviation	9.162
	Range	35

#### ***E. Teachers' attitudes and personal experience***

To examine the extent of relationship existed between teachers' experiences with person with disabilities and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices independent t-test were computed. The result indicated that there was not statistically significant at  $p<0.05$  ( $t=2.592, p=.098$ ) level which is greater than 0.05. Table 4.1 above shows that teachers have generally positive attitudes towards inclusion. Teachers' personal experience with person with disabilities has no notable relationship with their attitudes toward inclusive practices. This indicates that even those who had no such personal experience demonstrated relatively positive attitudes. However, it seems there was slight difference in attitude between those teachers who taught student with disabilities and those who never taught student with disabilities at  $p<0.05$ , ( $t=2.974, p=0.054$ ). Theoretically, to some extent this result was expected because of the longer the teachers' experience, the more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Various researchers out puts indicate that teachers experience with students with disabilities is a significant factor in developing positive attitude toward inclusive education. One factor that appears to have a positive effect on teachers' attitudes is experience with inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden,

2000). In addition, Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) indicated that teachers who had been implementing inclusive programs for multiple years held significantly higher attitudes when compared to their counterparts.

Table4.5: teachers attitude due to contact to persons with disability

Variable	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t	sig
Having individual with disability as relative, friend or staff	Who have individual with disability as relative, friend or staff	15	4.216	.539		
	Who do not have individual with disability as relative, friend or staff	45	3.700	.704	2.592	.098
Teaching student with Disability	Those who used to teach	19	4.197	.501	2.947	.054
	Who never taught	41	3.658	.112		

$p \leq 0.05$

#### ***F. Teachers' attitudes and training on special needs education***

As can be seen from Table 4.6, out of the total participants, more reported as having no special needs and inclusive courses 33 (55%), and 28 (45%) respondents were trained teachers. Independent sample t-test was taken to find possible differences in attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN between teachers with and without training. The result indicated that there was statistically significant difference at  $p < 0.05$  ( $t = 3.099$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ) in attitudes towards inclusion of students with SEN of the trained and non-trained teachers. These findings are supported by various researchers such as (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Brownell & Pajares, 1999). Likewise, Brownell and Pajares (1999) found that the greater the number of special education courses taken by general education teachers, the more positive their perceptions of inclusive education.

Table 4.6: teachers training and attitude

Variable	Group	N	Mean(M)	SD	t	sig
Special needs and inclusive education courses received	Those who have the course	27	4.12	.50	3.099	0.010
	Those who didn't learned the course	33	3.59	.76		

p<0.05

### ***G. Teachers knowledge and attitude***

Table 4.7 shows that more teachers n=28 (46.7%) thought themselves as having medium level of knowledge and understanding about issues of disability. out of the total population n=17 (28.3%) rated as having low level of disability knowledge. Comparatively amount of the participants' possess high level of knowledge and understanding about disability issues. Furthermore, One-way ANOVA was used for this significance test among three groups: teachers who have low level of knowledge and understanding, medium level of knowledge and understanding, and high level of knowledge and understanding. The result showed that there was significant difference in inclusion attitude among them (F=8.575, P=0.001).

Further data analysis, on Post Hoc Comparisons using the Tamhane test showed that difference merely existing in each three group. In general it is concluded that teachers who have high awareness had more positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with SEN, and the same to those teachers who possess medium and low awareness about disabilities and issues of disability.



Table 4.7: Teachers' attitude and knowledge about disability

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	sig
Teachers level of knowledge and understanding about disability	having low level of knowledge about disability issues	17	3.314	.56007	8.575	0.001
	Having Medium level of knowledge about disability issues	28	3.960	.62515		
	having High level of knowledge about disability issues	15	4.166	.69041		

## 5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the regular primary education teachers' attitudes toward including students with SEN in to the mainstream setting. In addition, it tried to investigate the relationship between the attitude and demographic characteristics of teachers. Though recently, students with disabilities have been participated in classroom activities with their peers without disabilities. The success of including students with SEN into the general education might be determined by several factors. The attitude of the teacher is one of the most important factors that determine the success of inclusion of students with SEN. This study investigated teachers' attitudes toward including students with SEN and described the relation of teachers' attitude and demographic variables like gender, experience, educational level, and knowledge and understanding.

The finding of this study showed that general primary teachers have slightly positive attitude toward inclusion. The overall mean (M) of all respondents on all the

statements of the STATIC was 3.82 with 0.700 standard deviation (SD). The current study also identified the relationship of attitudes and various demographic characteristics. Moreover, the current study revealed significant difference among teachers' attitudes toward including students with SEN and some demographic variables such as gender, pre-service courses completed by teachers that focused on special needs and inclusive education, and experience, knowledge and understanding about education of student with SEN. But no evidence was found for difference on teachers' attitude and characteristics like age, education level, the numbers of years of teaching experience and experience with person with disability. This may indicate that the age, education level, years of teaching experience and experience with person with disability do not have much effect on the attitudes of those teachers toward inclusion.

This study also investigated that, pre-service training on special needs and inclusive education, experience on teaching students with SEN and knowledge and understanding about education of student with disability affect teachers' attitude in positive manner toward inclusion of students with SEN to the mainstream setting. Regarding this a research conducted by Edmunds (2000) found that the three highest ranked variables according to teachers for a successful inclusion program were in-service sessions regarding inclusion, experience in teaching students with disabilities, and university courses specific to inclusion.

To insure the inclusion of students with SEN in general, education teachers' attitude play vital role. This study suggests that preparing teachers in universities and colleges through provision of special needs and inclusive education courses may help teachers to develop positive attitude toward inclusive education. To this end, college and university education training programs must provide education that acquaints teachers with appropriate knowledge and skills which helps teachers to respond for various group of learners in general classroom. General primary teachers who participated in the study have slightly positive attitude toward inclusive education. Furthermore, pre-service training in special needs and inclusive education may help teachers to respond for specific needs of each student in general classroom; hence, it facilitates teacher student interaction and it help to develop positive interaction toward them. Finally, there were some contradictions found between the current study and earlier research findings. The contradiction of the result might indicate the need for further investigation in the area with large number of participants.

## **6. Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The role of the teacher on inclusion setting is vital; in this regard the study tried to over highlight general primary teachers' attitude toward inclusion practice, and how these attitude facilitate the inclusion of students with SEN in general education schools.

2. Teachers who had not got pre service training should get in-service training and professional development activities that directly deal with inclusion. Though it might enhances teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence in dealing and interacting with students with SEN.
3. Further research is also needed to better understand the attitude of teachers toward inclusion in Ethiopian context. While earlier studies conducted in Ethiopian context show that general classroom teachers have negative attitude toward inclusion, one reason for this contradiction might be; the current study conducted in three primary schools only which is small in sample size. Further studies with a larger sample size should be conducted to make the findings more feasible and generalizable. But, to solve the contradiction it needs further investigations.
4. Additional research might be needed to determine the factors that influence teachers' attitudes toward including students with SEN.

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#### **Authors' contributions**

Abdulfettah Muzemil wrote the introduction part, the review of related literature, methods and procedures.

Jaffer wrote the findings and discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

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