

Professional Development Needs of Inclusive Education Teachers in Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract — Inclusive education is intended to enhance the participation and learning of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes, developing settings in which diversity is respected and all learners are given an equal chance to thrive. Yet, the success of inclusive practice to a great extent relies on teachers' professional competences, not just their knowledge and skills but also their attitudes towards inclusion. In Bangkok international schools, whose faculty members mirror a diversity of different nationalities and cultures, difficulties persist in spite of the existence of welcoming legislative measures in Thailand to promote inclusive education.

The research was planned to evaluate teachers' professional competencies in inclusive education and determine the degree to which these competencies relate to their demographic attributes and the challenges they face in practice. With a quantitative-descriptive design, data were gathered from 67 teachers in three schools located in the Prawet District of Bangkok. A structured survey questionnaire was employed to measure competencies in three main areas: knowledge of principles and strategies of inclusive education, practical skills in implementing inclusive practices, and attitude towards students with special learning needs. Descriptive statistics tabulated levels of competency, and correlation analysis probed correlations between competencies and demographic variables, including nationality, years of teaching experience, and participation in inclusive education training.

The results revealed that though teachers had high positive attitudes towards inclusive education in general, moderate difficulties were noted in both knowledge and practice of inclusive teaching competencies. There were significant correlations between competencies and some of the demographic variables like nationality of teachers, teaching experience, and previous experience in inclusive education training were all linked to differences in their competency levels. These findings highlight the need for professional development activities that are not just culturally responsive but also applicable to the reality context in international school environments. Particularly, the study calls for closing the gap between inclusive attitudes and classroom practice through specialist training, leadership support, and policy reflecting the multicultural and internationalized environment of such schools. The paper concludes with recommendations for the creation of model training programs, school leadership practice development, and policy development informing to promote inclusive education in Bangkok international schools.

Keywords — *Inclusive Education, Teacher Competencies, Professional Development, International Schools, Multicultural Education, Bangkok, Thailand, Knowledge-Skills-Attitudes Framework, Educational Policy, Teacher Training*

I. Introduction

Inclusive education seeks to offer access to equal quality learning experiences to all students, independent of their abilities, background, or learning needs. It is widely supported by global frameworks like Sustainable Development Goal 4 that demands inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for everyone (UNESCO, 2020). In Thailand, the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and the Special Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008) provide the legal basis for inclusive education, guaranteeing the rights of learners with disabilities and special educational needs to access and benefit from education (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2019). Although there are these legislative provisions, their routine and effective application, especially in international schools, is a multifaceted problem.

Bangkok international schools function within unique schooling contexts, characterized by multicultural staff populations, students with varied backgrounds, and mixed curriculum standards drawn from various national systems. Although better resourced than public schools, these schools are faced with specific challenges in placing inclusive education practice within the dominant local legal and cultural contexts. Expatriate teachers, comprising a large number of the teaching population, might have limited or no familiarity with Thailand's inclusive education policy and support (Suwannathat et al., 2021). Additionally, although the majority of international schoolteachers hold general pedagogical certification, they have minimal professional development in inclusive education that is tailored to Thailand's educational environment, e.g., approaches like Universal Design for Learning (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2022).

Recent studies emphasize that teacher competencies—most notably in knowledge, skills, and attitude—are the primary indicators of effective inclusive education (Amr et al., 2021; Qi & Ha, 2022). Variations in teacher preparedness, however, continue to exist within Southeast Asian international schools. Such variations are shaped by disparate training backgrounds, cultural expectations, and degrees of institutional support (Tan & Lim, 2021). There is growing consensus on the merit of contextualized studies that assess teacher competencies in particular local school contexts in order to inform focused professional development and policy specification.

Rationale

This study answers a call for empirical evaluation of the professional requirements of educators providing inclusive education in Bangkok international schools. While there exists extensive inclusive education policy in Thailand, minimal research evidence has been created in relation to their everyday implementation in international schools, where pedagogical and systemic

barriers dominate. The research seeks to examine how teachers' professional development needs are shaped by demographic factors, teaching experience, and exposure to training in inclusive education and to determine the type of institution support needed to enhance inclusive practices in these multicultural school settings, with implications for school leaders, policymakers, and trainers in designing responsive and effective interventions.

Significance of the Study

The research outcomes are relevant to a range of stakeholders involved in the facilitation of inclusive education in multicultural schools. For educators, the study offers evidence-based information about the strengths and areas for improvement of their professional competencies to inform self-reflection and assist with the development of individual professional development trajectories responsive to inclusive practices. Additionally, the findings provide school managers with tangible advice, especially in guiding recruitment policy, in-service development programs, mentoring schemes, and performance appraisal processes in light of the demanding situations associated with transnational and multicultural classrooms in international schools. The research also produces empirical results that can help policy-makers to develop and design policy regarding teacher education and professional development that is more appropriately balanced between international best practice and national education priorities on the one hand, and national legislative constraints on the other. Additionally, the study adds to the small but increasing literature on inclusive education in international school settings, building a foundation for comparative research and providing insight into future research on professional development in transnational teacher communities.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to evaluate the professional development needs of inclusive education teachers in international schools in Bangkok, Thailand. Specifically, it examines the relationship between their professional competencies and demographic characteristics, identifies the challenges they face in inclusive education practice, and proposes a competency-based model to address their professional development needs.

Research Questions

1. What are the demographic characteristics of inclusive education teachers in international schools in Bangkok, Thailand, in terms of age, sex, nationality, civil status, educational attainment, field of specialization, income, years of teaching experience, and participation in in-service training?

2. To what extent do these teachers demonstrate professional competencies in the domains of:
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Skills
 - c. Attitudes
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic characteristics and their professional development needs?
4. What primary challenges do inclusive education teachers in Bangkok's international schools encounter in relation to knowledge, skills, and attitudes?
5. What competency model can be proposed to strengthen the professional development of inclusive education teachers in international schools in Bangkok?

Research Hypothesis

The study tested the following hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' demographic characteristics (age, sex, nationality, civil status, educational attainment, field of specialization, income, years of teaching experience, and participation in in-service training) and their knowledge of inclusive education.
2. H₂: There is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' demographic characteristics and their skills in implementing inclusive education practices.
3. H₃: There is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward inclusive education.
4. H₄: There is a statistically significant difference in professional development needs based on teachers' nationality.
5. H₅: Teachers who have attended in-service training on inclusive education demonstrate higher levels of professional competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) than those who have not.

Conceptual Framework

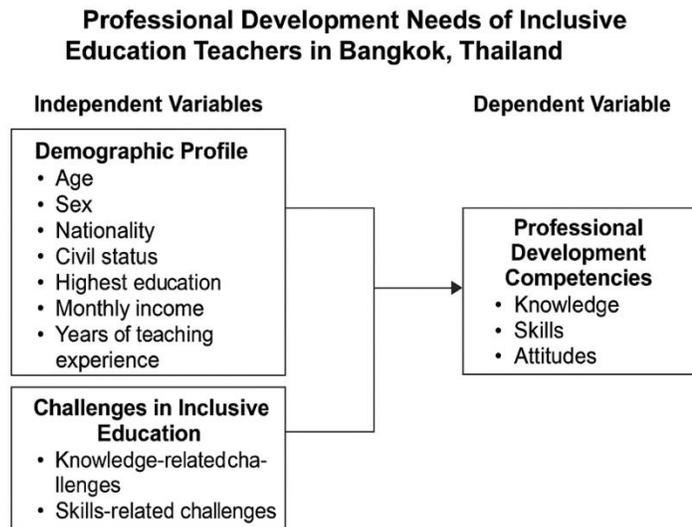


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the study's conceptual framework, which is Professional Development Needs of Inclusive Education Teachers in Bangkok, Thailand. The diagrammatic presentation displays the relationship between the independent and dependent variables that inform the study. To the left of the figure are the Independent Variables, and they are listed under two broad categories. The first one is the Demographic Profile of the teachers, and it includes variables like age, sex, nationality, civil status, highest educational level, monthly income, and teaching years. These demographic variables are assumed to have an effect on the professional needs of the teachers. The second one is Challenges in Inclusive Education, and this one is divided into knowledge challenges, skills challenges, and attitude challenges. These paradoxes mirror the predicaments of teachers in bringing inclusive practice to the classroom. To the right of the figure is the Dependent Variable, which are the Professional Development Competencies of teachers. This variable has three domains: attitudes, skills, and knowledge. The competencies are those areas in which teachers require targeted professional development to enhance their capacity to effectively deliver inclusive education. The arrows in the diagram show the direction of the relationship, demonstrating that the most likely impact on teachers' professional development competencies will be from the demographic profile and the issues faced by teachers. This model is the foundation for testing relations between these variables and for making evidence-based recommendations for the support of inclusive education practices in the international schools of Bangkok.

Literature Review

Inclusive education has become a worldwide agenda in the quest for equitable and quality education for all students, irrespective of their abilities, backgrounds, or contexts. This agenda is embedded in international agendas, for example, the United Nations' Sustainable Development

Goal 4, which promotes inclusive and equitable education (UNESCO, 2020). In Thailand, legislative efforts such as the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and the Special Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008) respectively enforce the practice of inclusive education and highlight disabled and special educational needs students' right to be included in schools without segregation (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2019). Although the policies offer an empowering framework, the implementation of inclusive education in daily practice, especially in international schools, relies heavily on teacher professional competence.

Studies continuously emphasize that teacher knowledge, skill, and attitude competencies are a determinant of the quality of inclusive education (Qi & Ha, 2022). Specific aspects of knowledge in inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction skills, positive attitudes toward students with special needs are determinants of instructional practice. Weaknesses in teacher training and professional development continue to undermine the full implementation of inclusive strategies. As Amr et al. (2021) point out, numerous educators cite a lack of preparation for inclusive education in initial teacher education, highlighting the necessity for continued, context-responsive professional development.

The setting of international schools provides additional complexity. Bangkok international schools, as multicultural schools in the sense of both teacher and pupil populations, present specific challenges to the reconciliation of inclusive practice with national law and international convention in education (Tan & Lim, 2021). Teachers as individuals, and especially expatriate teachers, will have had little exposure to the Thai educational policy context and the particular imperatives of inclusive education under national law (Suwannathat et al., 2021). Thus, there is an urgent need for professional development programs that are not only culturally responsive and contextually grounded but also deal with both the universal aspirations of inclusivity and the particularities of the Thai educational system.

Moreover, the literature explains that professional development needs of teachers are influenced by diverse demographic and experiential factors.

A study by Sharma et al. (2018) ascertained that factors including years of teaching experience, previous exposure to inclusive education training, and nationality of the teachers have a significant impact on the confidence and ability of teachers to engage in inclusive teaching. This would therefore imply that professional development sessions need to be designed with a consideration for the diverse backgrounds and previous experiences of teachers, especially for international schools where teachers hail from different education backgrounds. In addition to demographic considerations, teachers have practical issues to contend with that also impact their professional development needs. These include issues such as difficulty in applying inclusive pedagogical knowledge, poor resource and institutional support (Florian et al., 2019). Such challenges necessitate comprehensive professional development frameworks that promote not only individual capabilities but also school cultures and leadership practices that are friendly to inclusive education success. In total, the literature reiterates the importance of professional

development in driving inclusive education, especially in the multicultural diversity of Bangkok's international schools. The requirement for contextually designed, evidence-driven interventions that are sensitive to teachers' demographic characteristics, prior experiences, and contextual contingencies is extensively documented. This research helps address this gap through its investigation of professional development needs of inclusive education teachers in Bangkok and by proposing recommendations for competency-based standards to enhance effective inclusive practices.

II. Methodology

Research Design

This research used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design in investigating Bangkok, Thailand's international schools inclusive education teachers' professional development needs. The descriptive aspect of the design enabled the researcher to determine the degree to which teachers' professional competencies were developed in three main areas: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The correlational aspect, however, enabled the researcher to determine the correlation between these competencies and teachers' demographic factors. Data were gathered using a close-ended survey questionnaire with pre-selected items, allowing the generation of numerical data which were then put under statistical analysis in order to look for patterns, relationships, and implications pertaining to inclusive teaching practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Setting

The study took place in three international schools in the Prawet District of Bangkok. Charter International School, Kincaid International School, and Blessings International Academy were purposively selected to be part of the study because they have initiated inclusive education programs and have teachers of diverse national and cultural backgrounds. The schools are representative of the setting to explore teachers' professional development needs in inclusive education in multicultural and multiethnic contexts.

Participants of the Study

67 teachers took part in the study, out of a total of 120 possible teachers from the three chosen international schools. Simple random sampling was utilized to make sure that each teacher had an equal chance of being chosen, thus minimizing sampling bias and maximizing the representativeness of the sample. Inclusion criteria demanded that the participants have at least one year of teaching experience in an inclusive education setting and have completed at least one in-service training in special or inclusive education. The sample was heterogeneous with reference to nationality, age, level of education, teaching subject, and teaching experience.

Research Instrument

The main instrument for data gathering was a researcher-designed questionnaire, which was created after a thorough reading of the related literature and the existing competency frameworks for teachers of inclusive education. The instrument contained three broad categories: (1) demographic profile, (2) professional development competencies, and (3) challenges faced in inclusive education classrooms. These areas of competence in professional development were classified under knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and the items were scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low to 5 = Very High). A five-point scale identical to this was used to score perceived difficulty level for each area. The instrument was content-validated by four experts in inclusive education and educational research for relevance, clarity, and reliability.

Data Collection Process

Data collection was commenced only after seeking approval from the concerned institutional authorities. These included the management of the schools concerned and the research institution of the researcher. Informed consent was sought from all the participants, and the nature of the study was explained. Questionnaires were personally administered to the teachers with an assurance of anonymity, confidentiality, and liberty to withdraw from the study at any point in time without any penalty. These questionnaires were collected by the researcher, reviewed for completeness and consistency, and made ready for encoding of data and analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The research was done in line with the typical research ethics guidelines for human subjects' research. All the participants were properly informed regarding the objective of the research and signed an informed consent form prior to their participation. Confidentiality was ensured through anonymization of data, and the participation was purely voluntary. The researcher made sure that no harm would befall participants by virtue of their having taken part in the study, and all procedures were in line with the ethical standards of participating institutions.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive frequency statistics, percentage, and weighted mean were employed in presenting the respondents' demographic profile and in describing the respondents' professional development competencies and issues. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed in investigating relationships between demographic variables and competencies in order to permit multiple dependent variables to be considered simultaneously and to detect differences among profile categories. Statistical significance was set at the $p < 0.05$ level.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 67)

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	26–30 years	13	19.4
	31–40 years	29	43.3
	41–50 years	16	23.9
	51–60 years	6	9.0
	61 and above	3	4.5
Sex	Male	33	49.3
	Female	29	43.3
	Prefer not to disclose	5	7.5
Civil Status	Single	29	43.3
	Married	30	44.8
	Divorced	5	7.5
	Separated	1	1.5
	Others	2	3.0
Nationality	British	30	44.8
	American	6	8.9
	Indian	6	8.9
	Canadian	5	7.5
	Other (12 nationalities)	20	29.9
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor’s Degree	32	47.8
	With MA/MS units	10	14.9
	MA/MS Graduate	21	31.3
	Doctorate	4	6.0
Field of Specialization	Arts & Humanities	23	34.3
	Education	18	26.9
	Mathematics	8	11.9
	Computing	6	9.0
	Psychology	5	7.5
	Business	4	6.0
	Sports Science	3	4.5
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 1 year	4	6.0
	1–5 years	21	31.3
	6–10 years	14	20.9
	11–15 years	13	19.4
	More than 15 years	15	22.4
Inclusive Education Training	None	18	26.9
	1–5 trainings	31	46.3
	6–10 trainings	8	11.9
	More than 10 trainings	10	14.9

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The majority of the teachers (43.3%) were within the 31 to 40 age group, reflecting the predominance of millennial educators in the profession. This age group is often associated with high levels of technological literacy and

adaptability, qualities that are increasingly important in today’s dynamic classroom environments (Shaw & Newton, 2014). The gender distribution among respondents was relatively balanced, with 49.3% male and 43.3% female, which contrasts with global trends where teaching posts, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, are typically dominated by females (International Schools Services [ISS], 2021).

In terms of nationality, most respondents (44.8%) were British, followed by Americans and Indians, each comprising 8.9% of the sample. This distribution reflects the diverse and globalized staffing characteristic of international schools. While such diversity can enhance cultural exchange and enrich learning environments, it also underscores the importance of cultural responsiveness and alignment with local inclusion policies (Khamkhien, 2016). Regarding educational attainment, 47.8% of the teachers held a bachelor’s degree, while 52.2% had completed or were pursuing graduate-level studies. This high level of academic qualification aligns with international recruitment standards for teaching positions in international schools.

The majority of respondents specialized in the Arts and Humanities (34.3%) or Education (26.9%), suggesting strong foundations in humanistic and pedagogical disciplines. However, the notable absence of teachers from STEM fields highlights an area for potential development. Teaching experience was relatively varied, with 31.3% of teachers having between 1 and 5 years of experience and 22.4% having more than 15 years. This balance between early-career and experienced educators offers opportunities for peer mentoring and the formation of professional learning communities. Concerning inclusive education training, it is concerning that 26.9% of respondents reported no prior training in inclusive education, given the demands of inclusive classroom environments. Most teachers (46.3%) had participated in one to five training activities, while only 14.9% had attended more than ten, indicating a clear need for more sustained and targeted professional development initiatives.

Table 2. Extent of Professional Development Competencies of Teachers in Inclusive Education Settings (N = 67)

Domain	Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge	3.63	High
Skills	3.58	High
Attitudes	3.89	High
Overall Weighted Mean	3.70	High

Legend:

1.00–1.50 = Very Low | 1.51–2.50 = Low | 2.51–3.50 = Moderate | 3.51–4.50 = High | 4.51–5.00 = Very High

Table 1 shows the respondents’ demographic profile. Most of the teachers (43.3%) belonged to the age group of 31 to 40 years, a reflection of the prevalence of millennial teachers in the workforce. This is the age group most identified with high levels of technological know-how and flexibility, attributes that are fast becoming an imperative in the modern classroom

setting's rapid-fire pace (Shaw & Newton, 2014). The gender balance of the respondents was quite even, at 49.3% male and 43.3% female, which contrasts with international trends where teaching professions, and especially at the primary and secondary school levels, are often overwhelmingly female (International Schools Services [ISS], 2021).

In the context of nationality, most of the respondents (44.8%) were British, followed by Americans and Indians with 8.9% each. This diversity is reflected in the international schools' staffing profile which is cosmopolitan and globalized. While this diversity can allow for cultural exchange and diversity in school learning environments, it also underscores the importance of being culturally responsive to the local context and sensitive to local inclusion policies (Khamkhien, 2016). With regard to academic background, 47.8% had a bachelor's degree, and 52.2% had completed or were pursuing graduate studies. This high level of academic credentialing satisfies international hiring standards for faculty at international schools. Both Arts and Humanities (34.3%) and Education (26.9%) were the degrees of most of the respondents, indicating strong foundations in humanistic and pedagogical courses. Yet, the conspicuous lack of teachers from the STEM disciplines indicates a possible area of improvement.

Teaching experience was quite varied, with 31.3% ranging from 1 to 5 years and 22.4% in excess of 15 years. Such a balance between inexperienced and veteran teachers provides opportunities for peer mentoring and the development of professional learning communities. In terms of training in inclusive education, it is of concern that 26.9% of the sample indicated no previous training in inclusive education, considering the demands of inclusive classroom settings. The majority of the teachers (46.3%) had attended between one and five professional development activities, and just 14.9% had attended more than ten, showing the evident need for more comprehensive and focused professional development activities.

Table 3. Relationship Between Respondents' Profile and Their Professional Development Competencies (N = 67)

Profile Variable	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes	Interpretation
Age	0.184	0.143	0.196	Not Significant
Sex	0.322	0.388	0.401	Not Significant
Civil Status	0.174	0.190	0.215	Not Significant
Nationality	0.231	0.272	0.031	Significant in Attitudes
Years of Teaching Experience	0.162	0.042	0.158	Significant in Skills
Inclusive Education Training	0.062	0.019	0.025	Significant in Skills and Attitudes

Significance Level: $p < 0.05$

Analysis of variance, presented in Table 3, revealed that three demographic variables were statistically associated with some of the professional development competencies' dimensions at the 0.05 level. In the first place, teaching experience was significantly associated with the skills dimension ($p = 0.042$). This implies that the more years a teacher has of teaching experience, the more likely he or she will possess good practical skills in inclusive classroom management, likely a consequence of cumulative exposure to diverse student needs and differentiated instructional

strategies. This corroborates Florian and Linklater's (2010) argument that teaching experience enhances teachers' confidence and fluency in differentiated teaching. Second, participation in inclusive education training was also significantly correlated with skills ($p = 0.019$), as well as attitudes ($p = 0.025$). The greater number of in-service training sessions or seminars in inclusive education the teachers had attended, the higher levels of practical ability and more positive attitudes towards inclusive practices measured. The finding aligns with Forlin et al. (2009), who emphasized that not only does quality professional development increase teachers' capacity, but it also evokes higher levels of openness and receptivity towards inclusive education. Third, there was a significant association between nationality and teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education ($p = 0.031$). This shows that national policy and cultural tendencies towards inclusion are a predictor of teachers' attitudes. Teachers from countries with more legislative mandates or cultural heritage towards inclusive education are likely to have positive attitudes towards inclusion than teachers from countries where inclusion is not a priority (Sharma et al., 2012).

However, the variables of sex, civil status, and age were not significantly associated with any of the competency domains of professional development. This indicates that the demographic variables are not necessarily independently influential on the manner in which teachers express or believe in their competencies in the area of inclusive education in Bangkok international schools. Together, the findings underscore the central role of teaching experience and continuous professional growth in forging inclusive teaching practices and empathic positions. Second, they identify the role of cultural orientation, as articulated in teachers' home nations, in shaping assumptions and practices. These findings suggest the need for culturally sensitive and context-specific professional learning programs to advance inclusive education in global schools.

Table 4. Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Inclusive Education Settings (N = 67)

Domain	Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge	3.39	Moderate
Skills	3.45	Moderate
Attitudes	3.58	High
Overall Weighted Mean	3.47	Moderate

Legend:

1.00–1.50 = Very Low | 1.51–2.50 = Low | 2.51–3.50 = Moderate | 3.51–4.50 = High | 4.51–5.00 = Very High

Table 4 indicates that the difficulty level experienced by the teachers in teaching inclusive education was found to be moderate with the overall weighted mean of 3.47. Out of the three categories, the knowledge category had the lowest mean of 3.39, indicating that the teachers felt there were great difficulties to learn about inclusive education legislation, e.g., Thailand's National Education Act, and to apply frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The finding is consistent with what Klibthong and Agbenyega (2018) discovered, that international teachers

do not have contextual knowledge of national inclusive education policies and their implications for curriculum design.

Similarly, the skills area was rated moderately (Mean = 3.45), representing areas of challenge on the part of teachers such as differentiating instruction, developing individualized education plans (IEPs), and using assistive technologies. These areas align with those of Sharma and Das (2015), where despite acknowledging the significance of inclusive practices on the part of teachers, most of them do not have the day-to-day strategies and institutional support that can lead to successful implementation. The moderate rating of this area highlights the need for professional development programs emphasizing applied pedagogical strategies rather than theoretical foundations.

In contrast, the attitudes domain was more positively rated (Mean = 3.58), reflecting that although knowledge and skill gaps may exist, most teachers possess positive dispositions toward inclusive education. This finding is in accordance with Avramidis and Norwich's (2002) findings, which reported that teachers consider inclusive education as being a moral and ethical imperative. But, as cautioned by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), positive attitudes without related practice knowledge and skill cannot be taken to translate through to effective classroom practice. In conclusion, findings indicate that although teachers are open-minded and ready to accept inclusive education, they are held back by medium-level challenges in terms of practical knowledge and legal awareness. Medium-level barriers necessitate long-term capacity-building measures, stronger school-based support mechanisms, and longer-term professional development initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between inclusive ideals and everyday classroom practice.

Implications

The study explored the capacities and professional development requirements of inclusive education teachers in Bangkok's international schools in Thailand against the backdrop of the dynamics of relationships between these capacities, teachers' demographic profiles, and challenges faced by them in the implementation of inclusive practices. The findings provide insights into preparing teachers for multicultural and diverse classrooms with implications for instruction within the context of international schools. Overwhelmingly, the respondents were teachers in the age group of 31 to 40 years and nearly equally divided across gender, the majority of whom were British, American, and Indian nationals. These findings adequately represent the internationalized and multicultural nature of Bangkok's international school system. While diversity in educational background and nationality brings in richness of perspectives, it also highlights the need for context-oriented orientation. As Sharma et al. (2012) emphasized, teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds are likely to bring with them assumptions and expectations regarding inclusive education, thereby making localized orientation programs and continuous institutional support a necessity (Ulla, 2018).

For professional development competencies, overall satisfactory levels existed in the three areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with attitudes being rated the highest. This would mean that teachers are, generally, open to inclusive education and willing to change their pedagogy to meet diverse learners. However, the moderate levels reported in the areas of knowledge and skills correspond to the discrepancy between positive attitudes and classroom effectiveness. As Florian and Spratt (2013) point out, inclusive pedagogy would then have to go beyond values-based commitment to include the nitty-gritty skill required to differentiate teaching, apply assistive technology, and be aware of legislative imperatives. The results are in line with the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018), which includes recognition of diversity and redress of structural inequalities through informed and reflective pedagogy.

The study also revealed strong associations between certain demographic variables and professional development competencies. Past training in inclusive education and number of teaching years were both significantly associated with competencies in areas of skills and attitudes, affirming the importance of continuous professional development in teachers' building capacities (Forlin et al., 2009). Nationality was also a predictor of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, reflecting the influence of different national philosophies and traditions towards inclusion. These findings suggest that professional development programmes need to be not just skills-based but also culturally sensitive and responsive to international standards and national policy, e.g., Thailand's Special Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008). Moreover, although the reported difficulties of teachers tended to be modest overall, the greatest difficulties were noted in the knowledge base, namely, knowledge of local legislation and the application of specialist methods. Although teachers tended to report positive attitudes overall, they also reported deficits in legal awareness and classroom-level interventions critical to successful inclusion. This finding is consistent with the work of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who promoted the position that inclusive beliefs without attendant practical ability to implement them are insufficient. Closing this knowledge-practice gap will require sensitively designed, context-sensitive professional development programs that bring inclusive education from policy intention to lived classroom practice in the context of international schools.

IV. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the inclusive education teachers' skills and professional development needs in Bangkok, Thailand's international schools. Findings indicated that teachers reported generally positive attitudes towards inclusive education, reflecting openness to meeting the needs of students with different needs. There were gaps in knowledge and practical skills, however, reflecting intention-practice gaps in classrooms. Both inclusive education training and experience as a teacher were found to be significantly related to teachers' attitudes and skills, illustrating the value of on-going professional development. Nationality was significantly related to teachers' perceptions of inclusion, as well, illustrating the impact of professional culture on

beliefs. Teacher challenges reported were of moderate intensity overall, and most were associated with awareness of local inclusive education law and implementing practical strategies for diverse classrooms. Both sets of findings illustrate the need for professional development that is not only on-going but also context-responsive, equipping teachers with knowledge and skills to translate inclusive principles into effective practice.

V. Recommendations

Bangkok international schools are recommended to extend their in-service training programs to address the demonstrated gap in inclusive education knowledge and skills. Their professional development should be in areas of differentiated instruction, national inclusive education policy, the use of assistive technologies, and the development of individualized education plans. Each of these training sessions should be delivered within the context of long-term capacity-building programs bridging the gap between positive attitude and effective classroom practice. Training programs should be a combination of international best practice and national policy requirements so they are relevant and effective.

In addition, schools must create contextualized professional development plans that are tailored to the specific cultural and educational contexts of their own communities. The plans must increase cultural sensitivity, responsiveness to students' varying needs, and alignment of institutional goals. The creation of an explicit competency framework for inclusive education in international schools would allow for standards of teacher development and guide targeted support and intervention plans. The framework must include knowledge, skills, and attitudes and be sensitive to the varying backgrounds of teachers.

Moreover, schools have to establish peer mentorship networks and professional learning communities to foster reflective practice and collaborative learning. These setups would provide teachers with a platform to share, debate issues, and devise practical solutions for inclusive education. Finally, school leadership must demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion by integrating inclusive values into policy, curriculum, and school culture. Leaders must support intercultural communication and inclusive practice that promotes participation, equity, and collective responsibility in the school. In this way, international schools can effectively address the educational needs of all learners and offer a favorable, inclusive environment for learning and teaching.

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