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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Relationship Between Educators' Inclusive Education Attitudes and Subsequent Teaching Behaviours: A Quantitative Study in Vanuatu

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Abstract

Policy reform in many remote or developing nations focuses on quality education and inclusive education practices, yet many schools are ill-prepared to enact these reforms. In this study, we examined the attitudes and observed teaching behaviours of 27 educators towards inclusive education in Vanuatu schools. Attitudes were measured using the Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale (TAIS), and inclusive practices were observed using the Effective Teaching Practices Checklist (ETPC). Both instruments were administered before and after a professional learning (PL) workshop and time provided for the participants to implement their new learnings. Results indicated that participants' attitudes towards inclusive education were quite high on the TAIS scale and had a nonsignificant change; however, significant gains were observed across all five ETPC subscales ($p < .001$) of Classroom Organisation and Order, Behaviour Management, Lesson Planning, Lesson Delivery and Reinforcement, and in particular Adaptive Instruction. These findings suggest that although attitudinal shifts were modest, the targeted PL was associated with meaningful improvements in inclusive classroom practices. The results highlight the value of context-specific training to support inclusive education implementation in remote and developing contexts.

Keywords: attitude; inclusive education; teacher behaviour; Vanuatu

Inclusive education (IE) reform in Vanuatu depends on teachers' ability and willingness to translate positive attitudes into inclusive classroom practices. In this study, we investigate teachers' attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and intentions towards inclusion, alongside their teaching behaviours — the observable strategies and actions implemented in classrooms. Professional learning (PL) is therefore critical for influencing both attitudes and behaviours, equipping educators with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to effectively include students with disability (Sharma & Sokal, 2015).

Vanuatu is a culturally and linguistically diverse island nation with three national languages, English, French, and Bislama, and a bilingual education system where French and English are the main languages of instruction from primary to tertiary levels. Since ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, Vanuatu subsequently introduced a national IE policy. Despite this, many children with disability do not attend school, and those who attend often do not receive the support required for meaningful participation (UNICEF Pacific, 2021).

In Vanuatu, IE is defined as educating all students together in regular classrooms, with support tailored to their individual needs (Qu, 2022). Teachers are central to achieving this, as their attitudes

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influence expectations and classroom culture, while their practices determine whether inclusion occurs in daily teaching. However, research shows that positive attitudes do not always translate into inclusive behaviours (Forlin & Chambers, 2011), highlighting the need to investigate this correlation. This study addresses that gap by investigating how targeted PL can impact both attitudes and teaching practices, using a framework informed by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991, 2020) to explore the relationship between belief and action in the Vanuatu context.

Attitudinal Factors Affecting Inclusive Practices

According to MacMillan et al. (2014), attitude is one of the contributing factors to the successful implementation of inclusive practices. There are three components that impact attitude: cognitive (beliefs, thoughts, and attributes), affective (feelings, emotions), and behavioural (past behaviours and experiences of those behaviours; Scanlon et al., 2022). Attitudes are shaped by various external influences, including culture, family, and community (van Steen & Wilson, 2020), and can act as either facilitators or barriers to inclusion. A positive attitude has been found to encourage the inclusion of students with disability in mainstream classrooms as opposed to negative attitudes, which has been reported as a potential barrier towards IE (Barnová et al., 2022).

Global Patterns and Variability

Negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disability remain common worldwide (Cairns & McClatchey, 2013; Szumski et al., 2020), which helps explain why policies are often difficult to implement effectively at the classroom level. Although some studies have found predominantly positive attitudes (Freer, 2022; Reis et al., 2022), others report a more mixed picture, with neutrality or hesitancy towards inclusion of students with certain types of disabilities. For instance, Paseka and Schwab (2020) found more positive attitudes towards physical or learning disability, and more neutral or negative attitudes towards behavioural or mental disability. Such variability suggests that teacher attitudes are context-dependent and may be shaped by perceptions of manageability, resource needs, and previous experiences with different disability types.

Barriers Contributing to Negative or Neutral Attitudes

Concerns over workload, lack of training, and limited confidence in meeting diverse needs are recurring themes in the literature (Parey, 2023; Szumski et al., 2022). Resistance to change, uncertainty about classroom management, and fear of compromising academic standards also emerge as significant factors. Thaver and Lim (2014) stress the importance of ongoing support and collaboration, while Carew et al. (2019) highlight the need for targeted interventions to address these barriers. Additionally, Sharma et al. (2012) emphasise that inadequate teacher preparation often contributes to persistent attitudinal challenges.

Link Between Attitudes and Practice

Although some literature suggests that inclusion will only succeed when teacher attitudes are positive (Cambridge-Johnson et al., 2014; Ginja & Chen, 2023), this should be understood as a general tendency rather than an absolute rule. Teachers shape the classroom environment, set expectations, and create opportunities for students with disability. Positive attitudes can promote higher expectations and better social-emotional support, while negative attitudes can limit participation and achievement (Ginja & Chen, 2023). However, Saloviita (2020) notes that the relationship between attitudes and teaching practices is complex, influenced by teachers' perceptions of student differences and their willingness to respond effectively. In this study, teaching practice is understood as the observable strategies and actions teachers employ to facilitate student learning, including instructional approaches, classroom

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management, and adaptations to meet diverse needs. Within TPB (Ajzen, 1991, 2020), these practices represent the enacted behaviours that result from the interaction of three determinants: attitudes towards inclusive teaching (beliefs about its value and effectiveness), subjective norms (perceived social expectations from colleagues, leadership, and policy), and perceived control (teachers' confidence, skills, and access to resources). PL can influence all three determinants by fostering positive attitudes, reinforcing supportive norms, and strengthening perceived control, thereby increasing the likelihood that inclusive practices are consistently implemented in the classroom (Ajzen, 1991, 2020).

Empirical Evidence on the Attitude–Behaviour Relationship

Several studies (Clipa et al., 2020; Kuyini & Desai, 2007; Radojlovic et al., 2022; Yan & Sin, 2014) show a positive correlation between favourable attitudes and the implementation of inclusive practices. Nevertheless, other evidence (Lindner et al., 2023) indicates that teachers may report positive attitudes, and an intention to implement IE behaviours, without consistently applying inclusive methods in the classroom. The type of disability, availability of resources, and perceived feasibility of adaptation often mediate whether positive attitudes translate into practice. This aligns with findings by Avramidis and Norwich (2002), who argue that attitudes are shaped by complex interactions between teacher beliefs, contextual variables, and professional experience.

Professional Learning as a Change Mechanism

One consistent finding is that PL can positively influence teacher attitudes and practices (Chambers & Lavery, 2017). Effective PL in disability inclusion addresses both attitudinal and practical dimensions, combining conceptual understanding with hands-on strategies. In Vanuatu, where reports suggest prevailing negative perceptions towards disability (United Nations Population Fund, Women Enabled International, & Pacific Disability Forum, 2022), well-designed PL has the potential to shift attitudes and strengthen teacher confidence, thereby supporting the implementation — in other words, the behavioural components — of inclusion. International studies also confirm that PL programs tailored to local needs are more likely to result in sustained behavioural change and inclusive practices (Desimone & Garet, 2015; Sharma & Nuttal, 2016). Encouraged by international studies, we therefore sought to explore ways to change attitudes, guide confidence, and improve behaviours in the context of IE practices in Vanuatu.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What attitudes and teaching behaviours do Vanuatu teachers demonstrate towards IE?
2. How does participation in an IE PL workshop influence attitudes and teaching behaviours with respect to IE?

The PL was guided by the specific needs in Vanuatu identified in a series of prior exploratory interviews (Eldads Vira et al., 2025). The PL was structured in four broad themes: inclusive teaching practices internationally and in Vanuatu, IE policy from global to local, introduction to disability identification and teaching strategies, and the final theme addressed barriers and enablers to inclusion practices in Vanuatu. A three-phased approach to the study involved a survey, PL, and observations of practice. This combined approach allowed us to validate teachers' self-reported attitudes towards inclusive education by comparing them with their demonstrated behaviours.

Method

This quantitative study aimed to capture the attitudes and classroom behaviours of Vanuatu teachers towards children with disability and the subsequent impact on those attitudes and behaviours of a co-designed PL workshop specifically targeting the needs of Vanuatu. The approach used to capture

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this data included a pre- and post-PL validated survey coupled with observation of participants' pre- and post-PL to identify teaching practices towards IE before and after PL.

Participants

Twenty-seven participants took part in the study. Participants were drawn from English- and French-medium schools in urban, semi-urban, and nearby rural areas around Port Vila, all of which enrolled students with disability. Schools were selected from the Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) list of schools using a computer-generated random selection process. Schools were selected within the Vanuatu capital city of Port Vila to ensure diversity in language stream and location, while remaining logistically feasible for repeated observations and delivery of PL. The sample size reflects the total accessible population during the study period and, although relatively small, was sufficient for a paired pre–post design to detect changes of approximately medium magnitude at $\alpha = .05$ (Cohen, 1988). Ethics for the research was approved by the University of Newcastle before the research commenced, and MoET approval was also obtained. Schools within Port Vila were chosen to assist with the centralisation of activities and ease of administering the data collection phases.

Measures

Data were collected using two scales considered most suitable for addressing the key research questions: the Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale (TAIS; Boyle, 2014) and the Effective Teaching Practices Checklist (ETPC; Kuyini & Desai, 2007). These instruments capture both attitudinal and behavioural components of IE.

The TAIS comprises demographic questions about participants and two subscales: Global Attitude Toward Inclusion and Training and Self-Efficacy. In the present study, the Global Attitude Toward Inclusion subscale (five items; four reverse coded) demonstrated moderate internal consistency ($\alpha = .592$), whereas the Training and Self-Efficacy subscale (nine items; all positively worded) demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .815$). The TAIS includes 19 Likert-type items rated from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The scale examines teachers' feelings, attitudes, and concerns about IE, with consideration of their roles (e.g., principal, classroom teacher, inclusive teacher).

The ETPC assesses the behavioural component of teaching practices through classroom observation. In the present study, the Classroom and Behaviour Management subscale (23 items) demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .940$), and the Lesson Planning and Presentation subscale (22 items) also demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .944$). The ETPC consists of 55 items assessing three domains: classroom and behaviour management from an inclusive perspective, lesson planning and presentation, and adaptive instruction. Items are scored on a 3-point scale (1 = *fully in evidence*, 2 = *partly in evidence*, 3 = *not in evidence*).

These instruments were selected because they have previously been used in developing nations (e.g., TAIS: Boyle et al., 2024; ETPC: Kuyini & Desai, 2007), demonstrating their applicability in the Pacific context.

Procedures

The data were collected during the school term in 2022 and 2023 by a Vanuatu researcher. Participants were informed of the intentions and objectives of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their data, and their informed consent was obtained. Ethics approval was granted by the University of Newcastle.

The survey was translated to Bislama, Vanuatu's national language, and further concepts were verbally explained in Bislama to ensure the instrument was culturally appropriate and relevant.

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Translation process

The TAIS and ETPC were translated into Bislama by the lead researcher, a fluent bilingual speaker with expertise in IE. To ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence with the original English versions, a back-translation process was conducted by an independent bilingual educator not involved in the study. Because Bislama is derived from English, the translation recorded very few discrepancies, which were then discussed and resolved collaboratively to maintain alignment with the intent and meaning of the original instruments. This method aligns with recommended translation practices in cross-cultural research, including forward translation, back translation, and expert reconciliation to ensure face validity and equivalence (Beaton et al., 2000; Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011). Additionally, key concepts were verbally explained in Bislama to participants to ensure cultural appropriateness and clarity. Such verbal clarification is often necessary when translating instruments into Indigenous or less widely written languages to ensure conceptual understanding (Tsang et al., 2017).

The study consisted of three phases:

Phase 1. Teachers were given the TAIS to measure their attitude towards IE as a pre-test measure. Additionally, the researcher observed the same teachers using the ETPC to determine levels of teacher behaviour that reflected inclusive teaching practices prior to the PL workshop.

Phase 2. A PL workshop across a 2-week period, consisting of around 40 hours duration, was delivered to teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of IE and capacity to respond to the education of students with disability. The PL was collaboratively delivered by three Australian academics with expertise in IE. These academics worked alongside a senior MoET staff member (also a PhD researcher) to co-design and facilitate the workshop from a qualitative teacher interview that was part of a wider research project. After the PL, teachers were given 4 months to practise the skills acquired in the workshop. These skills included demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of disability, being able to provide individualised activities to target the needs of students with disability in the class, and being able to ensure that students with disability participate in classroom activities with teacher and student support.

Phase 3. After the PL, a post-test data collection using the attitude scale (TAIS) was conducted to measure the attitude of the same participants from Phase 1. After a period of 4 months, participants were then observed using the ETPC tool by the researcher, to establish whether their teaching practice regarding IE had shifted.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 30 program was used to evaluate scores from the TAIS and the ETPC. SPSS is widely used for educational and psychological data analysis due to its comprehensive functionality and accessibility (Field, 2018). Data analysis was aligned with the two research questions. Research Question 1 was addressed through the reporting of descriptive statistics of TAIS and ETPC scores that established baseline levels of teacher attitude and teaching behaviour with respect to IE. Research Question 2 (possible changes in attitudes and teaching behaviour) was analysed through paired samples *t* tests on TAIS and ETPC scores pre- and post-PL and the practice time period. The reliability of each subscale was measured by calculating Cronbach's alpha prior to conducting the main analyses, with values reported in the Results. Cronbach's alpha is a widely accepted measure of internal consistency, indicating the degree to which items on a scale measure the same underlying construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha if the item was deleted were also computed to evaluate individual item performance. Quantitative data from all subscales were synthesised to identify overall patterns.

Participant Characteristics

Twenty-seven participants were included in the final analysis after excluding principals (whose teaching behaviours were not observed). Table 1 presents a summary of participant characteristics, with category

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Table 1. Summary of Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Category	%
Gender	Male	11.1
	Female	88.9
Role in school	Classroom teacher (early childhood centre)	18.5
	Classroom teacher primary	63.0
	Classroom teacher secondary	7.4
	Inclusive teacher	11.1
Length of teaching service	New (under 1 year)	7.4
	1–5 years	29.6
	6–10 years	25.9
	11–15 years	3.7
	16–20 years	0.0
	21–30 years	29.6
	Over 30 years	3.8
Age range	18–25 years	11.1
	26–35 years	33.3
	36–44 years	29.6
	45–55 years	26.0
Country of teacher training qualification	Not completed/Not undertaken	11.1
	Other	3.7
	Fiji	3.7
	Vanuatu	81.5
Highest qualification	No qualification	14.8
	Certificate	33.3
	Diploma	48.1
	Degree	3.8
Studied inclusive education	Yes	29.6
	No	70.4

Note. $n = 27$. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place and may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.

percentages summing to 100% within each characteristic. Most participants were female (88.9%), worked in primary schools (63.0%), and trained in Vanuatu (81.5%). Nearly half held a diploma (48.1%), and 70.4% had not studied special/inclusive education beyond their initial qualification.

Measures, Scoring, and Score Meaning

The TAIS (Boyle, 2014) used a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). Two subscales were analysed: Global Attitude Toward Inclusion (Part A; several items reverse scored) and Training and Self-Efficacy (Part B). Higher means indicate more positive attitudes or greater

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Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for All Subscales

Subscale	Time	*M*	*SD*
TAIS – Global Attitude Toward Inclusion	Pre	3.674	0.689
	Post	3.719	0.771
TAIS – Training & Self-Efficacy	Pre	4.696	0.874
	Post	4.930	0.836
ETPC – Classroom Organisation & Order	Pre	2.301	0.374
	Post	2.926	0.220
ETPC – Behaviour Management	Pre	2.131	0.588
	Post	2.968	0.113
ETPC – Lesson Planning & Preparation	Pre	2.185	0.479
	Post	2.879	0.157
ETPC – Lesson Delivery & Reinforcement	Pre	2.182	0.503
	Post	2.963	0.111
ETPC – Adaptive Instruction	Pre	1.407	0.444
	Post	2.593	0.370

Note. $n = 27$. TAIS = Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale; ETPC = Effective Teaching Practices Checklist.

perceived capability to implement inclusive practices. Subscale scores were computed as the mean of their items, and these mean subscale scores were used for *t* tests.

The ETPC (Kuyini & Desai, 2007) used a 3-point observational scale (1 = *not evident*, 2 = *partly evident*, 3 = *fully evident*). To avoid inflated reliability from very long scales, the ETPC was analysed as five subscales: Classroom Organisation and Order, Behaviour Management, Lesson Planning and Preparation, Lesson Delivery and Reinforcement, and Adaptive Instruction. Higher means indicate that practices were more fully evident.

Internal consistency for the TAIS was $\alpha = .592$ for Global Attitude Toward Inclusion (moderate) and $\alpha = .815$ for Training and Self-Efficacy (good). For ETPC subscales, α values ranged from .696 (moderate) to .947 (excellent). The higher α values for some ETPC subscales likely reflect the relatively large number of items in these subscales, as longer scales tend to produce inflated alpha coefficients even when some items are redundant (Streiner, 2003).

Descriptive Statistics

Post-intervention means were higher than pre-intervention means for all subscales (see Table 2). For the TAIS (6-point scale), pre-intervention means ranging from 3.67 to 4.70 indicate that participants generally leaned towards agreement with positive IE statements even before the PL. For the ETPC (3-point scale), post-intervention means moved closer to 'fully evident' following the PL.

Paired Samples t Tests

Attitudes towards inclusion (TAIS)

Table 3 indicates that Global Attitude Toward Inclusion showed no significant change, $t(26) = -0.29$, $p = .777$, $d = -0.06$ (negligible). Scores remained in the *somewhat agree* to *agree* range at both time points, indicating already positive attitudes. Training and Self-Efficacy increased slightly but not significantly, $t(26) = -1.51$, $p = .143$, $d = -0.29$ (small). Although the change was in the desired direction, the effect size suggests only a modest shift.

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Table 3. Paired Samples *t* Tests for Teacher Attitudes to Inclusion Scale (TAIS)

Subscale	*M* diff (Pre–Post)	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	Cohen's *d*
Global Attitude Toward Inclusion	−0.044	−0.286	26	.777	[−0.364, 0.275]	−0.06
Training & Self-Efficacy	−0.235	−1.509	26	.143	[−0.554, 0.085]	−0.29

Note. $n = 27$.

Table 4. Paired Samples *t* Tests for Effective Teaching Practices Checklist (ETPC)

Subscale	*M* diff (Pre–Post)	*t*	*df*	*p*	95% CI	Cohen's *d*
Classroom Organisation & Order	−0.625	−7.185	26	<.001	[−0.804, −0.446]	−1.38
Behaviour Management	−0.837	−7.303	26	<.001	[−1.073, −0.601]	−1.41
Lesson Planning & Preparation	−0.694	−7.322	26	<.001	[−0.888, −0.499]	−1.41
Lesson Delivery & Reinforcement	−0.781	−7.331	26	<.001	[−1.000, −0.562]	−1.41
Adaptive Instruction	−1.185	−10.997	26	<.001	[−1.407, −0.964]	−2.12

Note. $n = 27$.

This lack of significant change may reflect a ceiling effect, as participants' pre-intervention scores were already high, leaving little room for measurable improvement (Streiner & Norman, 2008). In educational terms, a shift of less than a quarter point on a 6-point scale is unlikely to translate into noticeable behavioural change (Sullivan & Feinn, 2012). In the Vanuatu context, this suggests that attitudinal change was not the primary barrier to inclusion; rather, teachers may have required practical strategies, resources, and systemic support to convert already positive beliefs into consistent inclusive practices.

Inclusive teaching practices (ETPC)

All five ETPC subscales improved significantly ($p < .001$), with large to very large effect sizes, indicating that following the PL, teachers' classroom organisation, behaviour management, lesson planning, lesson delivery, and adaptive instruction were more fully evident.

Results Summary by Subscale

Classroom Organisation and Order

Scores increased significantly after the PL workshop, $t(26) = -7.19$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.38$. According to Cohen's conventions (values above 0.80 indicating a large effect), this result reflects a large positive effect, suggesting that teachers created more structured, accessible classrooms that supported movement, visibility, and participation for students with disability.

Behaviour Management

Behaviour Management scores improved significantly, $t(26) = -7.30$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.41$. This large effect reflects more proactive engagement strategies, clearer expectations, and equitable attention to all students, indicating a meaningful shift in classroom climate.

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Lesson Planning and Preparation

Lesson Planning and Preparation scores improved significantly, $t(26) = -7.32$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.41$. Teachers incorporated clearer lesson objectives, differentiated activities, and stronger alignment with diverse student needs. These planning enhancements likely contributed to the observed gains in Lesson Delivery and Adaptive Instruction.

Lesson Delivery and Reinforcement

Lesson Delivery scores increased significantly, $t(26) = -7.33$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.41$. Teachers provided more explicit instructions, varied delivery methods, and consistent reinforcement. These delivery improvements suggest that planning strategies were effectively translated into classroom practice.

Adaptive Instruction

Adaptive Instruction showed the largest improvement, $t(26) = -10.99$, $p < .001$, $d = -2.12$, indicating a very large effect. Teachers more frequently modified tasks, provided tailored support, and used adaptive strategies to meet individual needs. Taken together, these results suggest that the PL workshop had its greatest impact on differentiated instruction, the most direct indicator of inclusive practice.

Overall, all five ETPC subscales improved significantly following the PL, with especially strong gains in Adaptive Instruction. This pattern suggests that targeted, context-specific training can produce broad improvements in classroom inclusivity, with the strongest effects in areas requiring active adaptation to student needs.

Discussion

Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education

Teachers began with moderately positive attitudes towards inclusion, which shifted slightly in a positive direction after the PL, but not significantly. This aligns with studies reporting supportive views of inclusion (San Martín et al., 2021) and contrasts with research showing less favourable attitudes (Aldosari, 2022). Some participants endorsed inclusion in principle but believed certain students might be better served in separate settings, reflecting a common tension between philosophical commitment and perceived practical constraints (Schwab et al., 2022).

TPB suggests that attitudes alone do not drive change; perceived control and social norms also influence behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Hagger, 2019). Limited training, resources, and institutional support may have constrained teachers' perceived control, limiting measurable attitudinal change.

Unexpectedly, older teachers expressed more positive attitudes than younger colleagues, differing from studies reporting the opposite (Vaz et al., 2015). In Vanuatu, this may reflect stronger community ties, experience with diverse learners, and greater personal contact with disability (Alnahdi, 2019; Hutzler et al., 2019). However, some research links greater experience to a reluctance to change practice (Boyle et al., 2013), which may explain why not all experienced teachers showed equal behavioural gains.

Unlike attitudes, inclusive practices improved significantly across all five ETPC subscales ($p < .001$), with large to very large effect sizes ($d = 1.38$–2.12). The greatest gains occurred in Adaptive Instruction, with notable improvements in Classroom Organisation and Order, Behaviour Management, Lesson Planning and Preparation, and Lesson Delivery and Reinforcement. Before the PL, adaptation of lessons and assessments was rare; afterwards, teachers demonstrated clearer planning, varied delivery, proactive management, and more targeted adaptations.

These improvements reflect TPB principles: increasing perceived behavioural control through skills-based, culturally relevant PL leads to greater enactment of inclusive practices (Ajzen, 1991; Yan & Sin, 2014). Gains in individualised learning were modest, consistent with challenges noted even in

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well-resourced contexts (Mitchell, 2015; Strogilos & Tragoulia, 2013). Sustained support, resources, and accountability are often required for such strategies to become embedded.

Attitudes and behaviours did not fully align: substantial practice gains occurred despite only modest attitudinal movement. Consistent with TPB, meaningful change depends on the interaction of intention, perceived control, and social norms. The findings highlight the value of sustained, locally grounded PL that builds teachers' practical capability to act on inclusive intentions within real-world constraints.

Conclusion

The key principles of TPB were evident in the results of this study. Our findings showed that teachers' perceived control increases through training and confidence-building, and intentions are more likely to be realised in practice (Ajzen, 1991; Yan & Sin, 2014). In this study, we measured the attitudes of 27 Vanuatu school staff towards IE and evaluated the effectiveness of a co-designed IE workshop and post-PL implementation time. Teachers' attitudes were moderately positive before the PL, with no statistically significant post-intervention change. However, the findings demonstrate strengthened teacher skills in the areas of classroom organisation and order, behaviour management, lesson planning and preparation, and lesson delivery and reinforcement. In particular, adaptive instruction — the most direct indicator of inclusive practice — led to positive behavioural shifts and the transfer of inclusive strategies into classroom practice by our participants.

The study confirms the important relationship between teacher attitudes and inclusive practices. It underscores the importance of PL that is localised, culturally responsive, and context-specific. Effective PL must address the actual needs of teachers, reflect local realities, and align with the values of the local (Vanuatu) education system. Such an approach was deemed effective, as it resulted in significant improvements in inclusive practices and more adaptive classroom strategies, and contributed to reducing educational inequality. To embed IE in daily teaching practice, sustained and scalable PL must remain a national priority in Vanuatu.

Limitations and Future Research

As the study focused only on teachers in one location in Vanuatu, with more female than male participants, future research is recommended to include teachers from other parts of Vanuatu and to ensure a more balanced sample of male and female participants. Additionally, although the measures used in the current study were psychometrically sound, the results did not provide information on why teachers hold the attitudes they do. This highlights the need for more in-depth analyses of teachers' perceptions in future research.

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