Inclusive Education in Thailand: Legal Framework, Implementation, and Challenges in General Education

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ABSTRACT:

The article focuses on implementing inclusive education in Thai mainstream education, highlighting the United Nations (UN) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) guidelines on the right to education for children with special needs and referencing the Thai legislative framework. Thailand has a legal framework in place to support inclusive education; however, in practice, significant barriers still exist to its implementation. The aim of this research is to explore the practice of inclusive education in Thai schools and identify the main challenges faced by teachers and educational institutions. The study uses theoretical methods, including literature and document analysis, as well as empirical methods such as a questionnaire survey of teachers and students. The results reveal that teachers with less experience are more likely to support inclusive education, with the majority of teachers citing a lack of resources and professional development. The main findings highlight the need to enhance teachers' professional development, increase public awareness, and improve access to resources to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students, thereby contributing to the development of an inclusive society. The development and implementation of effective policies are crucial in preventing discrimination and fostering positive attitudes towards students with special needs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Inclusive Class, Teacher Professional Development, Students with Special Needs.

INTRODUCTION

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child gives all children, including those with special needs, the right to education (United Nations, 1989). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on the Education of All Children with Special Needs was launched at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994, calling for inclusive education to be the norm. The document argued that mainstream schools with inclusive education are the most effective learning option for combating discriminatory attitudes, building supportive communities, creating inclusive societies, and achieving education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

The inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream classrooms is now widely accepted as a common practice, but debate continues on how best to implement this approach. Children with developmental disabilities are part of inclusive education. According to the UNESCO report "Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education", the goal of education for the future is equal opportunities for all, instilling responsibility towards all communities and their values (UNESCO, 2021). Research highlights the need for effective policies that support inclusive education not only in law but also in practice, especially in countries where the implementation of inclusive education is still in its infancy (Sijuola & Davidova, 2022).

The importance of inclusive education is growing as societies worldwide increasingly recognize the need to ensure access to education for all students, regardless of their individual needs. However, implementing inclusive education faces various challenges in many countries, including Thailand. While Thailand has adopted legal mandates to ensure inclusive education for students with special needs, the actual transition from the adoption of policies and laws to their implementation in schools is a complex process. This highlights the need to investigate the process of implementing inclusive education, in order to understand the primary obstacles and potential ways to overcome them.

Research on the implementation of inclusive education in Thailand reveals several challenges for both school administrators and teachers. For example, Vorapanya and Dunlap (2012) found that teachers and administrators lack the necessary skills and knowledge about inclusive practices, which hinders the successful integration of students with special needs. Sharma and Sokal (2013) suggest, on the other hand, that negative attitudes and limited resources in schools hinder the inclusion process. The

lack of professional development programs and resources for teachers constitutes a significant barrier to the successful implementation of inclusive education (Sijuola & Davidova, 2022; Sharma et al., 2008; Vibulpatanavong, 2018). These challenges are compounded by the fact that educational leaders have limited knowledge about inclusive education, and there is a need to improve collaboration between educational institutions and government agencies to make inclusion the norm (The Office of Education, Religion and Cultural Development Regional 11th, 2001; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2012; Sijuola & Davidova, 2022). Thus, challenges need to be addressed at many levels for inclusive education to become the norm in Thailand. In this context, a collaboration among policymakers, educational institutions, and the community is essential to provide the necessary resources and implement professional development programs for teachers.

Overall, Thai society is moving towards an inclusive education system. The Ministry of Education's statement and action plan prioritize inclusive education as the most effective means of eliminating discriminatory attitudes and ensuring education for all. The Ministry of Education of Thailand's Sustainable Development Goal 2030 aims for schools and society to provide inclusive and high-quality education for all, promoting lifelong learning (Office of the Education Commission, 2018).

The research aim is to explore the implementation of inclusive education in Thai general education by analyzing the perspectives and experiences of teachers and students working with students with special needs.

Theoretical and empirical methods have been used to conduct the study. The theoretical method involves literature and document research and analysis, while the empirical method entails administering questionnaires to teachers and students, as well as data processing, to gather information on current practices and challenges in implementing inclusive education in Thailand.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Guidelines for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is an approach in which students with different developmental and learning disabilities are educated alongside students without special needs, rather than in separate classes or schools (Haug, 2017). This approach aims to ensure access and quality of education for all children, regardless of their individual needs. Inclusive education can also be viewed as a process of identifying the most effective ways to respond to diversity. Important aspects of inclusive education are equity (to promote

equal opportunities for all students), quality (to enable students to reach their potential and have positive learning experiences), and justice (to redress existing inequalities and promote social justice in education) (Mehta & Panju, 2018; Parveen & Qounsar, 2018).

The term "inclusive education" is used to refer to the inclusion of individuals with physical and mental disabilities, sensory or motor impairments, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, language impairments, behavioral disorders, and autism spectrum disorders (UNESCO, 2020; Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Inclusion is seen as adapting the education system, structuring schools and classrooms to be accessible not only to students with developmental disabilities but also to students who experience exclusion due to ethnicity, social background, gender, cultural and religious differences (UNESCO, 2020; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Sharma et al., 2008).

One of the frequently cited benefits of inclusive education is that it may help culturally, linguistically, and physically diverse students to develop their educational needs more effectively, unlike special schools (Florian & Beaton, 2018). However, recent research emphasizes that these outcomes are not guaranteed and depend on several factors, including teacher competence, resources, and systemic support (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020; Hornby, 2021). Inclusive education is also suggested to promote social integration for students with special needs and their families (Ainscow, 2020). Inclusion in the mainstream classroom can help students with special needs to integrate more easily into society in the future. Inclusion promotes the development of essential socialization skills and independence for these students (Forlin, 2015; Hornby, 2011). Yet evidence indicates that successful integration is contingent upon careful planning, supportive policies, and inclusive classroom practices (Kauffman et al., 2022; Hornby & Kauffman, 2023). While mainstream classrooms can provide opportunities for socialization and development of independence, the effectiveness of these opportunities varies depending on educational context and the nature of students' disabilities (Hornby & Kauffman, 2024; Hornby & Kauffman, 2025). Therefore, inclusive education has potential benefits, but they should be viewed as contingent outcomes rather than automatic consequences of placing students together.

The primary objective of inclusive education is to prevent exclusion and discrimination that all students may encounter in educational settings due to prejudice and negative attitudes about their differences and characteristics (Ainscow, 2020).

Teachers face a variety of challenges when starting to work in an inclusive classroom. The teacher needs to be able to control the flow of the lesson so that it is effective for students with or without special needs. This requires not only more knowledge about working in an inclusive classroom but also the ability to understand and respond to the diverse needs of students to ensure a positive learning environment (Florian & Beaton, 2018; Sharma et al., 2008). The teacher needs to be able to see early on that disagreement or discrimination is not occurring in the inclusive classroom and to address it as effectively and quickly as possible. If left unchecked, this can have negative consequences for students on both sides, making successful inclusion impossible (Bos & Vaughn, 2002; Hornby, 2011).

The primary responsibility of a teacher in an inclusive classroom is to foster unity among students. The teacher must teach students to respect one another despite their differences (Ainscow, 2020). In schools where successful inclusive education is implemented, unity can be observed in classrooms. Students help and learn from one another, which in turn creates a positive atmosphere among students (Florian, 2019). Respect between students is evident in classrooms, despite their differences (Baker et al., 1994). The successful implementation of inclusive education depends on teachers' competence, positive attitudes, confidence, and willingness to adapt to learners' learning needs (Kaushik, 2019; Rajendran et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2008).

Teachers need a deeper understanding of the nature of inclusive education and implementation strategies. They also need to develop the skills to identify the individual learning needs of each learner and adapt the learning process accordingly. This includes the ability to employ a range of teaching methods to address these needs. Additionally, the ability to establish and maintain effective communication with learners and motivate them to achieve their learning goals is also crucial. Teachers need to develop and implement a system that supports all learners to ensure their success (Chakravartya & Shinde, 2023).

Inclusive classrooms can enable students with special needs to feel part of a broader community, which is a crucial motivating factor for them to integrate. This sense of belonging may boost their self-confidence and motivation to go the extra mile to keep up with their peers, thus contributing to both learning outcomes and personal development (Schwab, 2018; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Over the past decade, knowledge of strategies that can positively impact the performance of students with academic underachievement or challenging behav-

iors has increased significantly (Mitchell, 2020). This research contributes to the development of effective personalized education programs that promote the successful inclusion and education of students (Florian, 2019).

Several studies have explored the factors that contribute to inclusion. For example, scholars have suggested that teachers' positive attitudes, knowledge, and understanding of inclusion are foundational to effective inclusive school practices (Pit-ten Cate & Krischler, 2018; Hay et al., 2001). Teacher preparation needs to place greater emphasis on these areas to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education (Mitchell, 2020).

Inclusive education is a vital mechanism that ensures equitable access to quality education for all learners, regardless of their individual needs and differences. To ensure its successful implementation, teachers need to possess a wide range of knowledge and be able to adapt the learning process to each student, while fostering a positive and supportive learning environment. While inclusive education offers significant potential benefits, these outcomes are contingent upon systemic support, effective teacher practices, and thoughtful classroom implementation.

Inclusive Education in Thailand

In Thailand, education is viewed as a crucial factor in human resource development and a key mechanism for advancing the Thai economy and society. Education in Thailand has a long history, reflecting the evolution of teaching and learning in the country, and has undergone several important reforms to ensure better access to education. The Thai Ministry of Education has made education compulsory from grades 1 to 9. Free tuition is also offered to students in grades 10 to 12 (The Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2019).

The National Education Law, adopted in 1999, mandates that schools in the public education system be transformed into inclusive schools and that all students be admitted to their classes without discrimination (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999). Schools must adapt to include students with special needs. The law states that persons with physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social, communication, and learning disabilities; physically handicapped or disabled persons; those who are unable to support themselves; and the poor or disadvantaged have the right and opportunity to receive basic education. These individuals have the right to access adapted facilities, media, services, and other educational resources, as outlined in the Ministerial Regulations (Office of the Education Council, 2004).

With the adoption of the law, confusion arose among educators regarding the provision of teaching in inclusive schools. In response, the Ministry of Education created an inclusion model in 2000, providing educators with greater access to resources and additional education.

In 2002, the Thai Government approved the Compulsory Education Act. The law requires all children aged 7 to 16 to be enrolled in school. Article 12 of the Act states that the Ministry of Education, local authorities, and educational institutions shall organize education for students with physical, emotional, intellectual, social, communication, and learning disabilities, as well as for students without caregivers and disadvantaged students (Office of the Education Council, 2002).

The Disabled Persons Act, approved in 2008, states that persons with disabilities have the right to an education that is tailored to their physical and mental needs, as outlined in the national education plan. Education should be provided in specific educational institutions, general educational institutions, and special educational institutions. The law ensures the right to education for persons with disabilities, but the person can choose the institution in which to receive it (Government of Thailand, 2008).

Since the new laws were passed, schools have started to include students with special needs to fulfill the national mandate and obtain the associated additional funding from the government. Many schools in rural areas are underfunded, so providing financial support for students with special needs has become a new way to secure additional school funding (The Office of Evaluation Regional 4th, 2005).

Many improvements are needed in inclusive education in Thailand, including both at the administrative level and in teacher education. A study conducted by the Office of Educational Development in Thailand found that school management lacked knowledge of inclusive practices and that significant changes needed to be made to reduce class sizes and strengthen teacher support (Office of the Education Council, 2009; Moonsarn et al., 2022; Umpanroung, 2004). In a study of 140 public schools, a lack of funding to properly implement inclusive education was identified as a key barrier (UNESCO, 2021). A study of 60 schools implementing inclusive education found that teachers lacked knowledge of how to work with students with different types of disabilities and lacked the skills to prepare lessons in an inclusive classroom. Teachers' primary challenge is adapting the curriculum and lesson plans to accommodate students with special needs (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2012). A study by

the Office of the Education Council (2009) also found that teachers in schools with inclusive classrooms do not have sufficient prior knowledge. Most of these teachers had never been trained in special education.

The Thai Ministry of Education has implemented several projects to provide professional development for teachers in special and inclusive education:

- opportunities for teachers to undertake professional development in special education and to become certified;
- the opportunity to study for a Master's degree in special education and receive a scholarship (Umpanroung, 2004);
- the introduction of a compulsory course of study in teacher education programs;
- the provision of funding for academics to work with teachers in schools to promote the development of teachers' knowledge and skills in special and inclusive education (Office of Education, 2006).

A specific budget funding program for in-service training in special education also exists; however, its implementation is not adequately monitored.

Thai education aims to provide education for all, including students with special needs. These students should receive all necessary support, including medical, academic, and media support etc. Schools need to revise their curricula, teaching methods, and learning approaches (Office of the Education Council, 2017).

The Office of Special Education Administration of Thailand oversees special education. The administration recognizes nine types of developmental disabilities: (a) hearing impairments, (b) mental disabilities, (c) visual impairments, (d) physical or health-related disabilities, (e) learning disabilities, (f) autism, (g) emotional and behavioral disabilities, (h) speech and language impairments, and (i) multiple disabilities (The Office of Education, 2018).

Currently, there are three types of schools in Thailand where students with developmental disabilities can receive education. Special schools are those specifically for students with mental, physical, visual, or hearing impairments. Similar to special schools, there are 76 special centers in Thailand - one in each province - that provide services in designated locations, such as inclusive schools, hospitals, and homes. These centers conduct research and develop curricula for short-term learning for students with disabilities. They also organize various events, including seminars, for parents and staff from different organizations. Inclusive schools play a key role in the ed-

ucation of children with developmental disabilities (Office of the Educational Council, 2003). Inclusive schools receive assistance from special schools and special centers in providing education for students with developmental disabilities, which provide teacher training, materials, and coordination with relevant agencies.

Inclusive education has introduced several approaches to building inclusive classrooms:

1. Full-time inclusive classrooms. This approach is used under the conditions that students with special needs can work with the learning materials, and their maturity level is close to that of their peers, and there are no disruptive behaviors;
2. Inclusive classrooms with special education teachers. Special education teachers provide guidance on classroom management and offer recommendations for developing and implementing an inclusive curriculum.
3. Inclusive classrooms with mobile special education teachers. These special education teachers transition from school to school, providing support and guidance to classroom teachers.
4. Inclusive classrooms with teaching assistants. These assistant teachers support class teachers in teaching students with special needs.
5. Full-time and drop-in inclusive classes. This approach applies to students with similar developmental disabilities. They are mainly taught in their own groups but are sometimes placed in mainstream classes with other students (Office of Education, 2006).

In 2017, the Thai government approved the National Education Plan for 2017–2036. The plan outlines five main goals, one of which is to ensure that all Thai citizens receive a quality education that meets national standards. The Plan's indicators of success are that free primary and secondary education is made available to children aged 6-14 and that appropriate education services are provided to all persons with disabilities. The Plan adopts four education concepts: 1) education for all, 2) inclusive education, 3) sufficient economy, and 4) all for education (Moonsarn et al., 2022; Vibulpatanavong, 2018; UNESCO, 2021; Office of the Education Council,2017; ConstitutionNet, 2017).

Thai laws and policies reflect the Thai government's commitment to improving access to education in the country. Although there are many barriers to inclusive education, its development continues to move in a positive direction. The development of inclusive education in Thailand is moving from a stagnation phase to a de-

velopment phase. An increasing number of schools are implementing inclusive education. Inclusive education is being discussed more frequently in society, public awareness of individuals with special needs is increasing, and public attitudes are shifting in a positive direction. This is a win-win situation for both Thai students and society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research aimed to explore the implementation of inclusive education in Thai general education by analyzing the perspectives and experiences of teachers and students working with students with special needs. The objectives of the study included data collection and analysis to assess the extent to which teachers are prepared to work in inclusive education environments and how students perceive their classmates with special needs.

The results offer insights into how the principles of inclusive education are implemented within the education system, helping to identify the primary problems and challenges in this area. The data supporting the results of this research are not publicly available due to privacy restrictions; access to the data is restricted to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the study participants.

The study sample consisted of teachers and students working in a Thai X school. Forty-eight volunteer teachers with a wide range of experience and ages participated in the survey. The student questionnaire was completed by 1,033 respondents from different year groups, providing a wide range of views on the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

The teacher sample aimed to cover a range of backgrounds and levels of expertise to gain an overview of the understanding and practice of inclusive education from different perspectives. The student survey focused on students' attitudes and experiences interacting with peers with special needs, as well as their impact on the classroom atmosphere and the learning process.

Two separate questionnaires were designed to collect data, one for teachers and one for students. The teacher questionnaire consisted of questions focusing on their work experience, knowledge of inclusive education, and teaching methods for working with students with special needs. Teachers were also asked about their participation in professional development programs organized by the school or by public institutions.

The questionnaire consisted of questions covering their attitudes towards students with special needs, as well as their experience of learning environments that include students with different disabilities. Students

were asked whether they had encountered such students, whether they considered them to be different in behavior or appearance, and whether their presence interfered with the learning process.

All questionnaires were designed in Thai to ensure maximum understanding and participation among respondents. The data was collected using an online platform, which enabled the survey to be administered quickly and widely. After data collection, the data were translated from Thai to English to facilitate further analysis and interpretation.

The data collected were summarised and analyzed using statistical methods that included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics were used to identify trends in teacher and student responses and how attitudes towards inclusive education vary with age and experience.

Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to assess the reliability and consistency of the questionnaires. This test is essential to ensure that the questionnaire questions are unambiguous and to assess the consistency of respondents' answers. Correlation analysis was used to investigate whether there is a correlation between teachers' work experience and their views on inclusive education, as well as between students' work experience and their attitudes towards students with special needs.

The data analysis was carried out using SPSS 22.0 software, which enabled accurate statistical calculations and comparisons among different groups of data.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to check the internal consistency of the teacher questionnaire. The result (α = .78) indicates good internal consistency and reliability of the results.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that teachers have different experiences of working in inclusive education. Of the teachers surveyed, 14 had between 1 and 5 years of experience, and a further 14 had between 6 and 10 years of experience, making up the largest group of teachers. The third largest group (9) was made up of teachers with 11 to 15 years of experience, while a smaller proportion (6) had 16 to 20 years of experience, and only 5 had more than 20 years of experience.

The majority of teachers (29) reported using special teaching methods with students with special needs. The majority of these teachers had up to 10 years of experience, indicating that the younger generation of teachers is

better prepared to work in inclusive education. Correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between work experience and positive attitudes towards inclusive education ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that teachers with less experience are more likely to support inclusive education compared to their more experienced colleagues. Younger teachers are more open to change and innovation in the education system and are better equipped to work with diverse groups of learners, which aligns with the demands of 21st-century education.

An important indicator was whether students with special needs need to attend special education institutions or whether they can integrate into mainstream schools.

The majority (32) of teachers indicated that students with special needs can learn in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers. This aligns with the fundamental principles of inclusive education, which are based on the notion that all students, regardless of their abilities or needs, should have the opportunity to participate in the mainstream educational environment (UNESCO, 1994). However, 16 teachers felt that these students would require special education in special schools, indicating resistance or a lack of understanding of the benefits of inclusive education among this group of teachers. This resistance may be related to the working methods of the older generation of teachers, which are often based on a traditional approach to education.

Additionally, 35 teachers reported that students with special needs do not disrupt the learning process when appropriate teaching methods are employed. This is an important indicator confirming that well-adapted strategies and methodologies allow for the successful implementation of inclusive education. This aligns with the theoretical literature, which highlights that inclusive environments become successful when teachers are prepared and have access to resources that enable them to adapt the learning process to the needs of students (Forlin, 2010).

Although 26 teachers reported that they are provided with training to work with students with special needs, 22 felt that the amount of training was not sufficient. This suggests the need to expand the opportunities and scope of professional development for teachers to realize the goals of inclusive education fully. Theoretical literature also emphasizes the role of teachers in promoting inclusive education and the importance of continuous professional development (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2012).

Cronbach's alpha test was performed to check the internal consistency of the student questionnaire. The result ($\alpha = .82$) indicates high internal consistency of the questionnaire, and reliable results.

The results of the students' questionnaires revealed similar resistance and divided opinions regarding inclusive education. While 46.2% of students believed that students with special needs could be integrated into mainstream classes, 53.8% still thought that these students should attend special education schools. This result indicates the persistence of certain stereotypes and prejudices among students, which may be linked to society's traditional perceptions of disability and special needs.

However, 42.1% of students reported that students with special needs do not interfere with the learning process, indicating a positive attitude towards inclusion. This is a significant indicator that students with special needs can integrate and participate in mainstream education if appropriate accommodations are made available. This result aligns with the theoretical approach, which emphasizes that inclusive education fosters mutual acceptance and respect among students, thereby creating equal opportunities for all (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

Additionally, 41.6% of students believed that students with special needs benefit more from education in mainstream schools than in special education settings. This view supports the idea that inclusive education not only provides academic benefits but also promotes social and emotional development, enabling students with special needs to integrate into society and develop social skills. This theoretical approach is also highlighted in the literature, which suggests that the general education environment can contribute to the successful integration of students with special needs into society (Lindsay, 2007).

The results of this research generally support the theoretical literature on the benefits and challenges of inclusive education. Inclusive education is an important tool for social inclusion, benefiting not only students with special needs but also their classmates by promoting tolerance and acceptance of diversity. However, the study also shows that teachers' and students' attitudes are not always homogeneous, and many teachers and students still believe that students with special needs would be better educated in special education settings.

To realize the full potential of inclusive education, there is a need for teacher education and resourcing, as well as a need to promote positive attitudes and public awareness of the benefits of inclusive education. Only then can inclusive education become the norm rather than the exception, promoting access to education for all students regardless of their needs.

DISCUSSION

The research results demonstrate the need for and importance of inclusive education in Thailand's general education system, while also identifying several challenges. To fully integrate students with special needs, it is essential to focus on further improving teacher professional development programs and raising public awareness of inclusive education.

Teacher professional development and preparation for working in inclusive environments. The results of the teacher survey show that younger teachers are more likely to support inclusive education and are better prepared to work in such an environment compared to their more experienced colleagues. This points to the need to review professional development programs to ensure that all teachers, regardless of seniority, are equipped with both theoretical and practical knowledge. It would also be valuable to introduce regular training to equip teachers with the latest methods and approaches for working with students with special needs, with a particular emphasis on promoting positive attitudes and utilizing technology effectively. Another possibility would be to establish support networks for teachers, where more experienced colleagues could share their knowledge and expertise in implementing inclusive education. Such networks could promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among teachers, creating a common support system and reducing teachers' stress when working with different groups of students.

Improving public attitudes and reducing stereotypes among students. The results show that many students still believe that children with special needs should be educated in special schools. Educating the public about the benefits of inclusive education is key to reducing these stereotypes. Lessons and discussions that promote tolerance and understanding among students can be introduced in schools to raise awareness of diversity and its value. These could include lessons or classroom activities on human rights, equality, and acceptance, as well as cooperation and teamwork that promote the development of social skills and empathy.

Adapted learning strategies and resources. For inclusive education to be effective, schools must provide suitable resources and adaptable learning strategies. Often, the inclusion of students with special needs is hampered by a lack of resources and support staff, which contributes to teacher overload. This means that additional resources such as teaching assistants, support services, adapted teaching materials, and technology are needed to facilitate the learning process. Educational institutions can collaborate with local authorities and the private sector to secure the necessary resources and technologies.

Parental and community involvement. The study's results highlight societal biases and differing perceptions of inclusive education, which also impact students' views. The involvement of parents and other community members is also necessary to foster positive public attitudes. Seminars and information campaigns could be organized to explain the benefits of inclusive education and to help change prejudices in society about children with special needs. Such campaigns and events would help to raise public awareness of inclusive education as a societal norm.

Sustainable policies and public support. The development of a sustainable education system requires state support and policies that promote inclusive education. National education policymakers should develop a detailed plan with specific goals and strategies that encompass teacher training, infrastructure improvement, access to technology, and public education on the benefits of inclusive education. Targeted monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education institutions are also essential to identify both the most effective approaches and the problems and challenges they face.

The development of inclusive education is a crucial step towards achieving equity and access, but it requires coordinated action by all stakeholders, including schools, teachers, parents, public institutions, and society at large.

CONCLUSIONS

Inclusive education benefits not only students with special needs but also their peers, promoting mutual acceptance and social cohesion.

The results of this research point to important trends in implementing inclusive education in Thai general education institutions. Although teachers' and students' attitudes are generally positive, stereotypes and prejudices persist which make full inclusion difficult. Inclusive education can offer many benefits if teachers are provided with professional development and public awareness is raised.

The research results indicate that continuous professional development and support for teachers are neces-

sary to enhance the quality and effectiveness of inclusive education. In turn, students require information and education about diversity to reduce prejudice and promote tolerance and mutual support.

Cooperation between school administrators, teachers, and government institutions is essential to ensuring resources and support for inclusive education. Policymakers must pay attention to developing effective strategies and access to resources.

The research highlights the need for systematic monitoring and evaluation to identify progress and challenges in implementing inclusive education. This information can provide a basis for further development of education policy and practice in Thailand.

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