

## Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity on Inclusive Education Practices in the Mainstream Classroom



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**ABSTRACT:** This study assessed the levels and relationship of cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers and their impact on inclusive education practices. It identified significant differences based on grade levels and academic interest but not on sex, highlighting the variability in cultural competence among educators. The findings revealed that while certain dimensions of cultural awareness, such as knowledge and open-mindedness, positively correlated with effective teaching strategies and managing challenging behavior, overall cultural competence did not significantly influence inclusive education practices. Based on these insights, a comprehensive Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training Program for Teachers was proposed. This program was designed to enhance teachers' cultural knowledge, empathy, communication skills, and respect for diversity through workshops, role-playing activities, and community involvement. The goal was to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that addresses the diverse needs of all students.

**KEYWORDS:** Cultural Awareness, Sensitivity, Inclusive Education Practices, Mainstream Classroom, Teacher Training

### I. INTRODUCTION

In today's educational landscape, the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity among educators could not have been overstated. Cultural awareness, as defined in the literature, entailed a mindful acknowledgment of the similarities and differences among individuals from various cultural backgrounds. It encompassed an understanding of power dynamics, privilege, and oppression within diverse groups (Maschi & Leibowitz, 2018). Conversely, cultural sensitivity built upon this awareness, requiring a deeper understanding and application of cultural knowledge in practice. It involved respecting and accepting cultural differences without judgment and strove to understand perspectives from within the culture itself.

The literature on cultural awareness and sensitivity in education spanned various disciplines and methodologies, providing valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of these concepts. Nguyen Vy Ngoc (2024) examined the intersection of cultural and global awareness with the development of communicative skills, emphasizing their significance beyond language proficiency. Radvai (2023) delved into the manifestation of cultural sensitivity within educational documents, highlighting the importance of institutional support in preserving minority cultures. Fu (2021) explored cross-cultural awareness in English education, proposing strategies based on cognitive psychology to address cultural differences effectively.

Harris and Seo (2024) investigated the impact of collaborative online international learning on students' cultural perspectives and knowledge, underscoring its role in fostering cultural sensitivity and competence. Phan et al. (2022) focused on LGBTQ+ cultural sensitivity training in pharmacy education, demonstrating its effectiveness in improving students' knowledge and motivation to provide inclusive care.

Recognizing the significance of cultural awareness and sensitivity in inclusive education practices, this research explored their impact within the mainstream classroom setting at Shanghai Jincai High School International Division (JCID), Shanghai, China. By examining teachers' cultural awareness and sensitivity levels and their relationship with inclusive education practices, this study sought to shed light on how educators navigated cultural diversity within the classroom. Through a comprehensive investigation of respondents' profiles, assessments of teachers' cultural competencies, and levels of inclusive education practices, this research endeavored to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on culturally responsive teaching and inclusive education.

Moreover, this study held implications for the development of tailored cultural awareness and sensitivity training programs for teachers, aimed at equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to create inclusive learning environments. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this research endeavored to support educators in their journey toward fostering cultural competence and promoting inclusivity in the classroom.

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Central to the success of inclusive education were teachers who possessed cultural awareness and sensitivity, allowing them to understand and respond effectively to the diverse needs of their students. In China, this was especially important as classrooms were becoming increasingly diverse with students from various ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and abilities. Teachers had to be equipped with the necessary skills to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported in their learning. By embracing cultural differences and adapting their teaching practices accordingly, educators in China ensured that every student had the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Thus, fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity was of primary importance in an inclusive classroom. By fostering an environment where students felt valued and respected for their unique backgrounds, teachers created a safe space for open dialogue and learning. This led to increased empathy and understanding among students, ultimately promoting a more inclusive and harmonious classroom community. Embracing cultural awareness also helped students develop critical thinking skills as they learned to consider different perspectives and worldviews. By encouraging students to engage in discussions about cultural differences and similarities, teachers helped them develop a greater appreciation for diversity. This not only enriched their educational experience but also prepared them to thrive in an increasingly globalized world. To truly promote inclusivity, teachers had to be proactive in addressing any instances of discrimination or bias that arose in the classroom, fostering a sense of mutual respect and understanding among all students. Ultimately, by prioritizing cultural awareness and sensitivity, educators created a learning environment that celebrated the richness of human diversity and promoted a sense of unity among students from all backgrounds.

Thus, the research found the need to look at the perspective of mainstream classroom in the context of Shanghai Jincui High School International Division (JCID), Shanghai, China. By examining the experiences of students, valuable insights were gained on how to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all individuals. Through this research, it was hoped that practical recommendations could be made to enhance cultural understanding and promote equality in education.

### II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, grade level, and academic Interest?
2. What is the assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of knowledge, open-mindedness, empathy, communication skills, and respect for diversity?
3. What is the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of teaching strategies, managing challenging behavior, and collaborative teaching?
4. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' assessments of the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers when the profile is used as a test factor?
5. Is there a significant difference in teachers' levels of inclusive education practices when the profile is used as a test factor?
6. Is there a significant correlation between the assessment of the respondents on cultural awareness and sensitivity and the level of inclusive education practices of teachers?

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative comparative correlation design to examine the relationship between teachers' cultural awareness and sensitivity and their inclusive education practices in a mainstream classroom setting. This methodological approach provided a systematic framework for analyzing how these two constructs interact, offering valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and practitioners. The research was conducted at Shanghai Jincui High School International Division (JCID) in Shanghai, China, a well-known institution with a diverse student population. The city's cosmopolitan nature and the school's reputation for educational excellence made it an ideal setting for exploring the impact of cultural awareness on inclusive education.

Participants were selected using a random sampling method to ensure representativeness and reduce bias. The study targeted students across various grade levels at JCID, with a subset randomly chosen to participate. Data collection was conducted using a researcher-made instrument divided into three sections: a profile questionnaire (collecting demographic data on sex, grade, and academic interest), a cultural awareness and sensitivity assessment (measuring students' perceptions of teachers' cultural awareness), and an inclusive education practices evaluation (assessing teachers' implementation of inclusive teaching strategies). The study categorizes response ratings into four levels: 3.51–4.00 as Strongly Agree - Highly Evident, 2.51–3.50 as Agree - Evident, 1.51–2.50 as Disagree - Evident, and 1.00–1.50 as Strongly Disagree - Not at all Evident, providing a clear interpretation of the assessment scale. This structured approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how teachers' cultural awareness influences their inclusive education practices.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the key findings of the study, focusing on the respondents' assessments of teachers' cultural awareness and sensitivity, as well as their inclusive education practices. The results are analyzed based on

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various demographic factors, including sex, grade level, and academic interest, to determine any significant differences in perceptions. Furthermore, the study explores the correlation between teachers' cultural awareness and their effectiveness in implementing inclusive education strategies.

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of the profile of respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	137	56.0%
	Female	138	41.3%
Grade Levels	Grade 10	100	29.9%
	Grade 9	72	21.6%
	Grade 8	83	24.9%
	Grade 7	70	21.0%
Academic Interest	SCIENCE	126	37.7%
	VISUAL ARTS	113	33.8%
	ENGLISH	37	11.1%
	MATH	49	14.7%

The respondents' demographic profile showed a balanced representation across sex, grade levels, and academic interests. Male students comprised 56%, while females made up 41.3%. Grade 10 had the highest representation (29.9%), followed by Grade 8 (24.9%), Grade 9 (21.6%), and Grade 7 (21.0%). Science (37.7%) and Visual Arts (33.8%) were the most common academic interests, with Mathematics (14.7%) and English (11.1%) following. This diverse composition provides valuable insights into students' perspectives on teachers' cultural awareness and inclusive education practices, allowing for meaningful subgroup comparisons.

**Table 2.1. Mean and standard deviation on the level of assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of knowledge**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. My teachers demonstrate an understanding of different cultural backgrounds.	2.79	1.098	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers incorporate diverse perspectives into classroom discussions and activities.	2.98	.645	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers are knowledgeable about the cultural traditions and customs of students in the class.	3.20	.932	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers are aware of the cultural factors that may influence students' learning experiences.	3.12	.868	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers actively seek resources to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity.	3.28	.823	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	3.07	.421	Agree- Evident

Teachers' cultural knowledge received an overall mean rating of 3.07, indicating that students perceived their teachers as having a general understanding of cultural diversity. The highest rating (3.28) was given to teachers actively seeking resources to enhance their cultural awareness, while the lowest rating (2.79) was associated with teachers' understanding of students' different cultural backgrounds. This suggests that while teachers demonstrate an awareness of cultural diversity, there is room for improvement in developing a deeper understanding of students' unique cultural identities.

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**Table 2.2. Mean and standard deviation on the level of assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of open-mindedness**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers are receptive to different viewpoints and perspectives from students of various cultural backgrounds.	2.70	1.016	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers encourage students to share their cultural experiences and perspectives without judgment.	2.96	.546	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers demonstrate flexibility in adapting their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles influenced by culture.	2.86	1.023	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers are open to feedback and suggestions from students regarding culturally sensitive topics.	2.98	.664	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers create a safe and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable expressing their cultural identities.	3.02	.913	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	2.90	.499	Agree- Evident

Respondents assessed teachers' open-mindedness at a mean of 2.90, indicating that while teachers were generally receptive to different viewpoints, there was variability in their approach. The highest-rated aspect was creating an inclusive environment where students felt comfortable expressing their cultural identities (3.02). However, receptiveness to students' perspectives received the lowest rating (2.70), suggesting that teachers could further improve their ability to integrate students' diverse viewpoints into classroom discussions.

**Table 2.3. Mean and standard deviation on the level of assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of empathy**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers show understanding and empathy towards students facing cultural challenges or barriers.	2.82	.994	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers make an effort to connect with students on a personal level, considering their cultural backgrounds.	2.94	.671	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers demonstrate sensitivity to the cultural differences among students and respond appropriately.	2.85	1.025	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers are supportive and understanding of students' cultural values and beliefs, even if they differ from their own.	3.11	.638	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers show compassion and empathy towards students experiencing cultural adjustment issues.	2.99	.896	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	2.94	.531	Agree- Evident

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Empathy was rated with a mean of 2.94, suggesting that teachers were generally perceived as understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and challenges. The highest-rated aspect was teachers' support for students' cultural values (3.11), while the lowest was their ability to recognize and address students' cultural challenges (2.82). This indicates that while teachers respect diversity, more targeted efforts are needed to address students' specific cultural struggles.

**Table 2.4. Mean and standard deviation on the level of assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of communication skills**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers effectively communicate with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	2.81	.989	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers use inclusive language and communication strategies that consider cultural sensitivities.	2.98	.678	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers encourage open dialogue and active participation among students from different cultural backgrounds.	3.00	1.026	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers clarify instructions and concepts to ensure understanding among students with varying language proficiencies.	3.10	.770	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers employ culturally relevant examples and analogies to enhance student comprehension.	3.05	.903	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	2.98	.4830	Agree- Evident

Teachers' communication skills in culturally diverse settings were rated at 2.98, with the highest score given to their ability to clarify instructions for students with varying language proficiencies (3.10). The lowest score (2.81) was assigned to teachers' general communication with students from diverse backgrounds, suggesting potential barriers in effective cross-cultural communication.

**Table 2.5. Mean and standard deviation on the level of assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of respect for diversity**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers treat all students with equal respect and dignity, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.	2.97	.960	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers celebrate cultural diversity through classroom activities and events.	3.02	.670	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers address instances of cultural bias or discrimination promptly and sensitively.	3.14	.953	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers create an inclusive curriculum that reflects the diversity of cultures represented in the classroom.	3.12	.826	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers promote a culture of respect and acceptance, where differences are valued and embraced.	3.06	.761	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	3.06	.406	Agree- Evident

Teachers' ability to foster respect for diversity received a mean rating of 3.06, indicating that students generally felt their teachers promoted inclusivity. The highest rating (3.14) was given to teachers' ability to

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address cultural bias and discrimination, while the lowest (2.97) was related to ensuring equal treatment for all students. This suggests that while teachers actively promote diversity, there may still be inconsistencies in equitable treatment.

**Table 3.1. Mean and standard deviation of the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of teaching strategies**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers employ diverse instructional methods that accommodate different learning styles and abilities.	3.01	.849	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers adapt teaching materials and resources to make them accessible to all students, including those with diverse needs.	3.00	.664	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers differentiate instruction to address the individual learning needs of students in the classroom.	3.15	1.018	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers incorporate cooperative learning activities that promote peer interaction and collaboration among students of varying abilities.	3.06	.875	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers use technology effectively to enhance learning opportunities and engage students in inclusive classroom activities.	3.26	.821	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	3.09	.387	Agree- Evident

Teachers' use of inclusive teaching strategies was rated at 3.09, with technology integration receiving the highest rating (3.26), highlighting its effectiveness in engaging students in inclusive learning activities. However, adapting teaching materials for accessibility received a lower rating (3.00), indicating a need for more tailored instructional resources.

**Table 3.2. Mean and standard deviation of the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of managing challenging behavior**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers establish clear expectations and rules for behavior that apply to all students, fostering a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	2.85	1.044	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers implement proactive strategies to prevent challenging behavior and promote positive student interactions.	3.02	.657	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers use positive reinforcement and praise to encourage desired behaviors among all students.	3.19	1.015	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers employ individualized behavior plans or interventions to support students with specific behavioral challenges.	3.07	.893	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers collaborate with other professionals, such as counselors or special educators, to develop strategies for managing challenging behavior effectively.	3.33	.777	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	3.09	.423	Agree- Evident

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The assessment of behavior management strategies yielded a mean of 3.09. The highest-rated aspect was teachers' collaboration with counselors and special educators to address behavioral challenges (3.33), while the lowest rating was given to the establishment of clear classroom behavior expectations (2.85). This suggests that while external collaboration is strong, there is room for improvement in proactive classroom management strategies.

**Table 3.3. Mean and standard deviation of the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of collaborative teaching**

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation and Adjectival Interpretation
1. Teachers work collaboratively with other educators to plan and deliver instruction that meets the needs of all students.	2.81	1.068	Agree- Evident
2. Teachers engage in team teaching or co-teaching arrangements to provide additional support to students with diverse learning needs.	3.06	.659	Agree- Evident
3. Teachers participate in interdisciplinary collaboration to address the holistic needs of students, including academic, social, and emotional development.	3.02	.989	Agree- Evident
4. Teachers involve parents and caregivers in the collaborative process, seeking their input and involvement in supporting students' educational goals.	3.01	.885	Agree- Evident
5. Teachers collaborate with community organizations or agencies to provide supplementary resources and services to students and families as needed.	3.17	.842	Agree- Evident
Overall Mean	3.01	.446	Agree- Evident

The overall mean for collaborative teaching was 3.01, with teachers' engagement with community organizations to support students receiving the highest rating (3.17). However, direct collaboration with other educators for instructional planning had the lowest rating (2.81), indicating potential barriers to teamwork in lesson planning and delivery.

**Table 4.1. T-test on the differences in the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of sex**

Indicator	Sex	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Knowledge	Male	3.09	1.879	.171	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.04				
Open-mindedness	Male	2.93	.013	.909	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	2.86				
Empathy	Male	2.95	1.581	.210	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	2.92				
Communication skills	Male	2.99	1.242	.266	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	2.97				
Respect for diversity	Male	3.07	.131	.718	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.05				
Overall	Male	2.50	2.922	.088	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	2.47				

The findings show no significant differences between male and female teachers in any aspect, with overall mean scores of 2.50 for males and 2.47 for females. The F-value of 2.922 and a significance level of 0.088 ( $p > 0.05$ ) led to the

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acceptance of the null hypothesis, confirming that gender does not significantly impact teachers' cultural awareness and sensitivity.

**Table 4.2. ANOVA on the differences in the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of grade levels**

Indicator	Grade Level	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Knowledge	Grade 10	3.04	2.781	.041	Rejected	Significant
	Grade 9	3.01				
	Grade 8	3.18				
	Grade 7	3.02				
Open-mindedness	Grade 10	2.91	1.871	.134	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	2.97				
	Grade 8	2.93				
	Grade 7	2.78				
Empathy	Grade 10	3.03	2.329	.074	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	2.83				
	Grade 8	2.95				
	Grade 7	2.90				
Communication skills	Grade 10	3.03	20.076	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Grade 9	2.66				
	Grade 8	3.21				
	Grade 7	2.98				
Respect for diversity	Grade 10	3.14	9.417	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Grade 9	2.94				
	Grade 8	3.18				
	Grade 7	2.92				
Overall	Grade 10	2.53	15.158	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Grade 9	2.40				
	Grade 8	2.57				
	Grade 7	2.43				

The results revealed statistically significant differences in respondents' assessments of teachers' knowledge, communication skills, respect for diversity, and overall cultural awareness, with Grade 8 teachers receiving the highest ratings. However, no significant differences were found in open-mindedness and empathy, indicating that teachers' ability to be receptive and empathetic was perceived similarly across grade levels. These results suggest that students' experiences with culturally responsive teaching may vary by grade, highlighting potential areas for further professional development among teachers at different educational levels.

**Table 4.3. ANOVA on the differences in the cultural awareness and sensitivity of teachers in terms of academic interests**

Indicator	Academic Interest	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Knowledge	Science	3.12	1.707	.165	Accepted	Not Significant
	Visual Arts	3.00				
	English	3.12				
	Math	3.06				
Open-mindedness	Science	2.89	1.657	.176	Accepted	Not Significant
	Visual Arts	2.85				
	English	3.05				
	Math	2.94				
Empathy	Science	2.89	1.162	.324	Accepted	Not Significant
	Visual Arts	2.94				



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		English	2.92				
		Math	3.06				
Communication skills		Science	3.00	.813	.48	Accepted	Not Significant
		Visual Arts	2.93				
		English	3.05				
		Math	3.01				
Respect for diversity		Science	3.093	1.149	.329	Accepted	Not Significant
		Visual Arts	06				
		English	3.06				
		Math	2.96				
Overall		Science	2.50	1.485	.218	Accepted	Not Significant
		Visual Arts	2.46				
		English	2.53				
		Math	2.50				

The findings indicate no significant differences across all five indicators—knowledge, open-mindedness, empathy, communication skills, and respect for diversity—as well as the overall assessment ( $p$ -values  $> 0.05$ ). This suggests that students, regardless of their academic interests, perceive their teachers' cultural awareness and sensitivity similarly. While minor variations in mean scores were observed, the null hypothesis was accepted, confirming that academic interest does not significantly influence students' evaluations of teachers' cultural competency. This implies that cultural awareness and sensitivity are consistently applied across subject areas, likely shaped by institutional policies and training rather than specific disciplines.

**Table 5.1. T-test on differences in the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of sex**

Indicator	Sex	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
teaching strategies	Male	3.09	.089	.766	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.09				
managing challenging behavior	Male	3.07	.049	.825	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.12				
collaborative teaching	Male	3.01	.052	.820	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.01				
<b>Overall</b>	Male	3.06	.039	.844	Accepted	Not Significant
	Female	3.07				

The findings indicate no significant differences between male and female teachers in any category ( $p$ -values  $> 0.05$ ), with nearly identical mean scores. The null hypothesis was accepted, confirming that sex does not influence teachers' implementation of inclusive education practices. This suggests that both male and female teachers apply inclusive teaching strategies, behavior management techniques, and collaboration efforts at similar levels, likely due to shared training and institutional guidelines.

**Table 5.2. ANOVA on differences in the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of grade levels**

Indicator	Grade Level	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
teaching strategies	Grade 10	3.06	.53	.65	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	3.11				
	Grade 8	3.12				
	Grade 7	3.08				
managing challenging behavior	Grade 10	3.09	2.03	.10	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	3.08				
	Grade 8	3.17				
	Grade 7	3.00				

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collaborative teaching	Grade 10	3.05	.57	.63	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	3.01				
	Grade 8	2.96				
	Grade 7	3.01				
<b>Overall</b>	Grade 10	3.07	.77	.50	Accepted	Not Significant
	Grade 9	3.07				
	Grade 8	3.08				
	Grade 7	3.03				

The findings indicate no significant differences among grade levels ( $p$ -values  $> 0.05$ ), with similar mean scores across all categories. The null hypothesis was accepted, confirming that grade level does not significantly impact teachers' implementation of inclusive education practices. This suggests that inclusive teaching strategies, behavior management approaches, and collaboration efforts are consistently applied across different grade levels, likely influenced by standardized training and institutional policies.

**Table 5.3. ANOVA on the differences in the level of inclusive education practices of teachers in terms of academic interest**

Indicator	Academic Interest	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
teaching strategies	Science	3.14	2.837	.038	Rejected	Significant
	Visual Arts	3.02				
	English	3.18				
	Math	3.06				
Managing challenging behavior	Science	3.13	6.474	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Visual Arts	2.97				
	English	3.08				
	Math	3.27				
collaborative teaching	Science	3.04	.758	.518	Accepted	Not Significant
	Visual Arts	2.97				
	English	3.08				
	Math	2.99				
<b>Overall</b>	Science	3.10	6.460	.000	Rejected	Significant
	Visual Arts	2.99				
	English	3.11				
	Math	3.10				

The findings indicate significant differences in teaching strategies ( $p = 0.038$ ), managing challenging behavior ( $p = 0.000$ ), and overall inclusive education practices ( $p = 0.000$ ), with English and Math teachers receiving the highest ratings. However, no significant difference was found in collaborative teaching ( $p = 0.518$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected for the significant indicators, suggesting that teachers' academic backgrounds may influence their instructional methods and classroom management approaches, while collaboration remains consistently practiced across disciplines.

**Table 6. Correlation between assessment of the respondents on the cultural awareness and sensitivity and the level of inclusive education practices of teachers**

Cultural Awareness	Statistical Treatment	Cultural Awareness in terms of Teaching strategies	Cultural Awareness in terms of managing challenging behavior	Cultural Awareness in terms of collaborative teaching
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.085	.149**	-.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.126	.007	.749
	Decision	Accept	Rejected	Accept
	Interpretation	Not Significant	Significant	Not Significant

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Open-mindedness	Pearson	.109*	.140*	-.079
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	.012	.157
	Decision	Rejected	Rejected	Accept
Empathy	Interpretation	Significant	Significant	Not Significant
	Pearson	.007	-.065	.116*
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.240	.037
Communication skills	Decision	Accept	Accept	Rejected
	Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant
	Pearson	-.102	.005	.008
	Correlation			
Respect for diversity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.924	.880
	Decision	Accept	Accept	Accept
	Interpretation	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
	Pearson	-.155**	.075	.021
Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity and the Level of Inclusive Education Practices of Teachers	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.178	.703
	Decision	Rejected	Accept	Accept
	Interpretation	Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity and the Level of Inclusive Education Practices of Teachers	Pearson	.074		
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.181		
	Decision	Accept		
	Interpretation	Not Significant		

Correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between teachers' open-mindedness and their ability to manage challenging behavior ( $p = 0.012$ ). Additionally, empathy was significantly correlated with collaborative teaching ( $p = 0.037$ ), indicating that teachers who show greater understanding tend to collaborate more effectively. However, no significant correlation was found between overall cultural awareness and inclusive education practices ( $p = 0.181$ ), suggesting that while individual aspects of cultural sensitivity influence teaching effectiveness, they do not necessarily translate into broader inclusive education practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that respondents' diverse backgrounds, particularly their gender representation and strong interest in Science and Visual Arts, provided valuable insights into how academic interests influence cultural awareness and sensitivity. Teachers generally demonstrated a positive level of cultural awareness, particularly in seeking resources and promoting respect for diversity, though there was variability in understanding cultural backgrounds and communication skills. Additionally, teachers displayed strong inclusive education practices, effectively implementing diverse teaching methods, managing student behavior, and engaging in collaborative efforts with educators and community organizations. However, significant differences emerged based on grade level, with Grade 8 teachers scoring higher in knowledge, communication skills, and respect for diversity. While cultural awareness was consistent across academic interests, inclusive education practices varied, with English and Math teachers exhibiting higher effectiveness compared to their Science and Visual Arts counterparts.

Further analysis revealed that sex and grade level did not significantly impact teachers' inclusive education practices, as male and female teachers demonstrated similar teaching strategies, behavior management, and collaboration efforts across all grade levels. However, academic interest significantly influenced inclusive education practices, particularly in teaching strategies and behavior management, where English and Math teachers showed greater effectiveness. While collaborative teaching remained consistent across disciplines, the study identified correlations between cultural awareness and inclusive education, with teachers' knowledge and open-mindedness positively affecting behavior management and teaching strategies. Additionally, empathy was linked to collaborative teaching, whereas communication skills and respect for diversity showed weaker correlations. Overall, while specific aspects of cultural awareness influenced inclusive practices, no significant overarching correlation was found between the two constructs.

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses deep gratitude to several individuals and institutions for their support in completing this thesis. Special thanks go to adviser Dr. Nelita F. Belena for her invaluable guidance and assistance throughout the research process.

Appreciation is also extended to the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta for its support, as well as to the thesis panel—Dr. Haydee Morales, Dr. Jen Tolang, and Dr. Alfred Orosco—for their insightful feedback.

The author acknowledges the moral support and prayers of family and friends and gives thanks to God for wisdom, strength, and guidance throughout his academic journey.

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