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Applying the theory of planned behaviour to examine teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices

İpek Gülsün[1] | Olli-Pekka Malinen[2] | Akie Yada[1,3,4,5] | Hannu Savolainen[6]

[1]Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

[2]Department of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

[3]Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

[4]Department of Psychology and Speech-Language Pathology, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[5]Centre of Excellence in Learning Dynamics and Intervention Research (InterLearn), University of Jyväskylä and University of Turku, Jyväskylä and Turku, Finland

[6]Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, Finland

Correspondence
İpek Gülsün, Department of Education, PO Box 35, FI-40014, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
Email: ipgulsun@jyu.fi

Abstract

Given the vital role of teachers in inclusive education, there has been growing interest in teacher-related factors that influence their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices. Based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, we investigated the relationship between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices, self-efficacy beliefs, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices within the same structural model. This study specifically focuses on two domains of inclusive practices: personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. Using a sample of 695 Finnish basic education teachers, the structural equation modelling results revealed that in both domains, teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for inclusive practices were significantly related to their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. These intentions were significantly linked to teachers' self-reported inclusive practices in these domains. Intentions mediated the indirect effect of affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms on inclusive practices. The mediating role of intentions in the indirect effect of self-efficacy beliefs on inclusive practices varied

across domains. While intentions partially mediated the indirect effect of self-efficacy for instructional strategies on personalised instructional practices, they fully mediated the indirect effect of self-efficacy for collaboration on collaboration and assessment practices. These findings have significant implications for enriching teacher training in inclusive education, enhancing educational practices in schools, and shaping future policies on inclusive education.

KEYWORDS

inclusive education, inclusive practice, intention, theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

Key insights

What is the main issue that the paper addresses?

Based on Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (TPB), this paper examines the relationship between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices, self-efficacy, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and inclusive practices within the same structural model in personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices domains.

What are the main insights that the paper provides?

To strengthen teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and increase their engagement in inclusive practices, this study highlights the need to promote positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education, favourable subjective norms about inclusive practices and a strong sense of self-efficacy for inclusive practices.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is a growing emphasis on the effectiveness of inclusive education. Teachers play a crucial role in successfully implementing inclusive practices in educational settings (Ainscow, 2020; Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014; Nilholm, 2021). The significance of the teacher's role in inclusive education has prompted researchers to investigate teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. These intentions reflect the likelihood that teachers will implement inclusive practices (Sharma, 2018). Strong intentions regarding inclusion are essential for the adoption and sustainability of inclusive strategies in classrooms (San Martin et al., 2021). Several researchers emphasise the importance of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Boyle et al., 2020; Urton et al., 2014), subjective norms about inclusive practices (Gilor & Katz, 2019) and self-efficacy (Sharma & George, 2016; Tumkaya & Miller, 2020) for their intentions regarding inclusion and the implementation of high-quality inclusive education.

A gap exists in the research literature regarding the association between teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, their inclusive practices and their attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy. Specifically, the relationship between all these factors within a single model has not been sufficiently investigated. The objective of this research is to enhance existing knowledge by examining the relationship between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices, self-efficacy, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices within the same structural model. This investigation particularly focuses on two domains of inclusive practices: personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB), introduced by Ajzen (1991), serves as a theoretical framework to explain and predict human behaviour. Ajzen (1991) maintains that an individual's intentions are determined by their attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms concerning the behaviour and perceived behavioural control. Moreover, an individual's behaviour is predicted by their perceived behavioural control and intentions to perform the behaviour (see Figure 1). *Attitudes towards the behaviour* are 'the individual's global positive or negative evaluations of performing a particular behaviour' (Armitage & Conner, 2001, p. 474), while *subjective norms* refer to 'perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour' (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). *Perceived behavioural control* is compatible with Bandura's (1986) concept of *self-efficacy* in social cognitive theory: both denote an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific behaviour under a particular set of circumstances (Ajzen, 2020). *Intentions* are regarded as 'indications of a person's readiness to perform a behaviour' (Ajzen, 2011, p. 1122). Furthermore, Ajzen (1991) posits that attitudes, subjective norms and self-efficacy are interrelated and influence an individual's behaviour mediated by their intentions.

Meta-analyses provide evidence of TPB's ability to predict intentions and behaviours across various domains, such as health (Cooke et al., 2016) and physical activity (De Vivo et al., 2016). Research highlights the significant relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, intentions and behaviour (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Downs & Hausenblas, 2005). In the context of inclusive education, several studies also highlight the applicability of TPB in understanding teachers' intentions regarding inclusion, inclusive practices and their underlying determinants (Opoku, 2021; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016).

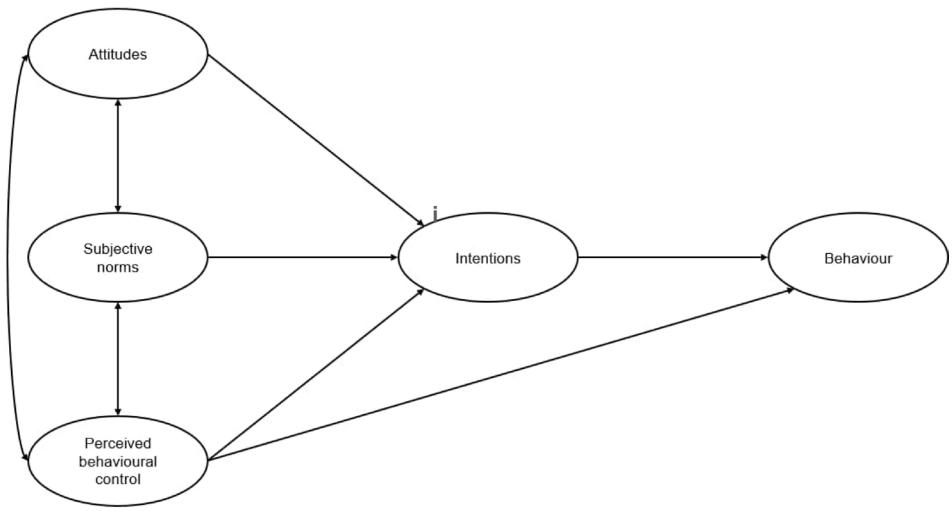

FIGURE 1 Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB).

Attitudes towards inclusive education are related to teachers' perceptions of the concept of inclusive education (Jury et al., 2021). Recognising that attitudes encompass various dimensions (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), numerous studies have explored teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, focusing on three main dimensions: affective, cognitive and behavioural (for a review, see de Boer et al., 2011). *Affective attitudes* reflect how teachers respond emotionally to inclusive education, including their satisfaction and excitement about teaching students with different abilities in their classrooms. *Cognitive attitudes* denote teachers' beliefs and knowledge about inclusive education, while *behavioural attitudes* indicate how teachers tend to act in inclusive settings.

Positive teacher attitudes are crucial for successfully implementing inclusive practices (Dias & Cadime, 2016; Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018; Woodcock & Vialle, 2016). Supporting this view, Monsen et al. (2014) found that teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusive education are more likely to create adaptable learning environments for students with diverse needs, indicating a greater likelihood of embracing inclusive approaches. In a similar vein, research indicates that teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusive education are more inclined to employ effective strategies for teaching all students (Carlson et al., 2012) and engage in working practices that foster inclusion (Saloviita, 2018). These findings emphasise the role of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in relation to their intentions (Chambers & Forlin, 2010; Mahat, 2008) and practices in inclusion (Dignath et al., 2022; Schwab, 2018), suggesting that those with positive attitudes towards inclusive education tend to demonstrate strong intentions regarding inclusion and, subsequently, implement more inclusive methods.

Teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively implement inclusive strategies that support students with diverse needs in various situations are known as their *self-efficacy for inclusive practices* (Sharma et al., 2012). Bandura (1997) suggests that self-efficacy is a domain-specific factor, indicating that an individual's self-efficacy may differ across behavioural domains. Based on this argument, studies have explored teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices within specific domains, such as instructional strategies and collaboration (Chao et al., 2016; Malinen et al., 2012; Savolainen et al., 2012). Self-efficacy for instructional strategies assesses a teacher's belief in their skill in adapting teaching and assessment methods to meet students' diverse learning needs (Perera et al., 2019). Such adaptations may include providing alternative explanations or examples to clarify concepts for confused students, designing learning tasks to accommodate the individual needs of students and offering appropriate challenges for high-achieving students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy for collaboration denotes a teacher's belief in their ability to collaborate with parents by creating a welcoming school environment for parents and helping them support their children's academic success (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). It also involves working jointly with other professionals, such as principals or school counsellors, to create a cohesive network of resources for all students (Park et al., 2016). Research emphasises the importance of teachers' beliefs in their ability to use instructional strategies and collaborate with parents and other professionals for the success of inclusion (Meyer et al., 2022; Silva & Silva, 2015; Woodcock & Hardy, 2023).

Teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices appears to be associated with their attitudes towards inclusive education. A recent meta-analysis by Yada et al. (2022) on the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion reveals a positive correlation between these two factors. This finding suggests that teachers' strong self-efficacy for inclusive practices is linked to their positive attitudes towards inclusive education and vice versa, as found in other studies (Frumos, 2018; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Özokcu, 2018).

According to Bandura (1993), teachers' self-efficacy impacts the learning environment they create, as those with strong self-efficacy are inclined to actively engage in educational practices, including those that promote inclusivity. Similarly, research indicates that

teachers with strong self-efficacy for inclusive practices are more likely to use instructional strategies (Avramidis et al., 2019) and adopt collaborative approaches that facilitate the inclusion of students with diverse needs (Woodcock et al., 2022). This evidence highlights the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their intentions concerning inclusion (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2019; Savolainen et al., 2022) and inclusive methods (Woodcock & Jones, 2020), implying that those with strong self-efficacy for inclusive practices tend to show strong intentions related to inclusion and, ultimately, implement more inclusive strategies.

Teachers' subjective norms about inclusive practices can also affect their success in implementing these practices (Avramidis & Norwich, 2004). These norms reflect teachers' perceptions of social pressure from the expectations of significant others in the school regarding the implementation of inclusive practices (Sharma & Mannan, 2015). Key figures in this context include other teachers, school principals and parents. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) argue for the importance of teachers' perceptions of a positive school ethos in motivating the adoption of inclusive strategies. This perspective underscores the connection between teachers' subjective norms and their intentions and practices related to inclusion (Young et al., 2017), suggesting that teachers who perceive a positive school ethos conveying the expectations of key figures for inclusive practices are inclined to exhibit strong intentions concerning inclusion and then engage in more inclusive practices.

Bandura (1993) argues that the school environment and teachers' belief systems are interrelated factors that jointly determine teachers' behaviour in educational settings. Likewise, research demonstrates a positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of a supportive school climate and their attitudes towards inclusive education (Weisel & Dror, 2006) and their self-efficacy for inclusive practices (Hosford & O'Sullivan, 2016). Shevlin et al. (2013) further reported that perceptions of a positive school ethos, along with teachers' positive attitudes and strong beliefs in their capabilities related to inclusion, are key factors that encourage teachers to adopt inclusive practices. All of this highlights the interrelationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their subjective norms about inclusive practices and their self-efficacy, as well as their collective association with teachers' intentions and, ultimately, their practices in inclusive education.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to implement inclusive practices successfully. One of these strategies entails *personalised instructional practices*, which are teaching methods that are adapted to meet students' strengths, needs and interests (Patrick et al., 2013). These practices, for example, involve connecting lesson material to students' personal experiences and designing learning experiences that build on their prior knowledge (Sharma et al., 2021). Studies have shown that personalised instructional practices benefit students' social and academic skills (Bešić et al., 2017) and their well-being (Prain et al., 2013).

Another effective strategy for teachers in inclusive classrooms is to engage in collaborative efforts with parents and other professionals (Lindner & Schwab, 2020), leading to various positive outcomes. This collaboration among teachers, parents and other professionals not only establishes a shared responsibility to assist all students but also promotes the exchange of ideas and enhances professional development through shared expertise (Paju et al., 2022). Studies have also demonstrated that collaboration practices play a crucial role in supporting inclusive approaches by creating a supportive environment for all students (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016).

Moreover, it is crucial for teachers to assess and monitor students' individualised outcomes using a variety of assessment strategies, such as making testing accommodations and checking for retention of previous content (Finkelstein et al., 2021). Research reveals that assessment practices foster an inclusive educational environment (Engh & Rose, 2014), enhancing students' sense of relatedness and self-esteem and encouraging them to engage more actively in their learning efforts (Kaur et al., 2017).

Inclusive education in Finland

The first steps towards inclusive education in Finland can be traced back to the Comprehensive School Act of 1970. This reform merged the old school system, which divided students into 'theoretically gifted' and 'practically gifted' streams, into one 9 year comprehensive education system (Kivirauma et al., 2006). An important outcome of this reform for inclusive education was the introduction of part-time special education, ensuring that all students remained within the same school system (Savolainen, 2009). Teachers still provide part-time special education through group or individual teaching depending on students' needs (Björn et al., 2016).

Following the curriculum reforms (National Board of Education, 2004) and the establishment of special education strategies (Ministry of Education, 2007), the Basic Education Act was amended in 2010 (Parliament of Finland, 2010). New amendments have resulted in a three-tiered support system that has been implemented in all schools since 2011. This support system consists of general, intensified and special support with the goal of offering early assistance to students with diverse needs (Sundqvist et al., 2019). General support is provided to all students in schools, and more intensive support is given when general support is insufficient (Sundqvist et al., 2014). Teachers provide general support by adapting their instructional strategies and methods to meet the individual needs of students and conducting ongoing pedagogical assessments as part of the learning process (Ahtiainen et al., 2021). For more intensive support, teachers collaborate with parents and other professionals, including principals and school counsellors, to discuss and determine appropriate support (Vainikainen et al., 2015).

The changes in educational policies have necessitated that teachers adopt more inclusive methods to accommodate the growing diversity of students. However, there is a recent public debate against the implementation of inclusive education, as seen on the website of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). This opinion is echoed by teachers and parents, arguing that teachers are struggling to manage heterogeneous classrooms (YLE, 2020). This opposition highlights teachers' negative attitudes and unfavourable subjective norms regarding inclusion. Similarly, Saloviita's (2020) study indicates that general education teachers hold negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Supporting this discussion, Moberg et al. (2020) reported that teachers expressed concerns about their self-efficacy in effectively implementing inclusive strategies. Furthermore, it has been argued that general education teachers employ few inclusive teaching and working practices (Saloviita, 2018). These findings underscore the challenges of successfully implementing inclusive education in Finland, emphasising the importance of the current study, which explores teachers' intentions regarding inclusion, their inclusive practices and factors associated with these intentions and practices within the full TPB framework.

The present study

To the best of our knowledge, the relationship between teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, their inclusive practices and their attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy has been understudied within a single model. Based on Ajzen's (1991) TPB, this study aimed to investigate the link between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices, self-efficacy, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices within the same structural model. To achieve this aim, the following hypotheses were formulated for both domains:

Hypothesis 1. Affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for inclusive practices predict intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms.

Hypothesis 2. Intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and self-efficacy for inclusive practices predict inclusive practices.

Hypothesis 3. Intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms mediate the indirect effects of affective attitudes, subjective norms and self-efficacy on inclusive practices.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 695 basic education teachers from 84 schools in Southern Finland. Of these participants, 76.55% identified as female, 21.15% as male and 2.30% reported a gender other than male or female. This gender distribution closely aligns with national statistics, which indicate that 78% of Finnish basic education teachers are female (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020). Teachers had a mean age of 51 years (mean, $M = 50.62$, standard deviation, SD = 9.46) and an average of 18 years of teaching experience ($M = 17.50$, SD = 9.77). Regarding classroom size, teachers reported an average of 19 students ($M = 19.39$, SD = 9.35), consistent with the average classroom size at the primary and secondary education levels in Finland (OECD, 2021). Table 1 presents participants' demographic information.

Procedure

The data collection process was launched in autumn 2022. Initially, permission to conduct research was obtained from the seven municipalities involved in the study. Subsequently, school principals in these municipalities were contacted. Eighty-four schools volunteered to participate in the study. In late September 2022, the questionnaire was made available and a web link was electronically distributed to 2491 participants across 84 schools using the online questionnaire platform provided by the first author's institution. Of these participants, 695 completed the questionnaire. After completion, questionnaire data was securely saved and stored on a cloud storage service at the first author's institution.

Ethical considerations

This study adhered to the ethical principles of research involving human participants and the ethical review process in the human sciences in Finland (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2019). Based on these guidelines, no ethical review statement from the Human Sciences Ethics Committee was deemed necessary. Participants were provided with the following ethical forms along with the electronic questionnaire via a cover letter: (a) the research notification, containing a brief description of the study; (b) the consent form, emphasising the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw at any time; and (c) the privacy notice, explaining the lawful processing and confidentiality of the personal data. Because we aimed to collect longitudinal data, we needed participants' email

TABLE 1 Participants' demographic background information.

Variable	*M* (SD)	%
Gender		
Female		76.55
Male		21.15
Other		2.30
Age	50.62 (9.46)	
Teaching experience	17.50 (9.77)	
Grade level		
Primary (grades 1–6)		50.52
Lower secondary (grades 7–9)		36.81
Primary and lower secondary (grades 1–9)		11.48
Lower and upper (grades 7–12)		0.89
Primary, lower, and upper secondary (grades 1–12)		0.30
Class characteristics		
Number of students in the classroom	19.39 (9.35)	
Number of students who have a mother tongue other than Finnish and Swedish	2.26 (3.35)	
Number of students who had intensified support	3.41 (3.14)	
Number of students who had special support	2.75 (4.02)	
Number of students who had significant learning difficulties	4.48 (3.81)	
Number of students who had significant attention problems	4.71 (4.07)	
Number of students who had significant behaviour problems	2.23 (2.29)	

Abbreviations: *M*, sample mean; SD, standard deviation.

addresses as personal identifiers in the data to link their pre- and post-survey responses. While participants' full anonymity to the research team members was not possible, we ensured that these personal identifiers were kept only in the knowledge of those research group members who needed to know them.

Measures

The data for this study were obtained from two sections of the questionnaire: (a) the demographic information section; and (b) the section containing five scales measuring affective attitudes towards inclusive education; subjective norms about inclusive practices; self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration; intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms; and personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. It took approximately 20 min to complete the questionnaire.

Attitudes towards inclusion scale

Teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education were measured using the Feelings About Inclusion subscale of the Attitudes Towards Inclusion Scale (AIS; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016). This subscale consists of four items. Participants were first presented with the statement, 'For each statement, choose the answer option that best matches your

opinion', followed by the items (e.g. 'I am pleased that including students with a range of abilities will make me a better teacher'). Factor loadings of items ranged from 0.52 to 0.86. The AIS uses a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Higher scores on this subscale indicate that respondents have more positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education. McDonald's omega score for the Feelings About Inclusion subscale was 0.80.

Inclusive practices scale

Teachers' personalised instructional practices and their collaboration and assessment practices were measured using two subscales of the Inclusive Practices Scale (IPS; Sharma et al., 2021). Participants were first presented with the statement, 'The following statements concern the planning and implementation of your teaching work in the current school. How often do you do the following things?', followed by eight items used for the Personalised Instructional Strategies subscale (e.g. 'I use a variety of instructional strategies within the learning activity to engage students') and eight items used for the Collaboration and Assessment Strategies subscale (e.g. 'I collaborate with teammates to support student learning'; 'I make test accommodations when necessary'). Factor loadings of items that belonged to the Personalised Instructional Strategies subscale ranged from 0.57 to 0.84, while factor loadings of items that belonged to the Collaboration and Assessment Strategies subscale ranged from 0.49 to 0.74. The IPS uses a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from *never* (1) to *very often* (5). Higher scores indicate that teachers implement personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices to a greater extent. McDonald's omega score was 0.84 for the Personalised Instructional Strategies subscale and 0.79 for the Collaboration and Assessment Strategies subscale. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for scales and subscales used in this study.

Subjective norms about inclusive practices scale

Subjective Norms About Inclusive Practices Scale (SNIPS) was developed by researchers of the current study to measure teachers' perceptions of social pressure from expectations

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics of the measurement scales.

Scale	Factor	*M*	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
AIS	Affective attitudes towards inclusive education	4.20	1.31	−0.32	−0.33
TEIP	Self-efficacy for instructional strategies	4.64	0.57	−0.38	0.75
	Self-efficacy for collaboration	4.65	0.60	−0.21	0.10
SNIPS	Subjective norms about inclusive practices	3.83	0.61	−0.54	0.93
ITICS	Intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms	5.82	0.75	−0.54	0.02
IPS	Personalised instructional practices	3.87	0.53	0.01	0.03
	Collaboration and assessment practices	3.99	0.50	−0.13	−0.27

Abbreviations: AIS, Attitudes Towards Inclusion Scale; IPS, Inclusive Practices Scale; ITICS, Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classroom Scale; *M*, sample mean; SD, standard deviation; SNIPS, Subjective Norms About Inclusive Practices Scale; TEIP, Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices.

of significant others regarding the implementation of inclusive practices. Scale items were based on the previously developed IPS (Sharma et al., 2021). With a total of nine items, three were selected from each subscale of the IPS (Personalised Instructional Strategies, Communicative Scaffolding Strategies and Collaboration and Assessment Strategies). Each item begins with 'In this school, most people who are important to me expect me to …' followed by the items chosen from IPS (e.g. 'modify instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students'; 'regularly share information and/or best practices with colleagues to improve practice'; 'use a variety of assessment strategies to measure student progress'). Factor loadings of items ranged from 0.61 to 0.77. SNIPS uses a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from *never* (1) to *very often* (5). Higher scores represent a greater perception of positive social pressure to implement inclusive practices. McDonald's omega score for SNIPS was 0.87.

Teacher efficacy for inclusive practices scale

Two subscales of the Finnish version of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (Savolainen et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2012) scale were used to measure teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration. Participants were first presented with the statement, 'The following statements concern your view of how you are able to meet the various challenges of teaching work. For each statement, choose the option that best corresponds to your own understanding', followed by six items used for the Self-Efficacy for Instructional Strategies subscale (e.g. 'I am confident in designing learning tasks so that the individual needs of students with disabilities are accommodated') and six items used for the Self-Efficacy for Collaboration subscale (e.g. 'I am confident in my ability to get parents involved in school activities of their children with disabilities'). Factor loadings of items that belonged to the Self-Efficacy for Instructional Strategies subscale ranged from 0.55 to 0.69, while factor loadings of items that belonged to the Self-Efficacy for Collaboration subscale ranged from 0.53 to 0.74. Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale items are rated on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (6). Higher scores indicate teachers have a stronger sense of self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration. McDonald's omega score was 0.73 for Self-Efficacy for Instructional Strategies and 0.76 for Self-Efficacy for Collaboration subscales.

Intention to teach in inclusive classroom scale

Teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms were measured using the Intention to Teach in Inclusive Classroom Scale (ITICS; Sharma & Jacobs, 2016). The ITICS comprises seven items divided into two-factor structures: Intention to Consult and Intention to Change the Curriculum. However, we found a high correlation between subscales in this model, resulting in discriminant validity constraints. Furthermore, both subscales showed poor reliability. To overcome these constraints, we used a one-dimensional model. Participants were first presented with the statement, 'The following statements are about your own work at your current school. How likely are you to do the following things at work?', followed by items (e.g. 'I change the curriculum to meet the learning needs of a student with learning difficulty enrolled in my class'; 'I consult with my colleagues to identify possible ways I can assist a struggling student in my class'). Factor loadings of items ranged from 0.52 to 0.78. The ITICS uses a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from *extremely unlikely* (1) to *extremely likely* (7). Higher scores indicate that teachers are more likely to intend to teach in inclusive classrooms. McDonald's omega score for the ITICS was 0.77.

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for individual scales and subscales involved *post-hoc* model modifications predominantly in the form of correlated residuals. These correlated residuals were added between items within the SNIPS, Self-Efficacy for Collaboration subscale, Personalised Instructional Strategies subscale and Collaboration and Assessment Strategies subscale to improve model fit. Table S1 provides details of the modifications applied to each of these scales and subscales.

Translation

The AIS, ITICS and IPS were not previously available in Finnish. These scales were translated from English to Finnish using the Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pre-testing and Documentation (TRAPD) approach, designed for cross-national surveys (European Social Survey, 2020). Recently, in the field of survey translation studies, TRAPD has been considered more appropriate than many other approaches, such as the commonly used back-translation method (Survey Research Centre, 2016). In this study, a professional translator initially translated scales using TRAPD. In the second step, the research team and translator collaborated to review the scale translations. The third step involved piloting scales with a small group of teachers. Finally, research team members decided on translations after discussing them with other participants.

Data analysis

In this study, CFA and structural equation modelling (SEM) with latent factors were used as the primary analysis methods. Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS (version 28) for descriptive statistics and Mplus (version 8.10) for CFA and SEM (Muthén & Muthén, 2023). Data were checked to test multicollinearity using variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values. According to the literature (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014), VIF values below 10.0 and tolerance values above 0.10 suggest the absence of a multicollinearity issue.

The first stage of analysis entailed conducting CFA individually for each scale and subscale that measures factors of TPB to verify the expected factor structure of these scales and subscales. The second stage involved performing CFA, including all individual CFA models and correlations between factors of TPB in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. The third stage comprised developing two structural models with TPB factors in two domains. The first model included five latent factors: affective attitudes towards inclusive education; subjective norms about inclusive practices; self-efficacy for instructional strategies; intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms; and personalised instructional practices. The second model also incorporated five latent factors: affective attitudes towards inclusive education; subjective norms about inclusive practices; self-efficacy for collaboration; intentions and collaboration; and assessment practices. Since SEM incorporates regression analysis within its framework, structural models were used in this study to investigate the extent to which affective attitudes, subjective norms and self-efficacy predict intentions. Additionally, models were employed to assess the extent to which self-efficacy and intentions predict inclusive practices.

Finally, models were used to explore whether intentions mediate indirect effects of affective attitudes, subjective norms and self-efficacy on inclusive practices. In this study, the mediating role of intentions was assessed using the bootstrapping approach to compute bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals for estimating indirect effects. According to MacKinnon et al. (2004), bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals are effective for testing mediation. The bootstrapping approach, with 1000 iterations, was used to obtain

reliable results consistent with the literature (Shrout & Bolger, 2002; Tofighi & Kelley, 2020). The statistical significance of the effect is assessed by whether the 95% confidence interval includes zero. If the confidence interval does not include zero, the effect is considered statistically significant (MacKinnon et al., 2004). Furthermore, full mediation occurs when the indirect effect through the mediator is statistically significant, while the direct effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable becomes non-significant (MacKinnon et al., 2007). Conversely, partial mediation exists when both direct and indirect effects through the mediator remain statistically significant (MacKinnon et al., 2007).

A weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator was employed for CFA and SEM owing to the ordinal nature of the Likert-type scales used in the current study. According to Brown (2006), WLSMV is the best choice for modelling ordered data. It provides less biased factor loadings compared with maximum likelihood (Beauducel & Herzberg, 2006) and also outperforms maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors in this regard, irrespective of the number of Likert-type scale response categories or sample size (Li, 2016).

Pairwise deletion is the default method for handling missing data with the WLSMV estimator in Mplus (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2010). Pairwise deletion produces unbiased estimates for parameters and their standard errors under the assumption that data are missing completely at random (MCAR) (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2010). We used Little's (1988) MCAR test to examine the missing data mechanism, and the result was non-significant (χ^2 (48) = 53.82, $p = 0.261$), supporting the MCAR assumption. The percentage of missing values ranged between 0 and 3.72%. Because participating teachers were nested within 84 schools, we accounted for the nested structure of our data using the 'type = complex' option available in Mplus.

The following fit indices were used to assess the goodness of fit for CFA and SEM models: comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR). Cutoff values for fit indices in this study were based on established guidelines in the literature. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), CFI and TLI values close to 0.95 indicate a good fit to the data. Similarly, an SRMR value <0.08 shows a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, an RMSEA value of ≤0.06 is considered indicative of a good fit to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

RESULTS

Measurement model

First, we used CFA to confirm each measurement model across all factors of TPB (see Table S1). Second, we tested two CFA models that included all individual CFA models corresponding to TPB factors in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. In the domain of personalised instructional practices, the CFA model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data (χ^2 (517, $N = 638$) = 1478.72, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.06), without any *post-hoc* model modifications. Similarly, in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices, the CFA model showed an acceptable fit to the data (χ^2 (517, $N = 638$) = 1606.70, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.07), also without *post-hoc* model modifications. Correlations between TPB factors in both domains are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Some correlations, as reported in Tables 3 and 4, exceed 0.50, which may suggest a potential multicollinearity between factors. To assess this issue, a collinearity diagnostic was conducted using VIF and tolerance values. In the domain of personalised instructional practices, VIF values ranged between 1.23 and 1.57, while tolerance values ranged between

TABLE 3 Correlations between latent factors in the domain of personalised instructional practices.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1. Affective attitudes	—				
2. Subjective norms about inclusive practices	0.27**	—			
3. Self-efficacy for instructional strategies	0.35**	0.38**	—		
4. Intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms	0.39**	0.48**	0.47**	—	
5. Personalised instructional practices	0.28**	0.50**	0.52**	0.59**	—

**$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

TABLE 4 Correlations between latent factors in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices.

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1. Affective attitudes	—				
2. Subjective norms about inclusive practices	0.27**	—			
3. Self-efficacy for collaboration	0.39**	0.41**	—		
4. Intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms	0.39**	0.48**	0.56**	—	
5. Collaboration and assessment practices	0.30**	0.51**	0.55**	0.66**	—

**$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

0.64 and 0.81. Furthermore, VIF values ranged between 1.24 and 1.69, with tolerance values between 0.59 and 0.81 in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices. Results showed no multicollinearity between factors in either domain, as all VIF values remained below 10.0 and all tolerance values exceeded 0.10.

Structural model

The final stage of data analysis involved constructing two structural models using factors from TPB in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. The results of these structural models are presented below as Models 1 and 2 in their respective domains.

Model 1

Model 1 exhibited an acceptable fit to the data in the domain of personalised instructional practices (χ^2 (519, $N = 638$) = 1507.23, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.06), without any *post-hoc* model modifications. A significant positive correlation was found between affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms about inclusive practices ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, there were significant positive correlations between self-efficacy for instructional strategies and subjective norms about inclusive practices ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) and between self-efficacy for instructional strategies and affective attitudes towards inclusive education ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$). Supporting Hypothesis 1, results indicated that affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for instructional strategies significantly predicted intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, with an explained variance of 55%. Corroborating Hypothesis 2, these intentions and self-efficacy for instructional strategies

significantly predicted personalised instructional practices, with an explained variance of 70%.

Results from bootstrapping analysis of indirect effects with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals provided support for Hypothesis 3. Indirect effects of affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for instructional strategies on personalised instructional practices via intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms were statistically significant, as evidenced by confidence intervals that did not include zero. Thus, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms mediated the indirect effect of affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms about inclusive practices on personalised instructional practices. Additionally, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms partially mediated the indirect effect of self-efficacy for instructional strategies on personalised instructional practices. This result suggests that the direct effect of self-efficacy for instructional strategies on personalised instructional practices was statistically significant, as the confidence interval for this effect did not include zero. Table 5 presents standardised results in the domain of personalised instructional practices.

Model 2

Model 2 had an acceptable fit to the data in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices (χ^2 (519, $N=638$) = 1624.42, $p<0.001$, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.07), without *post-hoc* model modifications. A significant positive correlation was found between affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms about inclusive practices ($r=0.31$, $p<0.001$). There were also significant positive correlations between self-efficacy for collaboration and subjective norms about inclusive practices ($r=0.46$, $p<0.001$) and between self-efficacy for collaboration and affective attitudes towards inclusive education ($r=0.43$, $p<0.001$). Supporting Hypothesis 1, results showed that affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive

TABLE 5 Standardised results in the domain of personalised instructional practices.

Factor	β	SE	BC 95% CI		R^2
			LL	UL	
Direct effect					
Intentions					0.55***
Affective attitudes	0.17***	0.01	0.11	0.24	
Subjective norms	0.38***	0.01	0.27	0.45	
Self-efficacy for instructional strategies	0.36***	0.01	0.24	0.43	
Personalised instructional practices					0.70***
Intentions	0.59***	0.01	0.45	0.72	
Self-efficacy for instructional strategies	0.32***	0.01	0.17	0.48	
Indirect effect on personalised instructional practices via intentions					
Affective attitudes	0.10***	0.01	0.07	0.13	
Subjective norms	0.22***	0.01	0.12	0.30	
Self-efficacy for instructional strategies	0.21***	0.01	0.14	0.30	

Note: Standardised effects (β), standard errors (SE), and significance testing for direct and indirect effects were obtained through bias-corrected (BC) 95% confidence interval (CI) analysis with 1000 iterations.

Abbreviations: LL, lower limit; R^2, multiple correlation squared; UL, upper limit.

***$p<0.001$.

practices and self-efficacy for collaboration significantly predicted intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, with an explained variance of 59%. These intentions significantly predicted collaboration and assessment practices. However, the effect size of self-efficacy for collaboration on collaboration and assessment practices ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$) was negligible and did not meet the threshold of substantive importance. This finding provides partial support for Hypothesis 2. Together, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and self-efficacy for collaboration explained 84% of the variance in collaboration and assessment practices.

Based on results from bootstrapping analysis of indirect effects with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed. Indirect effects of affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for collaboration on collaboration and assessment practices via intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms were statistically significant, as evidenced by confidence intervals that did not include zero. Consequently, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms mediated the indirect effect of affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms about inclusive practices on collaboration and assessment practices. Furthermore, intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms fully mediated the indirect effect of self-efficacy for collaboration on collaboration and assessment practices. This result indicates that the direct effect of self-efficacy for collaboration on collaboration and assessment practices was null, as the confidence interval for this effect included zero, despite the statistically significant *p*-value for the standardised coefficient. Table 6 demonstrates standardised results in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the link between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices, self-efficacy, intentions to teach

TABLE 6 Standardised results in the domain of collaboration and assessment practices.

Factor	β	SE	BC 95% CI		R^2
			LL	UL	
Direct effect					
Intentions					0.59***
Affective attitudes	0.14***	0.01	0.06	0.20	
Subjective norms	0.39***	0.01	0.31	0.46	
Self-efficacy for collaboration	0.42***	0.01	0.35	0.52	
Collaboration and assessment practices					0.84***
Intentions	0.88***	0.01	0.76	0.99	
Self-efficacy for collaboration	0.06***	0.02	−0.11	0.13	
Indirect effect on collaboration and assessment practices via intentions					
Affective attitudes	0.12***	0.01	0.06	0.17	
Subjective norms	0.35***	0.01	0.25	0.41	
Self-efficacy for collaboration	0.37***	0.02	0.29	0.52	

Note: Standardised effects (β), standard errors (SE), and significance testing for direct and indirect effects were obtained through bias-corrected (BC) 95% confidence interval (CI) analysis with 1000 iterations.

Abbreviations: LL, lower limit; R^2, multiple correlation squared; UL, upper limit.

***$p < 0.001$.

in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices based on Ajzen's (1991) TPB. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, this study found that teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy were positively related to their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. This finding supports Ajzen's (1991) TPB and corroborates the empirical findings of previous studies (Keppens et al., 2021; Monsen & Frederickson, 2004; Zainalabidin & Ma'rof, 2021). This result indicates that teachers with positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education, perceptions of a positive school ethos that conveys expectations of significant others to implement inclusive practices, and strong self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration tend to teach in inclusive classrooms.

Moreover, this study demonstrated positive correlations between teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education, subjective norms about inclusive practices and self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration. This result appears to be consistent with Werner et al.'s (2021) findings, which show a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, their perceptions of school support for inclusion and their self-efficacy. That is, teachers with positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education tend to perceive a positive school ethos that communicates expectations of significant others to implement inclusive practices and vice versa. Furthermore, those with strong self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration are likely to experience a positive school ethos and develop positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education, and vice versa. These findings underscore the importance of offering professional development programmes in inclusive education, as previous studies have identified their positive significant effects on these interrelated factors, which in turn could be linked to teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms (Aiello & Sharma, 2018; Berry, 2010; Romero-Contreras et al., 2013).

Corroborating Hypothesis 2, this study revealed that teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies and intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms were positively linked to their personalised instructional practices. This result corresponds with Ajzen's (1991) TPB and aligns with the findings of previous studies (De Neve et al., 2015; Leyser, 2002; Wang et al., 2015; Woodcock et al., 2023). This finding suggests that teachers with strong self-efficacy for instructional strategies and strong intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms are inclined to adapt their instructional materials and strategies to accommodate their students' diverse needs. Our results illustrate the importance of teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies and intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms for their involvement in personalised instructional practices.

Furthermore, this study's findings provided partial support for Hypothesis 2 regarding the domain of collaboration and assessment practices. Results indicated a positive association between teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their collaboration and assessment practices. This finding suggests that teachers with strong intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms tend to engage in collaboration and assessment practices. However, one unexpected finding was that teachers' self-efficacy for collaboration exhibited no direct relationship with their collaboration and assessment practices. While this finding diverges from the assumptions of TPB, Ajzen (1991) notes that the relationship between self-efficacy and behaviour can vary across different conditions. A possible explanation for this result can be drawn from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, positing that human behaviour is the product of the interaction between personal, environmental and behavioural factors. Based on this theory, the school environment may play a role in teachers' self-efficacy, which in turn may be linked to their behaviour. Indeed, research shows that certain school environmental factors, such as opportunities

for experiencing direct success or observing the successes of other teachers in specific domains, can enhance teachers' self-efficacy, which may enable them to engage in related behaviours (Bandura, 2012; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). The TALIS 2018 survey indicated that peer observation or mentoring was one of the least utilised professional development activities among Finnish teachers (Taajamo & Puhakka, 2019). This finding is supported by the research of Yada et al. (2019), revealing that vicarious learning was not a strong source of self-efficacy for Finnish teachers. These outcomes may suggest limited opportunities to experience and observe successful teacher collaboration within school activities. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy develops through positive mastery experiences and vicarious learning, which occur through observation. Therefore, this limitation may have specifically undermined teachers' self-efficacy for collaboration while leaving their intentions unaffected. This situation could have led to the absence of a direct link between teachers' self-efficacy for collaboration and their collaboration and assessment practices, whereas their intentions maintained a direct relationship with these practices. In practical terms, this finding highlights the importance of creating more opportunities for teacher collaboration and has implications for teacher training discussed in more detail in the conclusion section.

Supporting Hypothesis 3, teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms mediated the positive indirect effect of self-efficacy on their inclusive practices in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. This finding corroborates Ajzen's (1991) TPB and suggests that teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies is positively associated with their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, which, in turn, are linked to their engagement in personalised instructional practices. Similarly, the results indicate that teachers' self-efficacy in collaborating with parents and other professionals is positively related to their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, which in turn relates to their participation in collaboration and assessment practices. The present finding further underscores the significance of self-efficacy by demonstrating its indirect role through intentions in implementing more inclusive teaching and collaborative working and evaluation methods. In this respect, the result also appears to align with Deci and Ryan's (1985) argument, emphasising the importance of feeling capable of performing a behaviour. They argue that satisfying the basic human need for competence is a key driver of motivated behaviour. Therefore, fulfilling teachers' need for competence in using inclusive strategies is essential for motivating them to adopt more inclusive practices (MacCormack et al., 2021). From this argument, an implication that can be drawn is the possibility that fostering a school environment that supports teachers' beliefs in their ability to use inclusive teaching and teamwork strategies may enhance their intentions regarding inclusion and, in turn, relate to their engagement in more inclusive practices.

Additionally, the indirect effect of teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies on their personalised instructional practices was partially mediated by their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. Meanwhile, the indirect effect of teachers' self-efficacy for collaboration on their collaboration and assessment practices was fully mediated by their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. These results indicate that teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies had a direct effect on their implementation of personalised instructional practices beyond their intentions, unlike their self-efficacy for collaboration. These findings clearly underscore the domain-specific nature of teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices, as different domains of teacher self-efficacy exhibit different relationships with teachers' inclusive practices (Kiel et al., 2020; Sharma & Sokal, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Consistent with Hypothesis 3, a positive indirect effect of affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms about inclusive practices on teachers' inclusive

practices in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices was mediated by teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms.

That is, affective attitudes towards inclusive education and subjective norms are positively related to teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, which in turn are associated with their participation in personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. This finding aligns with Ajzen's (1991) TPB and the study by O'Toole and Burke (2013), highlighting the significance of teachers' favourable attitudes and a supportive school climate towards inclusive education in promoting the implementation of inclusive practices in their classrooms. Our results provide supporting evidence that teachers' positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education and their perceptions of a positive school ethos, which informs them about expectations for inclusive practices within the school community, play an indirect role via intentions in encouraging teachers' participation in inclusive teaching and team-based and assessment practices.

Limitations and future directions

This study has several limitations. First, our focus on teachers in southern Finland may limit the generalisability of our findings related to TPB to other regions in Finland and countries with different cultural and educational systems. Future research, using samples from the population in other parts of Finland and examining different cultural and educational contexts, is needed to assess the generalisability of these results to other regions and countries. Second, we could not examine potential differences in implementing inclusive practices between subgroups, such as primary vs. secondary school teachers or general vs. special education teachers. This may limit the generalisability of our findings across different teacher populations. These subgroup differences could be studied in future research to gain a more nuanced understanding of how different teacher populations implement inclusive practices.

Third, because this study used a cross-sectional design, findings regarding direct and indirect effects must be interpreted with caution and cannot be considered as evidence of causality. Therefore, the study's findings regarding the nature of all hypotheses tested offer only insights into possible logical relations among the examined factors. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal approach, such as a cross-lagged longitudinal design, to explore whether intentions play a mediating role. Such a design would also allow making assumptions regarding causality between TPB factors.

Fourth, the use of self-reports in the current study may be subject to a social desirability bias (King & Bruner, 2000). This makes it difficult to distinguish between what teachers actually do and what they think they do regarding inclusive practices. Although social desirability is mitigated in the current study by ensuring participant confidentiality (Grimm, 2010), there is a possibility that teachers would respond in a favourable way. Future research could utilise observational data on teachers' actual inclusive practices in classrooms to better understand their relationship with other TPB factors (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). However, conducting such a study would necessitate higher costs with smaller sample sizes. Additionally, future research could triangulate classroom observations of inclusive practices with other data sources, including surveys and in-depth interviews with principals, parents and students. Such a multi-method approach would also allow researchers to examine the nature and extent of inclusive practices more closely.

Fifth, *post-hoc* model modifications were applied to improve model fit by incorporating correlated residuals into CFAs for individual scales and subscales. Making such modifications without theoretical justification could lead to overfitting and capitalisation on chance associations in the sample data (Brown, 2006), potentially reducing the conclusiveness of

findings. However, we believe we have mitigated these risks by ensuring that all modifications were justified both statistically and theoretically.

Sixth, since SNIPS is a new scale developed by researchers of the current study, it could not be empirically tested in preliminary studies. Thus, there may be some limitations to its validity. The validity of this questionnaire scale should be investigated further in forthcoming research. Finally, the very large path coefficient between intentions and inclusive practices within the domain of collaboration and assessment practices might be cause for concern. However, the pairwise correlation table indicates that although concepts share variance, they are distinct ($r = 0.66$).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study provided support for the utility of the TPB framework in understanding teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and their inclusive practices in the domains of personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices. By identifying factors linked to teachers' intentions and practices regarding inclusion, the findings of this research could guide policymakers and educators in providing targeted professional development opportunities for teachers. Consequently, the study's results have implications for pre-service and in-service teacher training and development.

First, results underscore the importance of addressing teachers' affective attitudes towards inclusive education through teacher education programmes. Bandura (1994) suggests that when individuals observe others similar to themselves achieving success through persistent effort, they tend to positively approach performing the same behaviour. Lautenbach and Heyder (2019) also found that teachers' vicarious experiences in practical fieldwork positively influenced their attitudes towards inclusive education. Therefore, having teachers observe and model experienced teachers in teaching students with diverse needs in teacher education programmes could be an effective approach to fostering positive affective attitudes towards inclusive education. Fostering such attitudes could strengthen teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms, which in turn could be associated with their engagement in personalised instructional practices and collaboration and assessment practices.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of enhancing teachers' self-efficacy for instructional strategies and collaboration. Earlier research indicates that mastery experience is the most powerful source of teachers' self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Wilson et al. (2020) also note that past success in implementing inclusive practices reinforces teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices, while failures have the opposite effect. Therefore, teachers should be offered opportunities to gain positive and direct mastery experiences, as well as vicarious learning of instructional strategies and collaboration in inclusive schools and classrooms, as part of the teaching practice in teacher education programmes (Weber & Greiner, 2019). Building self-efficacy in these domains may increase their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and play a direct or indirect role, through these intentions, in their involvement in these inclusive practices.

Finally, the results reveal the role of positive social pressure in promoting inclusive practices, which may arise from the expectations of school principals, other teachers and parents who support inclusion. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a school climate that promotes inclusion and suggests that a school environment that is supportive of inclusive education may influence teachers' inclusive practices. This finding could inform future educational policies on inclusive education in Finland and other countries. Offering specific and unequivocal support and guidance for inclusive education in educational policies may help establish clear expectations of significant others in the school community regarding

the implementation of inclusive practices. School leadership could play an important role in creating a school-wide inclusive working culture and supporting significant others in the school community to promote an inclusive school ethos (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). Such initiatives may help improve teachers' feelings of a positive school ethos to implement inclusive practices. This, in turn, can strengthen their intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms and ultimately be associated with their more inclusive teaching and working practices.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

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ETHICS STATEMENT

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (https://www.tenk.fi/en). Based on these guidelines, ethics approval was not required for this study.

CONSENT

All participants provided informed consent prior to completing the surveys.

ORCID

İpek Gülsün https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9182-407X
Olli-Pekka Malinen https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8045-041X
Akie Yada https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1944-6793
Hannu Savolainen https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1264-3746

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