

## Attitudes of English as a Foreign Language Teachers and Future Teachers toward Inclusive Education: Unveiling the Certification Paradox

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**Abstract:** Teachers' attitudes are among the most significant factors that contribute to the effectiveness of inclusive education practices. Previous studies on attitudes toward inclusive education have not thoroughly examined the three primary components, including gender, age, training, and teaching experience of Indonesian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and future teachers, as well as certification of in-service teachers. Therefore, an investigation of the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers becomes paramount. The purpose of this study was to examine attitudes, actions, and processes, as well as the factors influencing attitudes toward inclusive education. Using convenience sampling, 147 EFL teachers and future teachers were recruited. This cross-sectional survey design involved online distribution of validated scales during the 2025 academic semester, with informed consent and ethical approval from institutional review boards. Participants completed the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES; including cognitive, affective, and behavioral components) and the second dimension of Accessibility, Process, Permanent, and Demanded Training (APTD; focusing on process) scale. The data were analyzed descriptively and using t-tests, one-way ANOVAs, and multiple regression analyses. The attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers towards inclusive education are generally positive. There is a significant difference between those teachers. Future teachers and young in-service teachers tend to have the most positive attitude toward inclusive education. In addition, there are no statistically significant differences in gender, teaching experience with students with special needs, or training/seminar/course participation. Certified teachers tend to have less positive attitudes, which reflects the certification paradox. Indonesian EFL teachers and future teachers have positive attitudes toward inclusive education. An intensive training program and evaluation of the certification program are recommended to foster the implementation of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** attitudes, inclusive education, EFL teachers, future teachers, certification paradox.

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### ■ INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of students with special educational needs in regular classrooms to provide equal educational opportunities has become a key priority in educational policy (Agavelyan et al., 2020; Hakim et al., 2025). Support from the government, institutions, teachers, and all members of society can help

create a more sustainable world (Brandisauskiene et al., 2020). Therefore, countries worldwide are encouraged to reform educational policies to promote inclusive education.

Traditionally, students with disabilities have been subject to discrimination, frequently stigmatized, underestimated, and studied separately in segregated schools (Gallego-Ortega

& Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020). However, the movement toward inclusion has led to a tendency to educate students with and without disabilities together in mainstream settings rather than in special schools (Saloviita, 2020a, 2020b). Therefore, regular schools need to establish an educational system responsive to this trend (Cardona-Molto et al., 2020) and strive to meet the academic needs of all students, regardless of their skills or disabilities (Adigun, 2021).

In line with this, Indonesia has embraced inclusive education through a series of legal frameworks, ranging from the National Education System Law to the recent 2019–2024 Master Plan for Inclusive Education (Government of Indonesia, 2003; Ministry of National Education, 2009; Ministry of National Development Planning, 2019). Therefore, the Master Plan aims to transform the attitudes of parents, teachers, school members, and other education stakeholders towards accepting inclusive education and children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2021).

Student enrollment with disabilities is governed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) Regulation No. 44/2019, which was subsequently updated by Regulation No. 1/2021 on New Student Admissions (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019, 2021). Teachers should be ready to have students with disabilities in their classes. Future teachers and university students who intend to become teachers should prepare themselves from the outset. English teachers and future teachers face additional challenges since English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia.

Although laws and regulations in Indonesia and other countries on the concept of equality education have been in place for decades, their effective implementation has not been achieved. Many schools reject the existence and presence of inclusive students (Basit et al., 2025). Inclusive

students are considered a burden. According to 2021 data, the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in formal education is 12.26% (Novrizaldi, 2022). It is a small number of students. Data from 2024 show that 17.85% of individuals with disabilities have never attended formal education (Zaravina, 2024). Moreover, in one region, there is only one school serving a range of inclusive students, and that school typically has only one inclusive teacher. Indonesia is experiencing a shortage of special needs teachers (Arifa, 2024).

In addition, the policies implemented rely on teachers' knowledge and understanding (Adigun, 2021). Teachers' readiness and understanding of inclusive education influence their perception (Faujiyyah et al., 2025) and serve as an essential foundation for working with students with special needs (Meriska et al., 2025). However, most teachers' knowledge of specific features, signs, and symptoms associated with special educational needs remains limited (Alali et al., 2020). As a result, teachers often feel worried and unprepared, and do not always possess the necessary competence, strong motivation, and positive attitudes to meet the inclusive education challenge (Cardona-Molto et al., 2020; Manrique et al., 2019; Saloviita, 2020b).

Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and skills are three key elements of their competence. Those three elements, the view of diversity in regular classrooms and the move to respond effectively to those differences, positively affect inclusive education practice (Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020; Saloviita, 2020a; Yada & Alnahdi, 2021). Therefore, teachers and future teachers need to prepare the proper knowledge, attitudes, and skills to promote a successful and effective implementation of inclusive education (Agavelyan et al., 2020; Hansen et al., 2017) to prevent student segregation and give them educational

equity and social justice (Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021).

Teachers' and future teachers' attitudes toward integration or inclusion have been studied extensively for decades across various countries and have become the most reliable predictors of their behavior. In recent studies, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021; Manrique et al., 2019; Saloviita, 2020a, 2020b; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014; Yada & Alnahdi, 2021) and future teachers' attitudes (Adigun, 2021; Efilti & Arslan, 2017; Forlin et al., 2011; Hassanein et al., 2021; Kis, 2016; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020) have been studied. They were preschool, comprehensive, basic, and secondary school teachers; special education teachers; and professors at a university. The future teachers were from the faculty of education. However, less is known about the attitudes of English teachers and future teachers, especially those teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), toward inclusive education. To address this gap, it is essential to examine the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers toward the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms.

EFL teachers and future teachers face challenges in inclusive education. They lack adequate inclusive and specialized pedagogies training and use a "one-size-fits-all" approach. They have difficulty developing strategies, classroom management plans, and adapted materials and assessments that meet students' diverse needs. Recent studies also present persistent barriers of EFL teachers and future teachers, such as having negative attitudes toward special needs students, uneven institutional and technological support, teaching and learning environment, and struggling with students' linguistic proficiency, behavioral, and motivation issues (Azka et al., 2025; Bekteshi et al., 2025; Sari, 2025; Tah, 2025).

Additionally, research on teachers' and future teachers' attitudes toward inclusive

education remains inconclusive. Associations with various background variables, such as age, gender, educational degrees, diversity training, and teaching experience (Supriyanto, 2019), vary. However, teachers are generally positive towards the notion of inclusive education (Saloviita, 2020a). Although there was no difference between female and male teachers (Efilti & Arslan, 2017), other studies have shown that female teachers have a more positive attitude towards inclusion than males (Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020; Saloviita, 2020b; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014), and some have shown that male teachers have more positive attitudes (Adigun, 2021; Agavelyan et al., 2020; Sharma, 2019). Although studies have shown that teachers' age is not a significant factor in attitudes (Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2021), other studies have found that younger teachers tend to be more positive than older teachers (Saloviita, 2020a; Sharma, 2019).

Studies suggest that direct contact and experience with students with disabilities affect teachers' inclusive attitudes (Narkun & Smogorzewska, 2020; Navarro-Mateu et al., 2020; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). Teachers and future teachers should receive rigorous training, and those who have not received training in educational inclusion tend to have lower confidence (Manrique et al., 2019; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). Trained and experienced teachers tend to have more positive attitudes than untrained and inexperienced ones (Sharma, 2019); however, no difference was found between certified and uncertified teachers (Nurhattati et al., 2020).

Since the findings of previous studies on attitudes toward inclusive education are inconclusive in terms of gender, age, training, and experience, and there is a lack of studies on the attitudes of English as a foreign language teachers and future teachers, an investigation of the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers becomes of paramount importance. Previous

studies on the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers have not been investigated in sufficient depth across three main components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral, as well as the action and process. Gender-related findings, the effect of age, and other relevant factors have not been adequately addressed in the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers. In addition, studies on training and teaching experience remain limited in the focus of EFL educators.

Therefore, to address research gaps, this study aimed to examine the attitudes of English as a foreign language teachers and future teachers toward inclusive education, the actions and processes they may employ in working with students with special needs, and the factors that influence their attitudes toward inclusive education. The research questions are as follows:

Research Questions: (1) What attitudes (cognitive/affective/behavioral) do Indonesian EFL teachers/preservice hold toward inclusion? (2) How do gender, age, experience, training, and certification predict attitudes? (3) What best predicts attitude towards inclusion?

## ■ METHOD

### Participants

This study used convenience sampling to recruit English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and future teachers. The inclusion criteria were being an active English teacher or a future teacher at the time of data collection and providing consent to participate in the study.

A total of 147 EFL teachers and future teachers conveniently participated in the study. Convenience sampling facilitated the rapid collection of data from targeted populations in Bali, Indonesia. Bali-centric sample limits national generalizability; however, the findings are internally valid and applicable to similar EFL contexts. From the sample, 55.8% were future teachers, and 44.2% were teachers. In terms of gender, 36.7% were male, while 63.9% were female. Their ages range from 18 to over 55 years old.

The majority of participants (66.7%) were 18-25 years old. In the sample, 91.8% had no experience teaching students with disabilities, and 78.9% had never received any training in inclusive education or diversity. Among teachers, 58.5% were certified, 61% had fewer than 10 years of work experience, and 54% were junior high school teachers. Among future teachers, 36% were students from the previous semester.

### Research Design and Procedure

This is a cross-sectional survey design that involved online distributed scales during the 2025 academic year. This study obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Indonesia. The heads of English teacher organizations, the coordinator of the study programs in English Language Education, and English Education lecturers were contacted via WhatsApp. They were informed about the purpose of the study and provided with a link to five Likert-scale questionnaires designed using Google Forms. The link and the informed consent were distributed to English teachers and future teachers.

### Survey Instrument

This study combined two scales. The first was the Multidimensional Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES). This scale contains 18 self-report measures to assess teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. It has three domains: cognitive (beliefs, six items), affective (emotions, six items), and behavioural (intentions, six items). The examples of indicators in the cognitive domain include "An inclusive school allows academic advancement for all students" (item 1) and "Students with disabilities should be enrolled in special education classes" (item 2, reverse).

Seven experts knowledgeable in inclusive education, measurement, and special education validated this scale. The reliability of the original version of MATIES has been well established,

with an alpha coefficient of 0.91 (Mahat, 2008), as cited in Hassanein et al. (2021). An Indonesian translation of the MATIES scale has been validated and used (Karolina et al., 2024). The internal consistency of the Indonesian translation,  $\alpha = 0.96$  (Muzdalifah & Billah, 2017). In this study, MATIES underwent a pilot test as a preliminary validation involving 30 participants. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated strong construct validity and supported an acceptable model fit (CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06). In addition, the full-scale reliability was also high, demonstrating excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95). The reliability of the subscales is as follows:  $\alpha = 0.77$  for cognitive,  $\alpha = 0.78$  for affective, and  $\alpha = 0.91$  for behavioral.

The second was the APTD scale, which was named after the following factors: "Accessibility to the university campus"; "Actions and inclusive educational Processes"; "Permanent training"; "Demanded training." Initially, this tool was used to analyze educators' perceptions of the inclusion of higher education students with special educational needs. This present study focused on and adapted only nine items of the second dimension of this scale, "the actions and inclusive educational processes." This second dimension addressed and posed questions that assessed teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs (González-Castellano et al., 2021). Teachers are key in creating and adapting content, activities, materials, teaching strategies, and assessments to meet students' diverse needs. Since the focus was on the attitudes of the teachers, this study did not explore the first dimension, the accessibility of special needs students, the third, the ongoing training provided to teachers, or the fourth dimension, the expected training to support the implementation of inclusive education.

An individual validation process was conducted for this scale as part of this study. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was

conducted to assess construct validity and factor structure. The dimension of action and inclusive educational processes showed good reliability,  $\alpha = 0.87$  (González-Castellano et al., 2021). The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) indicated strong agreement in measuring attitudes towards people with disabilities. In this study, APTD underwent a pilot study. The result of the pilot study, using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), indicated acceptable factorial validity, with a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.92 and standardized factor loadings exceeding 0.60.

Combining MATIES and the second dimension of APTD yielded 27 items for the present study scale. The Indonesian translation was validated and piloted, and this study replicated the high reliability rate with an  $\alpha$  of 0.8.

### Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 was used to compute descriptive statistics (Means and standard deviations for all items) and to conduct other statistical analyses. The effect size was detected using Cohen's *d*. The difference in attitudes between EFL teachers and future teachers was calculated using a *t*-test. Additionally, a *t*-test was conducted to examine the factors influencing the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers, including gender, teachers' certification status, experience with inclusive teaching, and training in inclusive education. To analyze the relationships among participants' ages, students' teaching years, and teachers' work experience and attitudes, this study employed a one-way ANOVA. Lastly, multiple regression was used to identify which factor best predicted attitude.

## ■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Attitudes of Indonesian EFL Teachers/Preservice toward Inclusion

The attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers towards inclusive education are generally

positive ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ); however, their responses also indicate an apparent tension between what they believe in theory and what they perceive as feasible in practice. There is an inconsistency in the cognitive component. EFL teachers and future teachers firmly believe that students with disabilities should be educated in special education schools (item 2,  $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 1.156$ ) to save them from rejection (item 6,  $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.201$ ). However, at the same time, the participants believe that the inclusion of special needs students in regular school can facilitate appropriate behavior among students (item 3,  $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.760$ ), help them learn in a

modified curriculum (item 4,  $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = 0.708$ ) and make academic progress (item 1,  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.807$ ) without a huge budget (item 5,  $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 1.170$ ) (table 1). Their answers suggested noticeable patterns: they strongly supported the core principles of inclusion; however, many participants viewed special schools as safer spaces that shield students and doubted the practicality and feasibility of adaptation. These findings present a “yes, but” cognitive stance and explain why inclusive education in Indonesia remains more normative and legalistic than fully realized in practice.

**Table 1.** Means and standard deviations for scores on the MATIES scale (cognitive component)

Item	M	SD
1. An inclusive school allows academic advancement for all students, regardless of aptitude.	4.22	0.807
2. Students with disabilities should be enrolled in special education classes.	3.92	1.156
3. Inclusion promotes socially acceptable behavior among all students.	4.29	0.760
4. Any student can learn from the school's standard curriculum if it is tailored to their specific needs.	4.24	0.708
5. Students with disabilities should be separated since it is prohibitively expensive to adapt the physical environment of the school.	2.97	1.170
6. Students with disabilities should be placed in special education schools so that they do not face rejection in regular schools.	3.54	1.201
Total cognitive component	3.87	0.967

The inconsistency of the cognitive component in the present study highlights the need for more inclusive educational socialization or training programs for EFL teachers and future teachers. Training programs that incorporate didactic and educational experiences (Manrique et al., 2019) may enhance teachers' confidence (Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014) and lead to a successful inclusive teaching experience.

Contrary to cognitive attitudes, the affective component presented low emotional comfort ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ). Rather than readiness, it indicated neutral to negative emotional responses. The affective component indicates that EFL

teachers and future teachers experienced minimal frustration when communicating with students with disabilities (items 7 and 9;  $M = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 1.118$ ;  $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 1.146$ ), suggesting limited anticipated emotional distress. The adaptation and progression in the curriculum and classroom interaction (items 12,  $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 1.105$ , and item 8,  $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.162$ ) emerged as primary barriers to the affective component. Low scores across interaction, collaboration with regular students, and curriculum adaptation reflected reluctance to implement and pragmatic emotional restraint despite cognitive support (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Means and standard deviations for scores on the MATIES scale (affective component)

Item	M	SD
7. I become frustrated when I have problems communicating with students who have a disability.	2.79	1.118
8. I become upset when they are unable to keep up with the daily content in my classroom.	3.14	1.162
9. I become upset when I find it difficult to understand students with disabilities.	2.78	1.146
10. I am hesitant to include students with disabilities in regular classrooms with students without disabilities.	2.44	1.177
11. I am concerned that pupils with disabilities, regardless of severity, are placed in mainstream classrooms.	2.65	1.139
12. I become annoyed when I have to change the curriculum to match the particular needs of each student.	2.67	1.105
Total Affective Component	2.74	1.141

Continuous training programs enable teachers to identify students' needs, make adjustments for them, and establish positive relationships with inclusive students (González-Castellano et al., 2021). Sufficient training programs can enhance sustainable development (Tavakkoli & Rashidi, 2020). Sustainable professional development, including competencies for working with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, contributes to inclusive education (Agavelyan et al., 2020; Leifler, 2020).

Further study is needed to conduct and evaluate the inclusive educational training program.

The behavioural component in the MATIES scale and action and inclusive educational process items from the second dimension of the APTD scale report the willingness of EFL teachers and future teachers to make adaptations and modifications to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. However, these efforts place an additional burden on teachers (Tables 3 and 4).

**Table 3.** Means and standard deviations for scores on the MATIES scale (behavioural component)

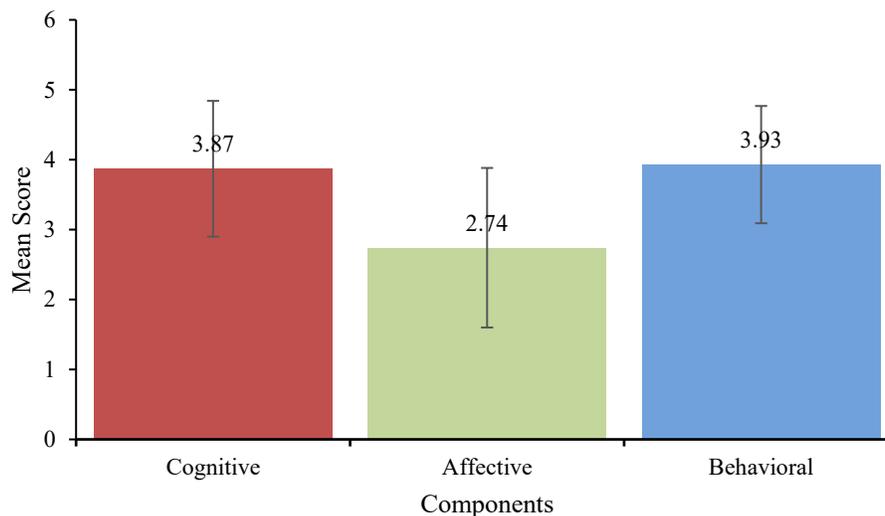
Item	M	SD
13. I am open to encouraging children with disabilities to participate in every social event in the regular classroom.	4.10	0.822
14. I am willing to tailor the program to the specific needs of all pupils, regardless of ability.	4.07	0.768
15. I am willing to physically integrate individuals with severe disabilities in the normal classroom with appropriate support.	3.67	0.982
16. I am willing to change the physical environment to accommodate kids with disabilities in the normal classroom.	3.75	0.875
17. I am willing to modify my communication strategies so that all kids with emotional and behavioral disorders can successfully participate in the regular classroom.	3.95	0.801
18. I am willing to alter the assessment of individual students so that inclusive education can take place.	4.06	0.761
Total Behavioral Component	3.93	0.835

Although the EFL teachers and future teachers stated their willingness, a classic willingness-difficulty paradox was evident based on the data. Item 15 in Table 4 ( $M > 4.0$ ) signaled profound pessimism in behavioral willingness and diagnosed the inclusion crisis “willing but unable.”

The mean scores for the three components are shown in the bar chart (Figure 1). The orange bar, the cognitive component, indicates strong theoretical beliefs. The green bar, the affective

component, shows hesitation, reluctance, and low emotional comfort. Meanwhile, the blue bar, representing the behavioral component, indicates a high willingness to act. The “high-low-high” pattern suggests a “yes, but” paradox.

Although many teachers are unprepared to teach students with special educational needs (Manrique et al., 2019), the present study’s EFL teachers and future teachers demonstrated moderate overall readiness to address this



**Figure 1.** The “yes, but” bar chart

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations for scores on the APTD scale (action and inclusive educational process)

Item	M	SD
1. I must adapt the content of the studies to the peculiarities of students with special educational needs.	4.07	0.741
2. I must adjust the activities to the characteristics of kids with specific educational needs.	4.09	0.776
3. I must modify the resources used in the activities to suit the characteristics of kids with unique educational needs.	4.05	0.770
4. I believe that kids with unique educational needs should be given resources that are appropriate for their educational requirements.	4.38	0.655
5. I modify the methods to adapt to the peculiarities of children with specific educational needs (examples: use of visual aids, task sequencing, etc.).	4.22	0.763
6. Specific training is required to work with students with specific educational needs.	3.43	1.060
7. It would be difficult for me to change my subject's contents and materials to meet the demands of pupils with special educational needs.	4.51	0.666

8. Developing parallel activities for students with unique educational needs would be problematic.	3.18	1.000
9. I believe that working with pupils with unique educational needs is an additional task for teachers.	3.80	0.936
Total Action and inclusive educational process	3.97	0.819

challenge. Indonesian EFL teachers and future teachers demonstrate a strong theoretical commitment to adapting and modifying curricula, materials, and strategies to welcome and support students with disabilities. This positive response to differences affects the implementation of inclusion (Saloviita, 2020a). However, this positive intent coexists with cognitive inconsistencies. Teachers' knowledge of high-perceived difficulty in implementing adaptation created a capability-confidence gap.

### Attitudes of EFL Teachers and Future Teachers

The differences in attitudes between teachers and future teachers toward inclusive education were analyzed using a t-test. An independent sample t-test shows there is a significant difference between EFL teachers and future teachers;  $t(147) = 5.043$ ,  $p < .001$  with a small effect size,  $d = .15$ . Future teachers are slightly more positive towards inclusion than the teachers (Table 5)

**Table 5.** Result of the independent sample t-test

	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.	d
EFL future teachers	82	102.91	12.713	5.043	.000	.15
EFL teacher	65	94.00	8.660			
Gender:						
Female	94	99.31	12.708	0.459	.651	-
Male	53	98.38	10.492			
Certification:						
Uncertified in-service and pre-service teachers	109	101.69	11.808	5.935	.000	.2
Certified in-service teachers	38	91.18	8.392			
Uncertified in-service teachers	27	97.96	7.517	3.349	.001	.15
Certified in-service teachers	38	91.18	8.392			
Having an inclusive teaching experience:						
Inexperienced	135	99.30	12.006	1.129	.261	-
Experienced	12	95.25	10.763			
Having inclusive education training/seminars/courses:						
Untrained	115	99.15	11.946	0.336	.737	-
Trained	32	98.34	12.031			
$n = 147$ .						
$p < .05$						

In the present study, Indonesian EFL future teachers have more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than in-service teachers. This finding aligns with a previous study conducted by Lemoine et al. (2024). Furthermore, future

teachers with high inclusive awareness (Emaliana et al., 2024) and young novice teachers have the most positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

Although most of them are young and lack experience teaching inclusive students and

professional teacher certification, they demonstrate better cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes, including action and inclusive educational processes, than more senior teachers. They believe that teachers play an important role in inclusive classes and need to work harder. They also believe that effective planning, instruction, and classroom management skills enable them to work with students with special needs and foster success in inclusive classrooms (Nurkhamidah et al., 2024).

### **Attitudes Differences on Gender, Inclusive Teaching Experience, Training, and Certification.**

Analyzed using a t-test (Table 5), there is no statistically significant difference between male and female EFL teachers and future teachers;  $t(147) = 0.459$ ,  $p = .651$ . This study supports the findings of Efiliti & Arslan (2017) that there are no differences between EFL male and female teachers and future teachers in their attitudes towards inclusive education. In addition, there is no significant difference between those with experience teaching students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms and those without ( $t(147) = 1.129$ ,  $p = .261$ ). Moreover, no statistical difference was found between those who had received inclusive educational training/seminar/course and those who had never received it,  $t(147) = 0.663$ ,  $p = .737$ . However, there were fresher, idealistic perspectives. The future teachers in this study significantly outperformed the teacher ( $t(147) = 5.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.15$ ). More strikingly, there was a significant difference among in-service teachers in the case of teachers' certification,  $t(65) = 3.349$ ,  $p = .001$ , with a small effect size,  $d = .15$ . There was a certification paradox: uncertified teachers scored higher than EFL certified teachers, potentially due to certification content. The content emphasizes general pedagogy and subject mastery (EFL)

without addressing inclusive competence, special education needs, diversity, or differentiated materials.

In terms of certification, this study does not align with the findings of Nurhattati et al. (2020), who reported null effects. Based on the findings, certification appeared as a counterintuitive negative predictor. It is an issue that uncertified EFL teachers in Indonesia tend to have more positive attitudes, readiness, and willingness to work with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Meanwhile, certified Indonesian EFL teachers exhibit significantly less positive inclusive attitudes.

Certification is a policy aimed at improving education quality through increasing teachers' competence and welfare (Fitriani & Novitasari, 2024). The counterintuitive certification paradox necessitates urgent redesign of credentialing. Teachers' competence should also include modules on special education needs to address pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competencies. Certified teachers receive more payment (De Ree, 2015). With higher salaries, certified teachers are expected to work harder and invest additional effort in preparing, teaching, and learning (Kusumawardhani, 2017). Future research may identify and evaluate the challenges faced by certified teachers and empower them to enhance their professional practice.

### **Attitudes Differences on Age and Work Experience**

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the attitudes of EFL teachers and future teachers towards inclusive education, with respect to age and work experience. Future teachers and young in-service teachers have the most positive attitudes toward inclusive education, followed by very senior teachers aged 55 and older; mid-career groups scored the lowest. The differences are statistically

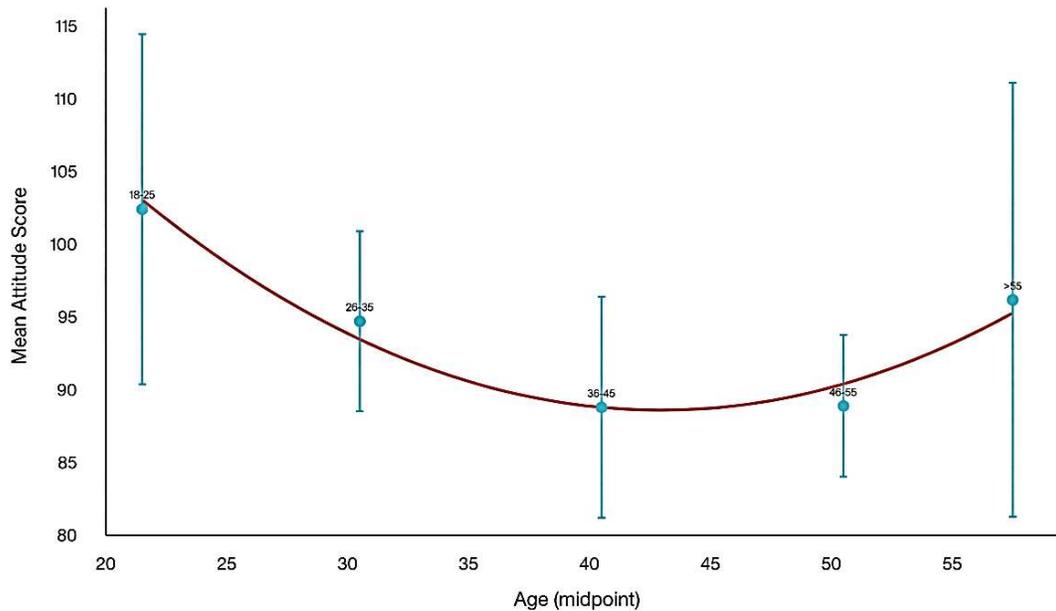
significant,  $F(147) = 8.184, p < .001$ , with a small effect size,  $d = .2$ . Similarly, future teachers and novice in-service teachers had high positive attitudes, followed by senior teachers who had worked for more than 30 years, with mid-career teachers being the least enthusiastic. A significant difference was found,  $F(147) = 7.906, p < .001$ ,

with a small effect size,  $d = .2$ . Table 6 illustrates this U-shaped trajectory, showing that career entry and exit occur at idealism peaks and that mid-career performance declines. It revealed mid-career burnout and overload, exacerbated by a lack of support for special education needs.

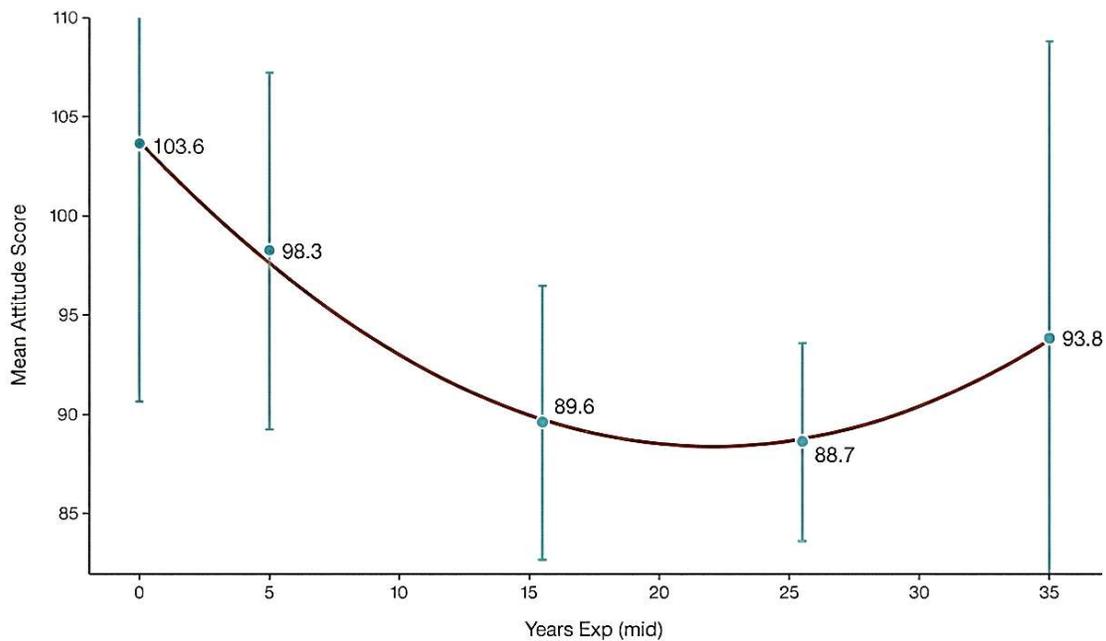
**Table 6.** Result of one-way ANOVA

	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	d
Age:				8.284	.000	.2
18-25	98	102.40	12.042			
26-35	20	94.70	6.182			
36-45	14	88.79	7.597			
46-55	9	88.89	4.859			
>55	6	96.17	14.905			
Work experience:				7.906	.000	.2
Unemployed	67	103.48	12.814			
0-10 years	49	98.24	8.971			
11-20 years	19	89.58	6.891			
21-30 years	5	88.6	4.980			
>30 years	7	93.86	14.916			

$n = 147.$   
 $p < .05$



**Figure 2.** U-Shaped Age-Attitude relation



**Figure 3.** U-Shaped work experience-attitude relation

In contrast to Gallego-Ortega & Rodríguez-Fuentes (2021), the age differences are significant. Figures 2 and 3 present scatter plots of age/work experience versus attitudes. Figure 2 shows that the younger and older groups peak in the positive direction, whereas the mid-career group dips. Similarly, Figure 3 shows that future teachers and seniors peak positively, whereas the mid-career group declines.

#### No Predictor Within a Full Model

In present study, gender,  $r(147) = -.038$ ,  $p = .326$ , inclusive teaching experience,  $r(147) = -.093$ ,  $p = .130$ , and training,  $r(147) = -.028$ ,  $p = .369$ , have small correlation with attitudes, while certification,  $r(147) = -.387$ ,  $p < .001$ , age,  $r(147) = -.361$ ,  $p < .001$ , and work experience,  $r(147) = -.371$ ,  $p < .001$  have medium significant correlation with attitudes of inclusive education.

Analyzed by multiple regression (Table 7), attitudes toward inclusive education are explained by 19% of those variables. Bivariate correlations revealed medium negative associations for certification, age, and work experience, whereas gender, inclusive experience, and training showed negligible associations. None of the variables makes a significant unique contribution to inclusive education ( $p < .05$ ). Teacher certification demonstrated the strongest bivariate relationship ( $r = -.387$ ) with the largest standardized coefficient, although falling short of multivariate significance. The certification's strong correlation reflected shared variance with teachers' work experience age. However, no predictors achieved unique significance in the multivariate model. It lost significance in the full model, potentially because age, work experience, and certification often co-occur among the same teachers.

**Table 7.** Result of multiple regression analysis

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Predictors	r	β	Sig.
Attitudes	0.194	3.668	Gender	-.038	.092	.271
			Certification	-.387	-.248	.096

Inclusive Experience	-.093	-.025	.765
Training	-.028	.045	.587
Age	-.361	.012	.954
Work Experience	-.371	-.060	.762

$n = 147.$

$p < .05$

This study reveals barriers to the implementation of inclusive education, including the fact that mid-career teachers had the lowest attitudes, that certification was negatively correlated with attitudes, and that no predictor accounted for more than 19.4% of the variance. Those contradictions recommend principled support exceeds practical readiness.

## ■ CONCLUSION

The findings from this study show that Indonesian EFL teachers and future teachers generally hold positive attitudes (cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, including action and inclusive educational processes) towards inclusive education. The cognitive component is inconsistent; the affective component reflects implementation reluctance; and the behavioral component signals a classic willingness-difficulty paradox. No statistically significant differences were found in gender, teaching experience, or training. The age profile showed a U-shaped pattern, indicating that future teachers significantly outperformed EFL teachers, whereas mid-career teachers experienced burnout. The certification's strong correlation reflected shared variance with teachers' work experience and age. However, no predictors achieved unique significance in the multivariate model.

There are some limitations of this study. First, the sample does not represent EFL teachers and future teachers across Indonesia. A large national sample can give more representative results. Stratified sampling is recommended for future policy calls. Second, the cross-sectional

design prevents causal interference. To confirm that age can drive attitude change, a longitudinal study is needed. Third, self-reported measures are susceptible to social desirability bias, which can inflate reported willingness and underreport implementation barriers. Fourth, the regression model explains only 19.4%, leaving unexplained 80.6%. Nevertheless, the design leads the authors to conclude that the study is valid and reliable. This study suggests sustainable professional development and regular, intensive training programs to educate EFL teachers and future teachers. Evaluating certification programs to address negative correlations and empowering EFL-certified teachers are two crucial steps toward achieving the 2030 Education for All target in Indonesia.

## ■ DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USAGE IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the writing of this manuscript, the author(s) employed PERPLEXITY to assist with ideas and language. The author(s) have reviewed and edited the content generated by this tool and assume full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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