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<https://doi.org/10.35765/hw.2023.2261.12>

Data zgłoszenia: 30.11.2022

Data akceptacji: 25.01.2023

Selected Determinants of the Polish and South African Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education of Students with Special Educational Needs

Wybrane determinanty postaw nauczycieli polskich i południowoafrykańskich szkół wobec inkluzji uczniów ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The main purpose of this research was to assess teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (IE) of students with special developmental needs in the school space. The article is a comparative study in which teachers from Polish and South African schools – special and public schools – took part.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: Following a pragmatic paradigm, a quantitative strategy and diagnostic survey method were applied. The specially prepared tool, the Scale for Attitudes Towards IE, was used to generate data. With 444 cases in total, we considered only the randomly selected 82 teachers from Poland and 81 teachers from South Africa. Confirming the normal distribution of variables, ANOVA and t-test were used for independent variables and descriptive statistics. For post-hoc analyses, Tukey's HSD test was used for equal or different N.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The own research on teachers' attitudes towards IE was preceded by theoretical considerations on the idea of educational inclusion. Determinants supporting the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools were identified. International scholars reported that one of the many factors considered as conducive to the implementation of the IE was teachers' attitude towards the idea of inclusion, which became fundamental

for research about "otherness" in mainstream education. The teachers' attitudes were assessed as a whole and separately in division according to the type of institution, nationality and seniority.

RESEARCH RESULTS: In the overall assessment of attitudes towards inclusive education there were no statistically significant intergroup differences between teachers in Polish and South African schools. However, clear differences emerged in post-hoc analyses of the variables such as: type of the institution and seniority within the two different contexts.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: The presented international comparative research on teachers' attitudes towards IE takes into account not only the current state, but also the historical context of both nations, marked by the stigma of segregation and the fight against discrimination. The study shows how it is important to pay attention to the process of teachers' education – pedagogues, especially, the ones prepared to work in mainstream institutions, for eliminating barriers, adapting curricula to the students' individual needs, and building openness. It is essential to monitor the correlation between seniority and the direction and intensity of attitudes towards education open for all. Further research is recommended in the area of teachers' burnout, work routine and teachers' level of empathy, which change in the span of life and may affect the attitude towards children not only with special educational needs in the system. It is postulated to conduct research also in the context of teachers' professional burnout, routine and the level of empathy, which change in the space of life and may affect the attitude towards children with special educational needs not only in the system.

→ **KEYWORDS:** **TEACHERS' ATTITUDES, INCLUSION, IE, DIVERSITY, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

STRESZCZENIE: _____

CEL NAUKOWY: Celem artykułu jest ocena postaw nauczycieli wobec edukacji inkluzyjnej uczniów o specjalnych potrzebach rozwojowych w przestrzeni szkolnej. Artykuł stanowi studium porównawcze, w którym udział wzięli nauczyciele szkół polskich oraz południowoafrykańskich – placówek specjalnych oraz ogólnodostępnych.

PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE: Badania zostały utrzymane w paradygmacie pragmatycznym, strategii ilościowej. Posłużono się metodą sondażu diagnostycznego. Użyto specjalnie opracowanego narzędzia badawczego: Skali do badania postaw wobec edukacji inkluzyjnej. Zgromadzono dane pochodzące od 444 nauczycieli. Do opracowania wyników badań porównawczych randomowo zakwalifikowano 82 ankiety z Polski oraz 81 ankiet z Republiki Południowej Afryki. Stwierdzając normalność rozkładu danych w analizie wyników, posłużono się testami ANOVA oraz t-studenta dla zmiennych niezależnych, do analiz post-hoc użyto testu HSD Tukeya.

PROCES WYWODU: Badania własne nad postawami wobec idei inkluzji edukacyjnej poprzedzono teoretycznymi rozważaniami nad ideą inkluzji edukacyjnej. Wyloniono determinanty sprzyjające włączaniu dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi do szkół ogólnokształcących. Jednym z wielu czynników sprzyjających implementacji założeń edukacji włączającej, referowanych przez naukowców świata, była postawa nauczycieli wobec idei inkluzji, którą uczyniono podstawą badań

własnych nad oswajaniem „inności” w nurcie edukacji ogólnodostępnej. Ocenie poddano postawy nauczycieli ogółem oraz w podziale na typ reprezentowanej placówki, narodowość oraz staż pracy.

WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ: W ocenie ogólnej postaw wobec edukacji inkluzyjnej nie odnotowano statystycznie istotnych różnic międzygrupowych pomiędzy nauczycielami polskich i południowoafrykańskich szkół. Natomiast wyraźne różnice wyłoniły się w analizach *post-hoc* w przypadku zmiennych takich jak typ placówki oraz staż pracy w podziale wg narodowości.

WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE: Prezentowane międzynarodowe badania porównawcze nad postawami nauczycieli wobec edukacji włączającej uwzględniają nie tylko stan obecny, ale także kontekst historyczny obu narodów, naznaczonych piętnem segregacji oraz walki z dyskryminacją. Pokazują, jak bardzo ważne jest zwracanie uwagi w procesie kształcenia nauczycieli – pedagogów, szczególnie przygotowywanych do pracy w placówkach ogólnodostępnych, na likwidowanie barier, dostosowywanie programów nauczania do indywidualnych potrzeb uczniów i budowanie w sobie otwartości. Bardzo ważnym aspektem jest monitorowanie korelacji pomiędzy stażem pracy a kierunkiem i natężeniem postaw wobec edukacji dla wszystkich – otwartej. Postuluje się prowadzenie badań także w kontekście wypalenia zawodowego nauczycieli, rutynowości i poziomu empatii, zmieniających się w przestrzeni życia, a mogących wpływać na postawę wobec dziecka nie tylko o specjalnych potrzebach edukacyjnych.

→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: POSTAWY NAUCZYCIELI, INKLUZJA, RÓŻNORODNOŚĆ, EDUKACJA WŁĄCZAJĄCA, SPECJALNE POTRZEBY EDUKACYJNE**

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, education systems have moved towards Inclusive Education (IE). International consensus on the inclusion of children with diverse needs into mainstream schools has been expressed formally in a number of charters and instruments issued on behalf of the United Nations (2004). The Framework for Action, which forms part of the UNESCO Salamanca Statement, underlines that inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of all their learners. Furthermore, all learners should be accommodated regardless of any difficulties or differences and the state should offer educational support services to foster the development of inclusive schools (Ainscow et al., 2019). Including schools for children of the incoming population with locals not only facilitated naturalisation but prevented the deepening of intellectual dissection of society. Access to education also gave economic and social living stability. Over the years, the understanding of the concept of inclusion has not changed, yet it has increasingly affected the awareness of world societies, making the idea a natural effect of their growth and development. Nowadays, the idea of inclusion is seen as something that is happening evolutionarily, the result of natural tendency to seize development opportunities, and the right of civilians to the equality of increasingly aware societies.

Research shows that IE allows for better development of entities in the cognitive, intellectual, emotional and social spheres. Mutual support teaches sensitivity and influences progress in the social understanding of the phenomenon of norm and pathology. Teaching together all children from a given area also allows non-disabled peers to develop acceptance, tolerance, and solidarity (Opatow et al., 2005; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2018).

Theoretical background

Teacher attitude towards the idea of IE and the determinants

The success of inclusion on all grounds must take into account the changes in social mentality towards the absolute departure from segregation tendencies. The research of international groups of specialists lists factors that favour the implementation and development of ideas but also limits or even prevents the implementation of their assumptions. The more frequently analysed factors are, amongst others, the attitudes of the teachers towards the idea of IE and the determinants of these attitudes. Due to their importance, teachers' attitudes towards integration or inclusion have been studied extensively for decades. These studies have mostly been conducted in the United States (US), but it is notable that they have been published in various parts of the world, including developing countries. This wide interest may reflect the active role of the United Nations and UNESCO in promoting inclusive policies worldwide. Different local circumstances and regulations around the world can naturally make the results difficult to compare. However, surprisingly, similar results concerning the term IE have repeated themselves across different countries (Saloviita, 2020). One of the key interests in these studies has been the overall level of acceptance of IE among teachers. Scuggs and Mastropieri (1996) reviewed 28 surveys conducted from 1958 to 1995 in the US, Australia, and Canada, mainly among general education teachers. They found that approximately two thirds of the teachers had positive attitudes towards the basic idea of inclusion. A somewhat smaller majority expressed readiness to accept children with special educational needs (SEN) into their classrooms. Similar percentages have emerged in subsequent studies. However, the overall acceptance of inclusion has seemingly not grown. An investigation in which studies from 1999 to 2008 were reviewed did not yield any study in which positive responses would exceed 70% (De Boer et al., 2011). Scuggs and Mastropieri (1996) already confirmed the stabilisation of the distribution of teacher attitudes towards inclusion – they found no changes in teacher attitudes between 1958 and 1995. Several researchers have conducted more targeted analyses to explain teacher attitudes. As regards the effect of gender, at least 10 studies showed no difference between male and female teachers (Chhabra et al., 2010). About the same number of studies has shown that female teachers feel more positive towards inclusion than male teachers (Alghazo & Nagggar Gaad, 2004; Alquraini, 2012). Only two studies – both conducted with high school teachers – found that male teachers felt more positive towards inclusion than female teachers (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Ernst

& Rogers, 2009). Research has further indicated that either teachers' age had no association with their attitudes towards inclusion (Chhabra et al., 2010; Gyimah et al., 2009; Kalyva et al., 2007) or younger teachers felt slightly more positive towards inclusion than older teachers (Ahmmed et al., 2014; Bornman & Donohue, 2013). In terms of attitudinal variables, the most frequently studied has been teachers' self-efficacy. *Self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1997) has been defined as teachers' confidence in their individual and collective capability to influence students' learning (Klassen et al., 2011). The most frequently applied scale in inclusion studies to assess this construct is the Teacher Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices Scale (Sharma et al., 2012).

Other frequently studied variables have included teachers' training in special education, their work experience with students with SEN, and their amount of prior contact with people with disabilities. The latter variable has been found to be associated with more positive attitudes towards inclusion (Boyle et al., 2013; Wilkerson, 2012). The training effect has consistently correlated positively with inclusive attitudes (Ahsan et al., 2012) as has work experience in most cases (Sharma et al., 2006). However, quasi-experimental designs, which cannot confirm causal links, have been used in the surveys. It could be that those teachers who are already positively inclined towards inclusion also participate more willingly in training and have more relevant experience.

Some environmental variables have also indicated positive associations with teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The clearest connection has been found with the type of child disability. Teachers are most positive to include children with mild impairments and most negative to accept students with severe intellectual disabilities or behavioural problems into their classrooms (Moberg, 2003). Most often, this finding has been understood to express a lack of teacher training or a lack of other resources, such as administrative support, adapted study materials or classroom assistants. However, the question remains why these resources should be so constantly lacking everywhere.

Another less-than-clear issue is the role of resources. Only one-third of teachers on average believed that they had access to all the necessary resources for successful inclusion to occur. The problem of lack of resources has also been mentioned in more recent studies (Goodman & Burton, 2010; Gunnþórsdóttir & Jóhannesson, 2014). This assertion has usually been taken at face value. However, teachers' opinions do not necessarily mean that resources are actually lacking. After all, there is no precise measure against which to assess the assumed shortage of means. It probably varies strongly from teacher to teacher. Teachers' claim of lacking resources might be just a socially acceptable excuse for not admitting children with SEN into their classrooms, while there are actually other and additional factors that result in the successful implementation of inclusion (Saloviita, 2020).

Teacher attitudes are strongly associated with teacher categories, so special education teachers have usually been the most positive group (Engelbrecht et al., 2013; Hernandez et al., 2016; Moberg, 2003). School principals have also been more positive than teachers (Boyle et al., 2013), and primary school teachers have been more positive than secondary school teachers (Chiner & Cardona, 2013; McHatton & McCray, 2007).

Research methodology

This research compares South African (RSA) and Polish (PL) teachers' attitudes towards IE of students with special education needs. We analysed the determinants of attitudes, such as nationality, type of school (mainstream- and special schools), and seniority of participants. The research was embedded in the positivist paradigm and was exploratory. The diagnostic survey method and specially prepared tool were used for the study (the Scale for Attitudes Towards IE), taking into account international standards for the implementation of IE, such as the guidelines of The European Agency for Special Needs and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, created with the support of the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission (cf. Kyriazopoulou & Weber, 2009). In addition, the guidelines included the laws and ordinances of the relevant authorities in both countries regarding the organisation of the education system and preparation of teachers for work in the profession. The tool consists of a five-level Likert scale. Each of the items expresses the level of favour in relation to the object. The questionnaire includes part of the statements consistent with or opposite to the direction of the attitude (cf. Mayntz et al., 1985). The first version of the tool contained 48 assertions exploring the most important aspects and considering the selected indicators of attitudes towards IE, namely:

- the right to common teaching healthy and disabled people,
- preparation of the content and improvement of the teacher's competence and knowledge, considering the diversity of children needs,
- school environment preparedness for the implementation of joint education including infrastructure preparation,
- undertaking activities to increase social awareness,
- implication of introducing the IE.

In order to estimate the intergroup differences between PL and RSA teachers, the discriminatory power of the statements was verified using the approximate method, and the reliability of the scale was estimated (Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.85). For proper research, 42 of 49 items were used.

The study involved 363 teachers and pedagogues from Poland and 81 from South Africa, while the PL sample randomly reduced the number of respondents in order to equalise the number of compared groups.¹ Female respondents dominated in the samples of both countries. They represented five age categories and two categories in terms of seniority. The surveyed teachers fulfilled their duties in mainstream- and special schools (Table 1).

¹ In order to reduce the sample size, a computer program was used containing a special algorithm developed for the above purpose – the author MSc. Artur Czyż.

Table 1. Characteristics of the tested sample

| Characteristics | N valid | | % | |
|---------------------|---------|-----|-------|-------|
| | PL | RSA | PL | RSA |
| Total | 163 | | 100 | |
| | PL | RSA | PL | RSA |
| Total | 82 | 81 | 50.31 | 49.69 |
| Gender | | | | |
| Man | 5 | 15 | 3.07 | 9.20 |
| Woman | 77 | 66 | 47.24 | 40.49 |
| Age | | | | |
| ≤ 30 | 6 | 29 | 3.68 | 17.79 |
| 31-35 | 17 | 10 | 10.43 | 6.13 |
| 36-40 | 13 | 4 | 7.98 | 2.45 |
| 41-45 | 13 | 7 | 7.98 | 4.29 |
| ≥ 46 | 22 | 22 | 13.50 | 13.50 |
| Seniority in years | | | | |
| < 10 | 42 | 55 | 25.77 | 27.6 |
| ≥ 10 | 39 | 36 | 23.93 | 22.09 |
| Type of institution | | | | |
| Mainstream | 40 | 40 | 24.54 | 24.54 |
| Special | 42 | 42 | 25.77 | 25.77 |

To carry out further statistical analysis, we checked the normality of the data distribution using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (KS, d) with the Lilliefors correction. Homogeneity of variance (Levene’s test) in groups was checked as well (annex/attachment). Considering the sample characteristics and the specifics of the research tool, parametric tests were used in statistical analysis – ANOVA and a t-test for independent variables as well as descriptive statistics were used. For post-hoc analyses, Tukey’s HSD test was used for equal or different N. The statistical significance of the relationship was assumed at p-value < .05*. Teachers were compared taking into account the following variables: nationality; type of institution; seniority in years.

The research was based on the pragmatic paradigm with the application of the quantitative strategy and diagnostic survey method. Confirming the normal distribution of variables and homogeneity of variation, we decided to apply the parametric.

Results of the research

Nation

First, the significance of differences in the sample by nationality was considered. Descriptive statistics show a slightly higher average value for the RSA teacher sample. The quartile range is comparable in both samples, but among RSA subjects, it is slightly shifted towards higher values than in the sample from Poland. The minimum and maximum in the RSA sample have slightly lower values than in the PL sample. The mean and median in the RSA sample are higher than in PL, the standard deviation is also greater here (Table 2). Considering the results of the t-test, broken down by nation, there is no statistically significant differences between PL schools and RSA schools ($t = -0.896$, $df = 160$, $p\text{-value} = .372$). Considering the results of the analysis, hypothesis H_0 was accepted: The nation does not differentiate the research results.

Table 2. Test results by nation – descriptive statistics

| Variable | <i>M</i> | Min | Max | Q_1 | Q_2 | <i>SD</i> | Var | <i>Ska</i> | <i>K</i> |
|----------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|---------|------------|----------|
| PL | 445.55 | 270.98 | 570.57 | 405.64 | 487.84 | 64.44 | 4153.06 | -0.52 | 0.16 |
| RSA | 438.26 | 332.85 | 615.64 | 401.29 | 473.26 | 51.98 | 2702.28 | 0.77 | 0.83 |

Type of school and nation

The relationship between the type of educational institution represented was tested in groups, broken down by the nationality criterion. Considering descriptive statistics (Table 3), attention should be paid to a group of special schools' teachers from South Africa. The mean, lower and upper quartile and standard deviation distinguish RSA special schools' teachers from other examined groups. Using further analysis, it was determined that statistically significant intergroup differences existed (ANOVA test; Nation: $F = 7.791$, $p\text{-value} = .005$; Type of school *Nation: $F = 8.963$, $p\text{-value} = .003$). Post-hoc analyses with the Tukey HSD test showed that teachers in special schools in South Africa have a significantly more positive attitude towards inclusion education than teachers in PL mainstream- and special schools as well as RSA mainstream schools, with the highest statistical significance noted between the attitudes of teachers in RSA mainstream- and special schools (Table 4). Taking into account the results of the analysis, hypothesis H_1 was accepted: The type of represented school differentiates the research results.

Table 3. Test results by type of school – descriptive statistics

| Variable | <i>M</i> | Min | Max | <i>Q</i> ₁ | <i>Q</i> ₂ | <i>SD</i> | <i>Var</i> | <i>Ska</i> | <i>K</i> |
|------------------------|----------|--------|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| PL special schools | 436.39 | 352.22 | 556.52 | 399.46 | 484.15 | 51.06 | 2607.33 | 0.54 | -0.64 |
| PL mainstream schools | 438.19 | 332.85 | 615.64 | 404.77 | 464.22 | 54.40 | 2959.41 | 0.95 | 2.09 |
| RSA special schools | 470.61 | 379.11 | 570.57 | 426.21 | 512.69 | 51.40 | 2641.76 | -0.05 | -0.92 |
| RSA mainstream schools | 418.55 | 270.98 | 552.50 | 379.87 | 466.51 | 67.44 | 4548.05 | -0.49 | -0.27 |

Table 4. Results of Tukey's HSD test by type of school and nation – post-hoc analyses

| No | MS = 3146.5, df = 158.00 | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Type of school | {1}436.39 | {2}470.61 | {3}438.19 | {4}418.55 |
| 1 | PL special schools | | 0.028* | 0.999 | 0.486 |
| 2 | RSA special schools | 0.028* | | 0.044* | 0.000* |
| 3 | PL mainstream schools | 0.999 | 0.044* | | 0.404 |
| 4 | RSA mainstream schools | 0.486 | 0.000* | 0.404 | |

Seniority in years and nation

Preliminary analyses with descriptive statistics drew attention to the differences in both samples from the RSA. Based on the mean, variance and standard deviation, it can be assumed that seniority can be a factor differentiating attitude and/or its strength (Table 5). Further analysis confirmed not only the above (work experience and nationality significantly differentiate the examined feature), but also enabled us to identify other relationships (ANOVA test; Seniority: $F = 4,07$, p -value = .045; Seniority*Nation: $F = 23,25$, p -value = .000). The attitudes of teachers whose seniority was 10 or more years from PL were significantly more positive than the attitudes of RSA schoolteachers with similar seniority. Teachers in RSA schools with less than 10 years of service experience showed significantly higher scores than their classmates with 10 years and more. They also obtained significantly higher results than teachers with less than 10 years of service in Poland (Table 6). Taking into account results of the analysis, hypothesis *H1* was accepted: The seniority of PL and RSA teachers differentiates the research results.

Table 5. Test results by seniority in years – descriptive statistics

| Variable | <i>M</i> | Min | Max | Q_1 | Q_2 | <i>SD</i> | <i>Var</i> | <i>Ska</i> | <i>K</i> |
|---------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| PL \geq 10 | 449.79 | 352.22 | 615.64 | 418.38 | 485.41 | 53.97 | 2913.28 | 0.32 | 1.15 |
| PL < 10 | 425.66 | 332.85 | 561.86 | 399.46 | 440.55 | 48.71 | 2372.92 | 1.31 | 1.60 |
| RSA \geq 10 | 412.84 | 270.98 | 570.57 | 377.99 | 463.04 | 70.03 | 4904.56 | -0.01 | -0.09 |
| RSA < 10 | 471.72 | 386.05 | 557.06 | 451.67 | 499.43 | 45.54 | 2073.83 | -0.16 | -0.40 |

Table 6. Results of Tukey's HSD test by seniority in years and nation – post-hoc analyses

| No | MS = 2980.4, df = 158.00 | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Seniority in years and nation | {1}449.79 | {2}412.84 | {3}425.66 | {4}471.72 |
| 1 | PL \geq 10 | | 0.021* | 0.206 | 0.286 |
| 2 | RSA \geq 10 | 0.021* | | 0.751 | 0.000* |
| 3 | PL <10 | 0.206 | 0.751 | | 0.001* |
| 4 | RSA <10 | 0.286 | 0.000* | 0.001* | |

Findings and conclusion

The research results allowed the acceptance of one zero and two alternative hypotheses. Considering the variable of nationality, the distribution of research results of teachers in both contexts was similar. Differences occurred when moderating variables were introduced – the type of represented institution (special school or mainstream school) and seniority in years (≥ 10 i < 10). It turned out that both variables significantly differed in the test results. The following relationships were found in the post-hoc analyses:

- teachers in RSA special schools presented a significantly more positive attitude towards IE of students with special education needs than teachers in special schools in Poland;
- teachers in RSA special schools presented a significantly more positive attitude towards IE of students with special education needs than teachers in mainstream schools in Poland;
- teachers in RSA special schools presented a significantly more positive attitude towards IE of children with disabilities than teachers in RSA mainstream schools.

In addition, it is stated that the most significant differences in attitude towards IE of students with special education needs exist between groups of teachers in RSA special schools and RSA mainstream schools.

Further relationships disclosed:

- teachers with seniority ≥ 10 in PL schools had a significantly more positive attitude than teachers with seniority ≥ 10 in RSA schools;
- teachers with seniority < 10 in RSA schools had a significantly more positive attitude than teachers with seniority ≥ 10 in RSA schools;

- teachers with seniority < 10 in RSA schools had a significantly more positive attitude than teachers with seniority < 10 in PL schools.

In addition, the largest differences in attitude towards IE of students with special education needs exist between groups of RSA teachers with seniority < 10 and RSA teachers with seniority ≥ 10 .

The research results highlighted the phenomenon of attitude, whose direction is determined by various factors. In this study, only three factors analysed. However, many of statistically significant relationships were indicated. Two countries were compared – Poland, with a relatively conservative, monolithic culture, race, and religion; and South Africa, which is more liberal, open to change, but also socially and economically stratified, a country with different cultures and languages. When introducing moderation variables (type of institution and seniority), the results of the research showed more polarised attitudes of teachers in RSA schools than PL; special school respondents had a significantly more positive attitude than all other surveyed groups, and teachers in RSA schools with work experience equal to or more than 10 years had a significantly more negative attitude than their younger colleagues from the same country as well as RSA teachers and teachers in PL schools with experience equal to or more than 10 years. In the analysis of the samples of teachers in PL schools, broken down by type of school and seniority, no statistically significant differences were found (however, compounds were revealed in PL and RSA samples).

This research reflects the nature of society and the differences in the functioning of teachers from both countries. The most important predictors of this state of affairs in South Africa are social divisions; the obstructed education system and poor access to schools; poor efficiency of monitoring the fulfilment of school duty; low awareness of parents; and reluctance to change people with low socio-economic status. These are some of the problems that teachers face. The attitudes of PL teachers are, however, determined by an increasingly totalitarian policy of the state authorities; sticking to the old, special and mass school system dividing children; and permanent statutory changes that create chaos in the education system. Each country has its own dilemmas. However, they have one thing in common: their approach to and understanding of the idea of educational inclusion. This study has uncovered some differences and similarities between these two countries, giving rise to a further search for the conditions of including all children into the education process, regardless of, *inter alia*, ability or disability, race, culture, language, maternal status, religion, or gender and sexual affiliation.

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