

**Attitudes of English medium school teachers in Bangladesh towards inclusive education:  
Challenges and possible solutions**

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**Abstract**

While practicing inclusive education (IE), teachers are critical stakeholders in ensuring the active participation of all learners. Thus, this study explored primary level (grade 1-5) English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes towards IE in Bangladesh. This research was conducted in two phases. In phase-1, the Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns regarding Inclusive Education-Revised (SACIE-R) scale was used, including some demographic questions. 120 randomly selected participants were taken as samples. The overall means of the SACIE-R score indicated that primary English-medium schoolteachers have a moderately positive attitude towards IE. It was also found that several demographic variables such as age, gender, confidence in teaching students with disabilities, and training on teaching students with disabilities had a significant impact on participants' attitudes toward IE. Two findings – regarding gender and length of training - from phase-1 were contradictory to the global trend. Moreover, teachers' concern level was found to be higher than their attitude and sentiment about IE. Interviews were conducted to understand further these uncommon results from the survey and their challenges in implementing IE and possible solutions. This study will guide educationists and policymakers to take the required initiatives to improve teachers' attitudes and empower them to implement IE in primary-level English-medium schools in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** English Medium schools, Teachers' preparedness, Inclusive Education, Teachers' attitudes, Bangladesh.

## **Introduction**

Inclusive education (IE) brings all students together in one classroom regardless of all kinds of diversity, strengths, and weaknesses and seeks to maximize the potential of all learners (Choudhuri, 2013). IE is a feasible, cost-effective, and effective means to meet every child's educational need. The focus of IE is to improve the education system and make it viable for every child, not just only incorporating underprivileged children in the current setting (Ainscow, 2005).

Several international declarations have been taken in Bangladesh at different times to establish educational rights for all children through the successful implementation of IE. In 2015, equity and inclusion has been mainstreamed as the global goal of SDG-4. Among several initiatives of the Bangladesh government, one of the most extensive sector-wide programs named the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4) has been conducted since July 2018 to execute this goal of SDG-4. Since a significant number (more than 77809; source: Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2019) of students all over the country are studying at primary-level English-medium schools, successful implementation of IE is essential in these schools too. Otherwise, if these schools do not enact the IE approach, the government's target of bringing all children under a quality education framework will not be achieved. Therefore, reaching the target of PEDP-4 will not be fulfilled.

## **Overview of Bangladesh**

Being a densely populated (1,115.62 people per square kilometer) developing country, Bangladesh struggles to achieve an equitable and quality education system for all children by 2030 according to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-4). More than 20 million children are primary school-going-aged in Bangladesh, but only 17.338 million are receiving an education (APSC, 2018). Around four million school-going-aged children, including children with disabilities, are still out of school (BBS, 2014). The current primary school enrolment rate is 97.85% (DPE, APSC 2018), and the dropout rate in the primary education cycle is 18.60% (BANBEIS, 2018). Update 2020. Despite several policy initiatives undertaken to ensure education for all, one study conducted by Plan International (2018) found that 5 to 9 percent of children are still out of school. One study conducted by Ahsan et al, 2013 revealed that 53% were reported to have special educational needs or disabilities among these educationally excluded children. Moreover, many students are taking admission but not attending school regularly. In addition, many students attend school habitually but cannot actively participate in

teaching-learning activities and are not getting promotions to the next grade. On the other hand, many students are getting upgrades to the next grade but not achieving the skills according to the academic level. Besides, many students fail to complete the total primary cycle of education. This scenario indicates the prevalence of policy gaps related to the implementation of IE in the Bangladesh Education system.

There are three streams of education for primary education, grade one to five, in the Bangladesh Education system (Kamol, 2009; Rahman *et al.*, 2010). These are Mainstream Bengali medium, English medium (consists of two groups: foreign curriculum & national curriculum ) and Madrasha medium. This study focused on the second stream, English-medium schools.

There was a remarkable increase in the number of English-medium schools. According to Kamol (2009), approximately 500 registered English-medium schools are in Bangladesh. The number might be larger than this in reality. Since a significant number (more than 77809; source: Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2019) of students are studying at primary-level English-medium schools, successful implementation of IE is essential in these schools to achieve the goal of PEDP-4. To implement IE successfully in these schools, significant reforms are required. Globally it has been proved by several studies that conducting education reform through the Whole Schooling Approach (WSA) has a significant positive impact on promoting IE. WSA follows some strong principles, those direct on ensuring quality education for children from all types of backgrounds, focusing on creating a culture for high learning and achievement, and building authentic collaboration with families and the community within the school. In addition to that, some characteristics of WSA have a significant positive impact on ensuring quality education for children with special needs without any ability grouping. Such as: building a caring community where staff consider students' challenging behaviours as their underlying needs and find ways to meet their needs positively. WSA also encourages strengthening the learning through support personnel and community resources and motivates teachers to assess students' unique learning styles, thereby designing targeted multi-level instruction strategies. These factors as a whole play an essential role in achieving IE.

### **Inclusive Education in Bangladesh**

Several studies have shown that the performance of the key stakeholders largely impacts the success of an approach. As teachers are the single most critical stakeholder in the WSA (Fullan, 1998), it is vital to ensure that English-medium school teachers are well prepared for

the successful implementation of IE in the classroom and build authentic collaboration with parents and the community to achieve the highest success. As teachers' role is the most critical in achieving success in this scenario, they must carry a positive intention to apply the WSA approach in the classroom and build collaboration among stakeholders. Several studies revealed that a person's attitude is the most critical component among the three components (attitude, efficacy & subjective norm) for predicting his intention to behave according to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Therefore, measuring teachers' attitudes will give a rough idea about their current level of intention to apply WSA in the classroom. Having an idea about teachers' current intention level will guide educationists in designing appropriate training modules and identifying required resources. This study aims to explore the attitudes of primary-level English-medium school teachers towards IE in Bangladesh and find the challenges they face in including children with special needs in the classroom. Very few researchers were directed to examine teachers' attitudes toward IE in the context of this country. Moreover, no study was conducted on English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes toward IE in Bangladesh. So, it was interesting to see the results.

### **Conceptual framework.**

Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has globally been recognized as one of the most influential models to predict a person's actual behavior by predicting his intention to perform that behavior (Ajzen, 1987; 1991; 2005).

In this study, the researchers explored only one determinant (attitude) among the three components of TPB, thereby did not replicate Ajzen's theory as it is. Rather they tried to predict participants' intention to behaviour based on their attitudes. This is because, among the three predictors, 'Attitude' was found as the most powerful predictor of intention to behavior, followed by 'perceived behavioral control' and 'subjective norm,' in Ajzen's summary analysis report (2005) based on studies conducted over a 20-year period. As 'attitude' has a major impact in predicting intention to behaviour, this study is expecting to generate an idea on behavioural intention prediction based on 'attitude', but not the exact implication of Aizen's theory. This is one of the limitations of this study that researchers did not have the scope to focus on measuring the other two determinants to have an ideal prediction about teachers' intention to behaviour towards applying WSA. As a result, researchers are not expecting to predict teachers' intentions 100% accurately in this study. Further study could explore the other two components to gain a better prediction.

Ajzen's TPB model further explained the effect of different background variables that can shape a person's attitude. Ajzen claimed that, while his theory could not identify the origin of a person's beliefs, it could recognize background factors that influence a person's beliefs (Ajzen, 2011). Guided by that idea, several studies were conducted globally to investigate the demographic factors responsible for affecting teachers' attitudes towards IE (Ahsan et al, 2013). (Ahmed (2014), Ahmmed et al. (2012), Ahsan et al. (2012), and so on used this model in the Bangladesh context for exploring teachers' attitudes.

### **Factors that affect teachers' attitudes toward IE**

Several factors were revealed as having a significant influence on teachers' attitudes towards IE, that includes gender, age, experience, academic background, etc.

Considering the gender variable, female educators tend to have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education than male teachers according to the global trend (Loreman et al., 2005; Woodcock, 2008 in Australia; Romi and Leyser, 2006 in Israel; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011 in Ghana and Botswana; Sharma et al., 2008 in Australia, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong). However, some other studies did not significantly differ in attitude toward IE based on teachers' *gender* (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Carroll et al. (2003); Kuester, 2000). Bangladesh context was found to be aligned with this global trend in some studies (Ahsan, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012; Kuyini & Mangope, 2011) However, some other studies found contrasting results. According to Ahmed & Ahsan (2013); Ahmmed, Sharma & Deppeler (2012), male teachers are more positive than females in Bangladesh, which is similar to a neighbour country, Pakistan (Sharma, Shaukat, and Furlonger, 2014). As a possible reason, Ahmmed, Deppeler & Sharma, 2013 reported that females in this region are socially deprived, which contributes to their lower confidence in IE.

Several studies found younger teachers to be slightly more positive than their older counterparts (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1999; Saloviita, 2018). Others did not find a significant difference between teachers' *age* and attitude towards IE (Chhabra et al., 2010; Gyimah, Sugden, & Pearson, 2009; Kalyva, Gojkovic, & Tsakiris, 2007; Forlin et al., 2009). In the context of Bangladeshi primary school teachers Ahmmed et al., 2014 found that younger teachers in teaching experience were more positive towards IE.

Regarding teachers' educational qualifications, several global studies revealed that teachers with a higher level of prior education exhibit more positive attitudes towards IE than

those with a lower level of education (Sharma et al., 2009). In contrast to that, in the Bangladesh context, a study conducted by Ahmmed et al. (2012) illustrated teachers with higher educational degrees (master's degree or above) have a lower level of attitude compared to teachers who have bachelor's or below bachelor's degree. The university curriculum of Bangladesh was suggested as a possible reason behind that, which barely covers any information regarding IE.

According to the global trend, a higher level of *previous experience of interaction with children with disabilities* has been found to be significantly positively related to positive attitudes towards IE (Romi and Leyser, 2006; Caroll, et al., 2003; Forlin et al., 2010). A similar finding was also found in the Bangladesh context by Ahmmed et al. (2012). Several studies conducted worldwide revealed that previous training on IE significantly contributed to developing positive attitudes among teachers (Kuyini & Mangope, 2011; Sharma et al., 2009). A similar result was found in a study conducted by Ahmmed et at. (2012) on Bangladeshi primary school teachers.

*Length of teacher training programs* and the *number of courses* undertaken on *disability and inclusion* by the pre-service teachers were found as significant positive predictors of their attitudes towards IE in several studies (Rademacher et al., 1998; Chai et al., 2009; Chong et al., 2007) worldwide. In contrast to that, several studies conducted in Bangladesh perspective found the opposite result that 4-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) student teachers have less positive attitudes than 1-year B.Ed (Ahmmed et al., 2012; Ahsan et al., 2012). Ahmmed & Ahsan (2013) noticed *teacher training curriculum* as a possible reason for this finding, where secondary level B.Ed. curriculum contributes to developing pre-service teachers with more positive attitudes, but 4-year B.Ed. curriculum does not cover IE adequately. The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of primary-level English-medium schoolteachers towards IE in Bangladesh and identify related challenges and possible solutions.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current level of English-medium schoolteachers' attitude toward IE?
2. Is there any significant relationship between primary level English-medium schoolteachers' demographic factors (such as *age, gender, educational qualification, experience in teaching children with special needs, experience in dealing with persons with special needs, previous training on inclusive/special education, knowledge about inclusive education policies* and *length of teaching experience*) and their attitudes toward IE?

3. What are the challenges they are facing in the case of implementing IE?
4. What are the suggestions to overcome those challenges?

### Methodology

This study followed a mixed-method research design by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to get more rational data. The sample of this study was primary-level English-medium schoolteachers. *Primary-level English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes towards IE* were considered as the dependent variable. A list of demographic variables (presented in *table-1, sample description*) that are widely recognized as having an impact on teachers' attitudes towards IE were considered as independent variables in this study. While performing the study, the ethical issues essential for social science research were maintained carefully.

#### Phase-1

The first phase was the quantitative part of the study, where a questionnaire survey was conducted on 120 randomly selected teachers from 18 English-medium schools.

#### *Sample Description:*

Researchers focused on teachers of English-medium schools from two major divisions (Dhaka and Rajshahi) of Bangladesh. This is because the majority number of English-medium schools in Bangladesh are located in Dhaka, Chittagong & Rajshahi divisions (Bangladesh Education Article, 2017), where Dhaka and Chittagong are megacities. In this study, researchers targeted one megacity (Dhaka) and another comparatively remote city (Rajshahi) to represent English-medium schools of Bangladesh.

Data were collected from 120 randomly selected participants from 18 English-medium schools in these two divisions. The detailed sample description is as follows in table 1.

*Table 1: Sample description*

Independent variable	Sample description
<i>Age</i>	ranged from 18 to 60 years (M=32.37; SD=9.49).
<i>Gender</i>	male 23.3% (n=28) female 76.7% (n=92).
<i>Educational qualification</i>	master's degree or equivalent 81.7% (n=98) bachelor or equivalent 15% (n=18) high school or equivalent 2.5% (n=3),

	others 0.8% (n=1).
<i>Degrees in Education</i>	No training (59.2%; n=71) Bachelor-in general-Education (B.Ed) 8.3% (n=10); Master-in-Education (M.Ed) 5.8% (n=7); C-in-Ed 3.3% (n=4) Diploma in Primary-Education (DPed) 0.8% (n=1) Bachelor in Special Education (B.SEd) 0.8% (n=1); other education degrees (21.7%; n=26).
<i>Learned about IE as a part of their degree in education</i>	60.8% (n=73) IE was never a part of their previous degree in Education. 39.2% (n=47) learned about IE as a part of their degree in education.
<i>Prior training on teaching children with disabilities</i>	no training 86.7% (n=104) some training 9.2% (n=11) longer training (at least 40-class hours) 4.2% (n=5).
<i>Length of teaching experience</i>	less than 1 year 6.7%(n=8) 1-2 years 24.2% (n=29) 3-4 years 26.7% (n=32) 5 years 5% (n=6) more than 5 years 37.5% (n=45).
<i>Previous interaction with a person with disabilities</i>	did not have <i>considerable interaction with people with disabilities</i> 52.5% (n=63)
<i>Experience in teaching students with disabilities</i>	no experience 60% (n=72) Some experience 31.7%(n=38) high (at least 30 full days) experience 8.3% (n=10)
<i>Confidence in teaching students with disabilities</i>	'very high' 8.3% (n=10); 'high' confidence level 9.2% (n=11) average level 52.5% (n=63) low 12.5% (n=15) 'very low' level 17.5% (n=21).
<i>Knowledge of local law regarding the rights of a person with special needs</i>	'none' 39.2% (n=47) 'poor' 35.8% (n=43) 'average' level 19.2% (n=23) 'good' 3.3% (n=4) 'very good' 2.5% (n=3).
<i>Knowledge about inclusive education policies,</i>	no knowledge 51.7% (n=62) 'poor knowledge 23.3% (n=28); average knowledge 15.8% good 7.5% (n=9) very good knowledge 1.7% (n=2).
<i>Followed curriculum</i>	English-version of the national curriculum 50% (n=60) Foreign-curricula guided by different countries:

British, 47%, n=57

IB, 1.7%, n=2

Canadian curriculum, 0.8%, n=1.

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### *Selection procedure*

By collecting a list of English-medium schools from BANBEIS and web browsing Simple Random Sampling (SRS) has been introduced to select schools. The headteachers of the selected schools were approached, and if accepted, responses were collected using a two-part survey questionnaire from a maximum of 10 voluntarily participated teachers from each school and continued the same process until reached the target number of 120 teachers. Data were collected in person by the researcher. The researchers tried to balance the number of teachers from each division, depending on the availability 65-response collected from Dhaka and 55 from the Rajshahi division.

### *Measurement Instrument*

A two-part standardized survey questionnaire was applied to measure English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes towards IE in phase-1.

**Part-1: Questionnaire on the Background and Demographic Information.** A series of questions were asked to obtain teachers' demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, experience in teaching children with special needs, experience in dealing with persons with special needs, previous training on inclusive or special education, knowledge about policies regarding IE and length of teaching experience.

**Part 2: Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns regarding IE Revised (SACIE-R) Scale.** SACIE-R (Forlin et al., 2011) is a standardized survey questionnaire consisting of 15-question for measuring a person's attitude towards IE, which was refined through a series of surveys from an initial 60-item scale. This final version of the scale was validated on 542 pre-service teachers from four countries (Canada, Hong Kong, India, and the United States) and demonstrated a satisfactory level of internal consistency ( $\alpha=.74$  for combined SACIE-R scale; and three sub-scales 0.75, 0.67, and 0.65 respectively). This scale was previously applied to several studies in Bangladesh. Ahsan et al. (2012) translated this scale into the Bangla language and used it on a large number of teachers (n=1623) for their study.

SACIE-R is a 4-point (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree) likert-type scale. This scale was designed to measure three factors (sentiments, attitudes, and concerns) that combinedly indicate the attitudes towards IE. Each factor is represented by a sub-scale consisting of 5-item. The 'sentiment' and 'concern' sub-scales contained all negative

statements, whereas the 5 items of 'attitude' were positive. All negative statements were reverse coded before analysis to ensure uniformity among all questions. The scale demonstrated a satisfactory level of internal consistency ( $\alpha=.72$  for the combined SACIE-R scale; and three sub-scales 0.58, 0.72, and 0.60 accordingly) in this study. However, alpha values for sentiment and concern subscales were a little lesser than desired yet adequate to measure these kinds of social hypotheses (DeVellis, 1991). Participants were given the option to choose either the original English version or the Bengali-translated version of the questionnaire while participating.

### ***Procedure***

Every participant was given a brief description of the research topic, the importance of her participation, the commitment to confidentiality, participants' freedom of withdrawal at any time, etc. before starting the survey. Teachers who agreed to participate willingly were asked to sign an informed consent form. It took around 15 to 20 minutes to complete the whole material. After completion, each participant submitted the materials to the researchers.

After receiving all the responses, data was manually inputted into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Then negatively worded 10-statement of the SACIE-R scale were reversed-coded so that all 15 items get aligned and a high score indicates a positive attitude towards IE. Then reliability of the combined SACIE-R scale and each of the three sub-scales was measured. After that, the average scores across all items of SACIR-R and three sub-scales were calculated. Then, multiple regression analyses were run to identify significant independent variables. 'Enter method' of multiple regression was used for analysis. 95% confidence interval has been considered to identify statistical significance in this study. Table 8 represents all the independent variables that are found to have a significant impact on the dependent variable identified through regression models.

### **Phase 2**

The second phase was the qualitative part of the study, where interviews were conducted with 20 teachers. These samples were selected randomly from the 120 participants of Phase-1. Among them, nine were male, 11 were female, ten from the Dhaka division, and ten from the Rajshahi division.

The researchers prepared a semi-structured open-ended interview questionnaire based on the findings of phase-1 data analysis. This approach allowed the researchers to establish rapport with the interviewee and the flexibility to change the order of questioning according to the demands of the interview situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2008).

**Procedures**

A synopsis of phase-1 was represented to each participant at the time of the personal interviews and was asked to reflect on the findings and explain possible reasons behind some of the unique results (compared to the global trend) from their perspectives. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and then transcribed in Bengali. Interpretative and reflexive interview listening and reading procedures (Denzin, 2001; Power, 2004) were followed to understand the nuance of contradictory data. After transcription, the researchers checked the transcript by re-listening and reading. Themes were extracted from the transcribed document through coding. Reliability of the data was ensured by reviewing and deleting the data unrelated to the objective of this study. Finally, themes were translated into English. The identities of the participants were kept unidentified.

**Analysis and Findings**

**Level of Attitude towards IE of Primary level English-medium schoolteachers**

Analysis of the SACIE-R scale score illustrates Primary level English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes towards IE. The overall mean of the SACIE-R scale scores was 2.76 (*SD*=.35) which is close to the value of 3 on a 4-point scale. This refers that participants are overall 'agree' with the statements of the scale, therefore, had 'moderately positive attitudes' towards IE.

*Table 2: Level of attitude towards IE*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
mean_SACIE	2.76	.35
mean_Sentiment	3.06	.47
mean_Attitude	2.67	.54
mean_Concern	2.56	.49

The mean score of the sentiment subscale is more than the value of 3 on the 4-point scale referred that participant had highly positive sentiments towards IE. The mean score of the attitude subscale is close to the value of 3 on the 4-point scale refers that participants have moderately positive attitudes towards IE. The mean score of the concern subscale is more than the value of 2.5 on the 4-point scale refers that participant had fewer concerns about IE. Comparison between 3-subscale indicates that the mean score of concern is the lowest among the three subscales, where a higher score indicates a positive attitude towards IE. This suggests that teachers are still somewhat concerned about the implication of IE.

Separate multiple regression analyses were applied to determine the effect of significant predictor demographic variables on the dependent variables: the mean score of the SACIE-R scale and the mean score of each of the three subscales.

**Effect of Demographic variables on Participants' Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns**

To identify predictor demographic variables of participants, only the demographic variables entered in regression analysis as independent variables and found as significant were discussed in this section.

**Significant Predictors of overall SACIE-R**

A significant model emerged,  $F(1, 111) = 12.061, p < .05$ . in regression analysis for overall SACIE-R. The adjusted R-square of the full model was .105 ( $SE = .332$ ), which indicated a small effect. Two variables were found to be significant predictors of participants' overall SACIE-R scores.

Table-3: Regression Model Summary of overall SACIE-R

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.406 <sup>a</sup>	.165	.105	.331777	.091	12.061	1	111	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, Educational qualification, Teaching experience, Previous Interaction with students with disabilities, Training in teaching children with disabilities, knowledge of local law & legislation of IE, confidence in teaching students with disabilities

b. Dependent variable: overall SACIE-R

The level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities ( $\beta = .112, SE = .032$ ) made the strongest contribution among the significant variables in predicting primary-level English-medium schoolteachers' overall attitude towards IE. Teachers with 'very high' confidence in teaching students with disabilities (SWD) showed the most positive attitude ( $M = 3.09, SD = .34$ ), which decreased chronologically in accordance with the level of confidence in teaching SWD, likely teachers with 'High' confidence in this aspect had slightly lower positive attitude than them ( $M = 2.89, SD = .21$ ), teacher who had an average level of confidence showed positive attitude but bit lower level ( $M = 2.74, SD = .37$ ) than the previous group. The mean of Attitude-score of teachers who had a low level of confidence was  $M = 2.70 (SD = .304)$ , and the mean of Attitude-score of teachers who had a 'very low' level of confidence was  $M = 2.65 (SD = .29)$ .

Gender ( $\beta = -.191, SE = .075$ ) was the other significant predictor variable of overall attitude. Male ( $M = 2.89, SD = .37$ ) teachers showed slightly more positive attitudes towards IE than female ( $M = 2.72, SD = .34$ ) teachers.

**Significant Predictors of Sentiment Subscale**

A significant model emerged from regression analysis  $F(7, 112) = 2.164, p < .05$  for the sentiment subscale. The adjusted-R square of the model was .064 ( $SE = .455$ ), which indicated a small effect. Two demographic variables, *age* ( $\beta = -.210, SE = .094$ ) and *gender* ( $\beta = -.215, SE = .102$ ) were found to be significant predictors of participants' sentiment scores.

Table 2  
Regression Model Summary of Sentiment subscale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.345 <sup>a</sup>	.119	.064	.45510	.119	2.164	7	112	.043

- a. **Predictors:** (Constant), Previous interaction with person with disability, Teaching experience, Confidence in teaching students with disabilities, Sex, Training on teaching children with disabilities, Educational qualification, Age
- b. **Dependent Variable:** mean\_Sentiment

Table-5  
Compare mean of Age with Sentiment subscale

Age	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
18-25 years	3.21	17	.44
26-40 years	3.06	89	.47
41-55 years	2.88	12	.41
more than 55	2.60	2	.28

Analysis regarding *age* indicated that the lower the teachers' age was, the higher the level of positive sentiment they were having. According to analysis, the youngest group of teachers aged 18-25 had the most positive sentiment ( $M = 3.21, SD = .44$ ) towards IE, which has decreased as the age progresses.

Male ( $M = 3.157, SD = .463$ ) teachers showed slightly more positive sentiment towards IE than female ( $M = 3.026, SD = .471$ ) teachers in comparing the mean of gender with the sentiment subscale.

**Significant Predictors of attitude subscale**

A significant model emerged ( $F1, 111 = 4.24, p < .05$ ) in regression analysis for attitude subscale. The adjusted R-square of the full model was .008 ( $SE = .5397$ ), which indicated a small effect. Two variables were found to be significant predictors of participants' attitude subscale scores.

Table-6: Regression Model Summary of Attitude subscale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.274 <sup>a</sup>	.075	.008	.53967	.035	4.240	1	111	.042

a. **Predictors:** (Constant), Gender, Age, Educational qualification, Teaching experience, Previous interaction with a person with disabilities, Training in teaching students with disabilities, knowledge of local law & legislation of IE, Confidence in teaching students with disabilities.

b. **Dependent variable:** mean\_Attitude

*Training on teaching students with disabilities* ( $\beta = -.260$ ,  $SE = .121$ ) was found as a significant predictor variable of attitude subscale score. This indicates that the shorter the length of the *training on teaching students with disabilities* of teachers was, the higher the positive attitude they represented. According to the analysis, teachers who did not have any training in this regard showed a moderately positive attitude ( $M = 2.698$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) towards IE. Teachers who had 'some' training also had positive sentiment but slightly lower than the previous group ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = .37$ ). On the other hand, the mean attitude score of the teachers who had a high level (at least 40 class hours) of training was  $M = 2.28$  ( $SD = 1.18$ ), which is closer to score two, which indicates 'disagreed'.

*Confidence in teaching students with disabilities* ( $\beta = .108$ ,  $SE = .052$ ) was another significant variable in predicting primary-level English-medium schoolteachers' mean attitude score towards IE. Teachers with 'very high' confidence in this regard showed the most positive attitude ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = .85$ ), which decreased chronologically in accordance with the level of *confidence in teaching SWD*, likely teachers with a 'High' level of confidence in this aspect had slightly lower positive attitude than them ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = .77$ ), teacher who had 'average' level of confidence showed positive attitude but bit lower level ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) than the previous group. The mean of the Attitude-subscale score of teachers who had 'very low' confidence level was  $M = 2.52$  ( $SD = .523$ ); there was a fluctuation in the group with 'Low' confidence ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = .45$ ).

### **Significant Predictors of Concern-subscale**

A significant model emerged from regression analysis,  $F(1, 111) = 14.096$ ,  $p < .001$  for concern subscale. The adjusted-R square of the full model was .203 ( $SE = .434$ ), which indicated a small effect. Two variables were found to be significant predictors of participants' concern scores.

Table-7: Regression Model Summary of Concern subscale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.506 <sup>a</sup>	.256	.203	.43385	.094	14.096	1	111	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, Educational qualification, Teaching experience, Previous interaction with a person with a disability, Training in teaching students with disabilities, knowledge of local law & legislation of IE, confidence in teaching students with disabilities.

b. Dependent variable: mean\_Concern

The level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities ( $\beta=.158$ ,  $SE=.042$ ) was found as a significant predictor variable of teachers' concern subscale score. Analysis indicated that the higher the level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities in teachers, the lower their concerns were. Teachers with 'very high' confidence in this regard showed the most positive attitude ( $M=3.02$ ,  $SD=.426$ ) among others, which decreased chronologically in accordance with the declination of the level of confidence of teachers in teaching students with disabilities (except for a slight difference at the group with 'very low' confidence), likely teachers with 'high' confidence in this aspect had moderately positive attitude ( $M=2.78$ ,  $SD=.46$ ) but slightly lower than them, teacher who had an average level of confidence showed moderately positive attitude ( $M=2.56$ ,  $SD=.48$ ) but lower level than the previous group. And the mean score of teachers who had a 'very low' confidence level was  $M=2.38$  ( $SD=.419$ ), representing a somewhat positive attitude. This sequence fluctuated in the case of the group with 'low' confidence, the mean of concern score of teachers who had a low level of confidence was  $M=2.31$  ( $SD=.41$ ) which was the lowest among the other confidence level groups.

Gender ( $\beta=-.324$ ,  $SE=.098$ ) was the other significant predictor variable of concern subscale score. The mean score of concern subscale for male teachers was  $M=2.79$  ( $SD=.485$ ;  $n=28$ ), indicating a moderately positive attitude towards IE. On the other hand, the mean score of female teachers was  $M=2.48$  ( $SD=.465$ ;  $n=92$ ) in this regard, which is lower than 2.50, thereby a somewhat positive attitude towards IE.

Table-8: Summary of significant variables predicting sentiment, attitude, and concern towards IE

Dependent variable	Predictor variables	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized coefficient	t value	Sig.
	Gender	-.191	.075	-.232	-2.559	.012

Mean	<i>Confidence in teaching a student with a disability</i>	.112	.032	.350	3.473	.001
SACIE						
Sentiment subscale	<i>Gender</i>	-.215	.102	-.194	-2.096	.038
	<i>Age</i>	-.210	.094	-.249	-2.226	.028
Attitude subscale	<i>Training on teaching students with disabilities</i>	-.260	.121	-.230	-2.143	.034
	<i>Confidence in teaching a student with a disability</i>	.108	.052	.219	2.059	.042
Concern subscale	<i>Gender</i>	-.324	.098	-.283	-3.314	.001
	<i>Confidence in teaching a student with a disability</i>	.158	.042	.357	3.754	.000

Comparison of the mean SACIE-R score between English-medium schoolteachers, who followed foreign curriculum ( $M=2.726$ ,  $SD=.313$ ,  $n=60$ ) and who followed the English translation-version of Bangladeshi national curriculum ( $M=2.798$ ,  $SD=.384$ ,  $n=60$ ) showed that both groups had almost similar level of attitude, 'moderately positive attitude' towards IE.

### Phase-2 Findings

Based on the analysis of phase-1, participants represented higher level of concerns compared to their attitudes & sentiments regarding the implication of IE. Further investigations were conducted in phase-2 to figure out the reason behind this. Moreover, several demographic variables were found as significant predictors of participants' attitudes toward IE in phase 1. Among those predictors, *age* and *confidence in teaching students with disabilities* were not investigated further, as these findings are highly consistent with several previous research. The other two significant predictors, *Gender* and *Length of training in teaching students with disabilities*, were further investigated in phase 2, as those contradicted many previous international studies. This qualitative-research phase was conducted to further explore the reasons for those uncommon findings and investigate prevailing challenges faced by English-medium schoolteachers in implementing inclusive education and possible solutions.

### Gender-related challenges

The finding of phase-1 indicated that female teachers had a lesser positive attitude and sentiment towards IE than male teachers, contradicting much previous research. Participants were asked about possible reasons behind this uncommon finding in phase 2. The following sub-themes were extracted from their responses.

**Gender role in teaching.** According to many of the participants, in 99.99% of cases, female teachers have to take responsibility for younger students, such as: pre-primary and grade 1 to 5. As this is the transition period in kids' life from home to a formal setting, it is challenging to manage their behavior and teach them the school formalities, regardless of a student with or without disabilities. Things become far more challenging when it comes to the case of kids with special needs. That is why they opposed adding students with disabilities to class. On the other hand, male teachers generally teach in grade 5 and over and occasionally come to teach in junior classes (i.e, art, music, sports, etc.). That is why most male teachers are unaware of the challenges of managing young children. The possible reason behind their more positive answers could be they answered from their assumptions, not from real-life experiences.

*"Female teachers have to take lot more responsibilities than male teachers in junior classes without any extra incentives. Such as, they have to monitor kids even during the lunch break. These responsibilities are never given to male teachers." (p-8)*

#### **Gender Exposer in Male-dominating Society.**

Some of the participants suggested that men are expected and thereby exposed more to the external environment and responsible for decision-making, and problem-solving tasks in the male-dominating society of Bangladesh, which contributes to uplifting their confidence and accepting new challenges. On the other hand, women grow up lacking confidence and feel hesitant to take on challenges. This could be a possible reason behind more concerns in women.

**Behavioral challenges.** Because of women's dress code and cultural mindsets, sometimes they face embarrassing situations while dealing with students with behavioral challenges in Bangladesh, where the same behavior is acceptable for their male counterparts. Few teachers reported that female teachers sometimes encounter awkward situations while working with students with special needs that they perceived as harmful—such as inappropriate touch, punching a female teacher when pregnant, pulling clothes, etc.

*"A student with a behavioral challenge may suddenly punch on any part of the female teacher's body, which will not be easy to accept for her. Or that child may pull off her scarf, which is embarrassing for a woman in the Bangladeshi context". (p-5)*

#### ***Training related challenges***

**Having no Training at all.** As most of the participants did not have training in teaching students with disabilities, they found it challenging and frustrating. That also makes them less confident and thereby concerned about handling students with disabilities. The reason behind

this is every student with a disability is unique. Their needs and handling techniques are unique, which requires the teacher's knowledge and experience. One of the participants responded,

*"As we didn't receive any training, it is difficult for us to identify the needs of students with special needs and resolve those. As a result, teachers consider IE a burden and feel stressed when they receive a student like this." (p-7).*

**Shorter training vs longer training.** One of the findings from phase-1 indicates that the shorter the training on teaching students with disabilities, the more positive attitude the teacher represents. Teachers without any training in this aspect showed a more positive attitude than those who have, which is contradictory to many previous studies. Participants of phase-2 were asked about possible reasons behind that. The following sub-themes were extracted from their responses.

**Theory-focused training.** Some participants suggested that their training was more theoretical than practical and was not responsive to real situations. Even after receiving training, they perceived teaching in inclusive classrooms as challenging and faced difficulties in applying their acquired knowledge.

*"Once a student with visual impairment was admitted at our school. None of the teachers knew how to handle this type of student, even though few teachers had received training before." (p-18)*

**Assumption-based Answer.** It has been found that most of the teachers who responded with positive attitudes had little to no training; it could be possible that they reacted positively without having any idea about real-life situations of dealing with students with disabilities.

*"Teachers who don't have the training and experience assumed it as an easy task to deal with. On the contrary, teachers who have some training know that it is tough to handle". (p-8).*

### **Concern related challenges**

Every participant in phase-2 was asked about possible reasons behind their concerns and the challenges they face in implementing IE at their institution. The following sub-themes were extracted from their responses.

**Large-size Classroom Management Concerns.** Maintaining discipline in a primary-level classroom is tricky, as there is only one teacher for every 30 to 40 kids in a classroom. The situation seems even worse when a student with a disability is added there.

*" We already have 30-35 students in each classroom. On top of that, having a student with special needs seems like an extra burden to everybody. " (p-2).*

**Concerns about the extra workload.** Most teachers consider having a student with a disability in the classroom as an additional workload. Because it requires a lot of patience, spending extra time, effort, and attention on that child on top of a host of regular challenging responsibilities. They believe that it will be impossible to complete their regular responsibilities if they pay attention to students with special needs. For this reason, some teachers ignore students with disability, even though they know that child needs further clarification.

*"There are around 35 children in the class. The teacher has to do a lot of work within this limited class time. Such as covering the topic of the lesson plan, checking students' copies, paying attention to students' attentiveness, etc. Among all these tasks, putting extra effort on one or two children is impossible." (p-7)*

**Attitudes of Stakeholders.** Teachers face various challenges while working with several stakeholders, which was identified as one of the major reasons for their concern in phase-2. As most English-medium schools are privately run, and all the school costs come from parents, the school authority is concerned about guardian complaints. Parents of other kids often complain if they find teachers paying additional effort to students with special needs. They consider that depriving their child. Moreover, a student with special needs gets bullied by his classmates most of the time.

*"When a teacher demonstrates additional consideration to the unique needs of the student with a disability, some parents cannot take it easy." (p-10)*

Another major reason for teachers' concern is their unclarity about the real-life applicability of IE. Many teachers believe IE is impossible to implement in English-medium schools. Therefore, they technically avoid students with special needs on the admission test. Another reason for not considering students with hearing impairments or visual impairments for admission is teachers do not know the use of special technologies (ie. braille) to communicate with them. One of the participants said:

Schools are concerned about their ranking and reputation, which depends on students' academic results. In most cases, teachers are under pressure by school authorities to achieve satisfactory results in national-level exams. As a result, some schools were found on screening out children with special needs during admission by taking tricky admission tests. Furthermore, several school governing bodies were found to have little to no knowledge of dealing with children with special needs. Several teachers reported that members of the school managing committee or school authority were neither academicians nor had any training in education, so

they have very little knowledge about the importance of being flexible for students with disabilities. Here teachers are bound to follow the authority.

*"There is a pressure from authority that students have to have outstanding results. If otherwise happens, the course teacher has to take that responsibility and considered as a failure". (p-3)*

*"Sometimes the school authority just gives admission to the child with special need, but don't take any initiative to support the teacher with training or resource." (p-19)*

### **Possible Strategies to Overcome Challenges:**

Participants were also asked about their thoughts regarding possible solutions to the problems they are facing regarding implementing IE. The following points are illustrated from their responses.

#### ***Solutions for Gender-related Challenges***

**Social Awareness.** Participants suggested taking initiatives for workload distribution by creating social awareness. Another participant suggested arranging sessions on 'strategies of work-life balance' from school authorities or teacher training programs may make them more confident and distribute the workload.

*"We need to work on changing this social norm first. Then, we may expect female teachers to welcome challenges at the workplace." (p-3)*

**Counseling.** Some participants suggested that to eliminate the gender gap in the male-dominated society, counseling will be helpful to boost women's confidence and decrease their concern about including children with disabilities and inspire them to take on new challenges in teaching.

*"Along with training on IE, counseling should be included for female teachers to help them accept their current situation and provide necessary tips to bring out the best outcome at teaching while managing stress." (p-9)*

#### ***Solutions for Training related challenges:***

**Arranging Concise but Complete training.** Most of the participants did not have any formal *training in teaching students with disabilities*. That was a major reason for their concern and frustration regarding handling these children. The result from phase-1 showed that teachers with more extended training represent comparatively less positive attitudes than teachers with shorter training. Several participants from phase-2 suggested that shorter training, which

presents all required information in a summarized version is easier to capture and must be arranged.

*"Training and workshops must be arranged in the schools to prepare teachers for IE practice." (p-19)*

**Extending the practicum part.** Most of the trained teachers reported challenges in applying their knowledge in practical situations even after formal training. They suggested that training should be linked with vast practical experiences.

### ***Solutions for Concern related challenges***

**Classroom management.** Several possible solutions to classroom management challenges were found in phase-2 by participants.

***Introducing the Facilities of Support-teachers.*** Most teachers complain that they face challenges keeping the classroom calm when providing required attention to students with special needs. Some teachers suggested providing an assistant-teacher from school to help the main teacher as a potential solution. Another teacher suggested a unique idea, which is being applied at her school that the teacher of the next period sits at one corner of the classroom and prepares for her upcoming lecture, preparing worksheets, and so on. That second teacher stays available to help the first teacher when s/he needs it.

***Workload segregation.*** Some teachers suggested that having a student with a disability seems like pressure for most teachers; there should not be more than one student with a disability in the same classroom.

***Infrastructural structure change.*** One of the teachers suggested installing a new sitting arrangement, such as a 'U' or 'V' shape or sequentially higher benches at the back. That will support the teacher to maintain eye contact with all students and ensure classroom discipline while helping the student with special needs.

**Solutions for Stakeholder challenges.** Participants suggested some possible strategies to overcome the stakeholder-related challenges.

***Peer assistance.*** Participants suggested peer tutoring as a solution to reduce teachers' workload. This will also reduce the possibility of being bullied by classmates for the students with disabilities and help him grow as a confident human being. Moreover, the other classmates without disabilities will also be benefited by having a chance to develop a responsible personality and grow as better citizens of the democratic society.

***Teacher-parents collaboration.*** Participants also suggested that consistent communication between teachers and parents may help teachers better understand students' special needs and gain more confidence in handling them. Parents can also be given some instruction from teachers regarding assisting the kid at home with homework, and thereby achieving the target of WSA will be easier. One of the participants suggested that teachers and parents should maintain continuous informal communication, at least one formal meeting every 3- 6 months. Participants also recommended including a lesson on guardian handling in the teacher training curriculum, which will be helpful to boost teachers' confidence in working in implementing WSA.

***Teacher-Teacher collaboration.*** Participants suggested that teachers sharing their experience and handling techniques will be helpful to overcome challenges. One of them reported that sometimes that is not possible because of workplace politics, which should be resolved by the active role played by the school authorities.

***Teachers- Experts Collaborations.*** Some participants recommended the importance of cooperation from experts. Regular visits of experts and specialists from the related field would be beneficial for teachers to overcome their challenges by sharing their challenges and getting practical ideas from experts. One of the participants said,

*"Appointing a counselor or a specialist in this criterion for occasional visits will be beneficial to get directions on how to handle these challenges. At least once every six months or so." (p-16)*

***Co-operative Authority.*** Furthermore, school authorities' cooperation appeared as an essential requirement for teachers to implement IE in the classroom from their interviews. Therefore, it is also crucial to train the people who work as the governing body for these schools.

***Incentives must be added, along with Resources and Counseling.*** Most teachers suggested that only motivational speeches will not be sufficient to change teachers' attitudes. According to them, if teachers get some incentive (salary increment or other financial incentives) for handling students with challenging behaviors, they will work with more enthusiasm for it.

*"In this case, teachers should be given recognition for their additional efforts. If I were an education minister, I would have taken a list of students with special needs from each class/school, then allocated a 5% increment as a reinforcement for the responsible teachers". (p-2)*

### Discussion

This study aimed to explore primary-level English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes towards IE in Bangladesh. In the quantitative phase of this study, 120 English-medium schoolteachers' sentiments and attitudes towards and concerns about IE were examined. These three components indicate a person's attitude altogether (Forlin et al., 2011). The participants of this study consisted of two major groups: i) teachers from schools that follow foreign curriculums; ii) teachers from schools that follow the English-version of Bangladesh's national curriculum. Each group individually and both together represented a similar level of attitude, **moderately positive attitude** towards IE. Previous studies conducted on attitudes of Primary-level teachers from other streams in Bangladesh had also revealed a similar result. To get an in-depth idea behind such a result, the researchers checked the significance of some well-known predictor demographic variables of attitude that have been discussed below.

One of the principal objectives of this research was to explore the impact of several demographic variables on primary-level English-medium school teachers on their attitudes towards IE. The results revealed that teachers' *gender, age, confidence in teaching students with disabilities, and training on teaching students with disabilities* were significant predictors of their attitudes towards IE.

The global trend showed that teachers who had a higher level of *confidence in teaching students with disabilities* perceived a higher positive attitude and lesser concerns about IE; this study revealed the similar. Government and school authorities should focus on boosting teachers' *confidence in teaching students with disabilities* by including a targeted training plan on confidence uplifting and other necessary resources to initiate this revolutionary approach of IE.

The *age* of the participants has been found as a significant predictor of sentiment subscale scores, but not significant in the case of the other two subscales in this study. Jordan et al. (2009) suggested that the sentiments and attitudes of teachers are predictors of successful IE programs. Forlin et al. (2011) suggested that positive sentiment indicates a positive attitude. This finding validates many international studies that younger teachers have a more positive attitude than their older counterparts (Sharma et al., 2008; Avissar et al., 2003). Though, some studies on the relationship between teachers' age and attitude towards IE did not find a significant difference (Chhabra et al., 2010; Gyimah et al., 2009; Kalyva et al., 2007). Several studies conducted in the Bangladesh context also found corresponsive with this finding. This implies that young teachers already have a positive sentiment towards IE, this positive

sentiment could be utilized by minimizing their concerns through proper training and experience. It implies that recruiting more young teachers will stimulate the whole schooling approach in primary-level English-medium schools. Despite having alignment with global trends, this study had some unique findings. Those have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

Teachers' *gender* is a significant predictor of their attitude toward IE in this study, where male English-medium schoolteachers' attitudes and sentiments towards IE were slightly more positive and had slightly less concern about IE than their female counterparts. This finding is corresponding with some studies conducted in the Bangladesh perspective and with very little international research (Jobe & Rust, 1996; Hussien & Al-Qaryouti, 2014). Some studies in the international context (e.g., Hadjidakou & Mnasonos, in press; Parasuram, 2006; Park & Chitiyo, 2011) did not find any consistent result regarding *gender* differences in teachers' attitudes towards IE. In contrast, a host number of international research (Loreman et al., 2005; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Woodcock, 2008) represented a high level of positive attitudes in female teachers compared to males. Some socio-cultural factors can explain this contradictory finding in the Bangladesh context that were supported by participants in interviews in phase-2 of the study. From participants' perspectives, it has been found that several female teachers perceive including students with special needs as an extra workload due to their excessive responsibilities in family life in the Bangladesh context. Furthermore, *gender role* in teaching at the primary-level has been identified as another reason. There female teachers have to take on a larger number of responsibilities in the case of primary-level students at school. Male teachers are mostly involved with students of higher grades who are already trained in school disciplines. Another possible explanation for this uncommon result is unequal gender exposure in Bangladesh's male dominating society, where males get the opportunity to grow up more confident than females. In this social setting, most women grow up less confident, which could be a possible reason for an increased level of concern in women. Some other studies have validated this finding (Acharya, 2007; Anam & Ahsan, 2002; Jayaweera & Gunawardena, 2007; Nasreen & Tate, 2007). Another possible reason for women's less positive attitude and more concern about IE was the behavioral challenges of students with disabilities. Due to women's dress code and social mindset, sometimes they risk being embarrassed while handling students with behavioral challenges. This is a new finding of the current research. An in-depth investigation is needed in the Bangladesh context for more confidence and a better understanding of this result.

Several previous studies revealed that *participation in inclusive education courses* (Lancaster & Bain 2007, 2010; Oh et al., 2010; Sari et al., 2008; Woodcock, 2008) and *experience of teaching* in special or inclusive education classrooms (Bain, Lancaster, Zundans & Parkes, 2009) are significant predictors of positive attitude towards IE. Studies (Ben-Yehuda et al., 2010; Forlin et al., 2010; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Sharma et al., 2009) have revealed that pre-service teachers who participate in *training programs on teaching in inclusive classrooms* express their readiness by showing welcoming attitudes towards students with diverse learning needs. Although participants' *length of training in teaching children with disabilities* was a significant predictor in this study, this variable was found to be negatively related to the dependent variable 'attitude', which is contrary to the previous studies. Here, the number of participants, who were *experienced in teaching students with disabilities* was low. More than half of the participants never had any interaction with a person with a disability. In this scenario, although most of them did not have any formal training on IE and experience in teaching a student with a disability, they have shown a moderately positive attitude towards IE, which could have two explanations: firstly, they might have previous personal or somewhat other types of significant *experience in dealing with a person with a disability* because considerable *interaction with people with disabilities* was found as a strong predictor of positive attitude and lower level of concern in many studies (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Ahsan et al., 2013; Subban & Sharma, 2006). Secondly, it could be possible that most of them answered based on their assumptions which were found in several previous studies. At this stage, researchers investigated which interpretation between these two is appropriate in this case.

The findings from phase-1 show that the independent demographic variable *significant interaction with a person with disability* had not been found as a significant predictor in the current study. Therefore, the first explanation is not suitable in this case. Regarding the second possible explanation, interview data from phase-2 represents that, the teachers without training have a lack of awareness regarding the possible challenges of adding students with disabilities to the regular class. This indicates the majority of participants answered based on their assumptions. This scenario is not friendly for either WSA or IE approach. Compulsory teacher training programs, including practical experiences of working with students with disabilities, must be arranged in English-medium schools in Bangladesh.

This study revealed that teachers with more extended training are predicted to have lesser positive attitudes than teachers with shorter training and no training. This finding contradicts the common belief that more extended training is more effective than a shorter one and several research findings (Carroll et al., 2003; Rademacher et al., 1998; Theaker, 2008).

But one research conducted in Bangladesh perspective found almost similar results (Ahsan, 2014). The possible explanation behind this unusual finding of this study was reported that those trainings were more theory-based rather than practical challenges oriented. As a result, even after receiving training, teachers still felt frustrated in real-life classroom challenges. Another possible reason for 'teachers without training' having the most positive attitude could be that they answered from assumptions without facing real-life challenges. Another research finding shows that shorter program participants receive brief but more effective content. In contrast, participants with longer training programs receive comparatively lengthy but less effective content (Ahsan, et al., 2012), which could be a possible reason. This finding further suggests that the training curriculum for teaching students with special needs requires reconsidering and revising it as more practical-oriented.

This study revealed that primary-level English-medium schoolteachers exhibit a higher level of concern regarding including children with special needs in the classroom. In phase-2 of the study, researchers tried to identify the possible reasons behind this increased level of concerns among English-medium schoolteachers through interviews. The findings revealed that many participants had a negative belief that the implication of IE is not possible in reality. Some participants accepted that it might be possible to implement IE in traditional Bengali medium schools but impossible in an English-medium setting. A similar result was found in another research in the Bangladesh context by Ahsan et al, (2012). This could be counted as a significant barrier against the successful implication of IE as teachers are the key role player and to be successful, they must have faith in what they are doing. Several researchers showed that teachers might retain their pre-existing beliefs, even after having training (Nespor, 1987; Kagan, 1992). This requires extensive training with real examples and interaction with successful people in this field to change the belief (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996).

One of the main reasons behind their concern and negative belief about the prospect of IE was most of them did not receive any *training in teaching students with disabilities*. Few teachers had training but reported that was not correspondent with real classroom situations. So, handling students with special needs is still challenging and frustrating. A similar outcome was also revealed by Ahsan et al (2012) in the Bangladesh context. Several teachers suggested that schools should arrange training or help teachers to pursue other standard providers. All of these training should emphasize realistic practicum opportunities.

Teachers were also found as being reluctant to accept students with communication challenges because of their inability to use communication technologies (such as brail, sign

language, etc.), which is also supported by various studies (Plan International, 2013; Ahsan 2014) in Bangladesh context.

In phase-2 of the study, researchers investigated the challenges of English-medium schoolteachers to identify the source of their concerns. The findings revealed that most of the teachers were concerned about increased workload and providing appropriate attention to diverse students while maintaining discipline in a large classroom - which was also the findings of another research in the Bangladesh context (Ahsan, 2014). Initiating peer-tutoring and employing teacher assistants to support students with special needs have been suggested as possible solutions to relieve teachers' workload and concerns about classroom management. Moreover, training on inclusive pedagogy and information on making better use of available resources will make them more efficient (Ahsan, 2014).

Other reasons suggested are non-cooperative school authorities sometimes do not approve teachers' initiatives to implement new thoughts for meeting diverse learning needs; similar results were also found by Ahsan et al, (2012). Additionally, lack of collaboration between stakeholders, peer bullying, and negative attitude of family, teachers and community have been found as potential challenges in the successful implication of IE in the study. A similar result was found in some other studies in the Bangladesh context (CAMPE, 2011; Plan International, 2013).

Some limitations were taken into account while construing the research findings. One limitation is that the number of participants was not large enough to represent all the primary-level English medium schoolteachers in Bangladesh. Moreover, data has been collected from only two major divisions of this country, giving more perfect findings if more geographical locations could be explored. Furthermore, this research researcher could not manage to balance the number of male and female participants. The number of female participants was more than three times the number of male participants. This gender imbalance may have an impact on the acquired result. Another limitation of this study was that the data had been collected from participants depending on what they think about themselves; there was no way to justify whether they represent that level of sentiment, attitude, and concern about IE in a real scenario.

Based on the limitation of this study, some indications for future research can be taken into account. The finding of this study was that primary-level English-medium schoolteachers have a moderately positive attitude towards IE. However, it is a question for further research to explore whether those teachers who expressed positive views towards IE were also inclusive in their practices. In further investigation, the more geographical area along with a larger number

of participants can be explored. Furthermore, classroom observation can be added as a data collection tool to get more accurate data and justify their attitude towards IE more. Another idea for further research could be research on exploring primary-level English-medium schoolteachers' efficacy towards inclusive education, which will be helpful to get a clearer idea about preparedness for IE of this group of teachers.

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