

The Importance of Inclusive Education and Correlation with Self-Concept among Students: A Conceptual Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is pivotal in promoting equitable learning opportunities and nurturing student self-development. This study systematically reviews relevant literature to explore the significance of inclusive education and its correlation with self-concept among students. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this conceptual study draws on various peer-reviewed sources that address inclusive pedagogical practices, student identity formation, and psychosocial learning environments. The analysis reveals that inclusive education positively influences students' self-concept by fostering a sense of belonging, autonomy, and competence within the school setting. Teachers' attitudes, peer interactions, and institutional support are critical factors shaping students' self-perception in inclusive environments. Furthermore, inclusive classrooms promote mutual respect and reduce stigmatization, improving academic and socio-emotional outcomes. This paper also highlights challenges in implementation, such as limited teacher training and societal prejudice, which may hinder the development of a healthy self-concept among learners with diverse needs. The findings suggest that to optimize student self-concept, inclusive education must be approached holistically—integrating curriculum design, teacher preparedness, and school-wide inclusion policies. The study provides conceptual insights that may inform educational practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in designing inclusive strategies that support student identity and well-being. Limitations and directions for future empirical research are discussed.

Keywords: *self-esteem, self-perception, inclusive education, student self-concept, psychosocial learning.*

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INTRODUCTION

Ali et al. noted that education is indispensable because it frequently fosters cognition and enhances social equality.¹ It can also perpetuate discrimination when special students are denied this privilege. They further argued that proper inclusion is often beneficial for students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. Mbelu and Maguvhe conjectured that inclusive education has recently evolved beyond the traditional classroom setting.² Previously, teaching and learning were principally teacher-centered, and students were passive recipients. Very little focus was afforded on diversity and individual needs as students were categorized according to age or aptitude. Mbelu and Maguvhe also argued that there was little regard for students with disabilities or diverse learning styles, and there was minimal physical and instructional accessibility.³ Inclusive education is based on the principle that the comprehensive performance of students is augmented when they study in the same environment. To this end, Gorges et al. proposed that inclusion elevates students' potential because such environments are restorative, therapeutic, and reformatory.⁴ Self-concept is students' perception of themselves and is chiefly focused on knowledge such as strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, desires, habits, and hobbies. Most of all, it constantly addresses the question of who I am. It also assists in establishing sound relationships and promoting good behavior. Even though the publication of the Salamanca Statement UNESCO motivated research in inclusive education, very few were dedicated to the relationship with self-concept among students.⁵ In this regard, Stieger et al. and Lohbeck affirmed that there is little documentation about the actual correlations between inclusion and self-perception of students.⁶ Thus, this study addresses that gap, and the research questions guided it. Is there a relationship between inclusive education and the self-concept of students? How does inclusion nurture self-concept among students?

Literature Review

The philosophy of inclusive education has become very prominent universally. This educational concept is rooted in the firm conviction that all students should be afforded equitable opportunities to learn alongside their peers in the same learning environment. This

¹ Mohammed Feroz Ali et al., "Investigation of Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Western Division in Fiji," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2419704>.

² Sifiso Emmanuel Mbelu and Mbulaheni Obert Maguvhe, "Evaluating the Socioecological Classroom in Full-Service Schools: A Whole-School Approach to the Inclusive Education Context in South Africa," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 11 (October 24, 2024): 1151, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14111151>.

³ Mbelu and Maguvhe.

⁴ Julia Gorges et al., "Reciprocal Effects between Self-Concept of Ability and Performance: A Longitudinal Study of Children with Learning Disabilities in Inclusive versus Exclusive Elementary Education," *Learning and Individual Differences* 61 (January 2018): 11–20, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2017.11.005>.

⁵ UNESCO, "The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education," 1994, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427>.

⁶ Mirjam Stieger et al., "Changing Personality Traits with the Help of a Digital Personality Change Intervention," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 8 (February 23, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2017548118>; Annette Lohbeck, "Does Integration Play a Role? Academic Self-Concepts, Self-Esteem, and Self-Perceptions of Social Integration of Elementary School Children in Inclusive and Mainstream Classes," *Social Psychology of Education* 23, no. 5 (October 10, 2020): 1367–84, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09586-8>.

literature review explores some aspects of inclusive education and self-concept and highlights their connection. The effects of social desirability on students' self-reports highlight the complexity of self-concept formation. As noted in a recent study, social desirability can skew students' perceptions of their academic competencies, particularly when assessments are conducted in varied social contexts.⁷ This is particularly relevant in inclusive education settings where students may feel pressure to conform to perceived norms. Ali et al. opined that inclusion refers to educational frameworks that incorporate the integration of all students, and the principal goal is to foster collaborative learning environments conducive to the holistic development of students.⁸ Nogueras and Steven S. N. Rogahang et al. believed that inclusion is fundamental for contemporary pedagogy because it affirms equitable learning environments, values all students, and provides appropriate support to assist them academically and socially.⁹ Over the years, inclusive education has gained importance because its main objective is centered on the philosophy that all students should be given equal opportunities to learn.¹⁰ The emotions students experience in education are inextricably woven with self-esteem, self-concept, and feelings of self-efficacy. Self-concept and self-efficacy are primarily cognitive components of how students view themselves, while self-esteem reflects self-image's affective or emotional components. Hence, the theories about self-concept are rudimentary to education. It is interesting to mention that the two humanistic psychologists, Rogers and Maslow, agreed with the notion of self-concept and indicated that people achieve their full potential through self-actualization.

An Overview of Inclusive Education

Schwab and Nilholm noted that globally inclusive education has gained notable significance.¹¹ According to Felder, when special students are educated in mainstream classrooms, it accentuates equitability and fosters inclusive societies.¹² While some students with special needs may require additional support, creating environments where they can interact with their peers encourages appreciation and fosters respect for all. In addition to promoting more inclusive learning communities, giving students opportunities to learn together, regardless of their abilities or differences, helps them to develop empathy and

⁷ Konstantinos Lavidas et al., "The Effects of Social Desirability on Students' Self-Reports in Two Social Contexts: Lectures vs. Lectures and Lab Classes," *Information* 13, no. 10 (October 11, 2022): 491, <https://doi.org/10.3390/info13100491>.

⁸ Ali et al., "Investigation of Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Western Division in Fiji."

⁹ Raquel H Nogueras, "Enhancing Reading Outcomes through Inclusive Education: Evaluating the Impact of Differentiated Instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and Collaborative Teaching Models" (risejournals.org, August 2024), <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13364819>; Steven S. N. Rogahang et al., "Inclusive Education Practices: Fostering Diversity and Equity in the Classroom," *Global International Journal of Innovative Research* 1, no. 3 (March 23, 2024): 260–66, <https://doi.org/10.59613/global.v1i3.46>.

¹⁰ Nogueras, "Enhancing Reading Outcomes through Inclusive Education: Evaluating the Impact of Differentiated Instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and Collaborative Teaching Models."

¹¹ Katharina-Theresa Lindner and Susanne Schwab, "Differentiation and Individualisation in Inclusive Education: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis," *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, September 16, 2020, 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1813450>; Claes Nilholm, "Research about Inclusive Education in 2020 – How Can We Improve Our Theories in Order to Change Practice?," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 36, no. 3 (May 27, 2021): 358–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1754547>.

¹² Franziska Felder, "Inclusive Education, the Dilemma of Identity and the Common Good," *Theory and Research in Education* 17, no. 2 (July 5, 2019): 213–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878519871429>.

compassion. Inclusive education ensures that all students have equal access to quality learning. It also allows them to appreciate the various social behaviors and levels of communication, which helps them decrease stereotypes and heighten self-concept. Bešić et al. and Krämer et al. recognized that inclusive education is collaborative and coordinated since educators in inclusive classes need cooperation and flexible support.¹³ For this reason, they suggested that the presence of more than one educator recurrently provides more resources to meet the needs of all students competently. When accomplished effectively, it positively augments students' social-emotional and academic development.¹⁴ Moreover, Kapcia argued that peer tutoring and collaborative learning are effective strategies in inclusion classrooms because they promote mutual support and enrich learning experiences.¹⁵ Peer tutors provide explanations and examples in ways that resonate with their classmates, while collaborative projects encourage cooperation, communication, and problem-solving skills. When ideas, suggestions, and opinions are inculcated in lessons, they enhance motivation and engagement, and cognition becomes apparent. When students can select topics for projects, choose from a range of activities, or decide how they will demonstrate their learning, it gives them a great sense of ownership and autonomy. This personalized approach respects students' preferences and leads to more meaningful and enthusiastic participation.¹⁶

Inclusion or Exclusion

Although universally, inclusion is rudimentary for the overall welfare of individuals, some students with disabilities remain elusive.¹⁷ This is because many of them continue to experience high degrees of poverty, poor nutrition, limited inclusion in education, and inadequate mental health. Trani et al. surmised that this obvious stigma negatively affects them and diminishes their self-esteem.¹⁸ Baluyot et al. also noted that although inclusive education is forward-looking and burgeoning, there are still multitudinous encumbrances, especially concerning the comprehensive psychosocial welfare of exceptional students.¹⁹ Baluyot et al. further opined that these students customarily suffer difficulties related to self-concept, social acceptance, and emotional regulation.²⁰ These children perceive themselves as less competent and socially accepted than their peers, adversely affecting their self-

¹³ Edvina Bešić et al., "Inclusive Practices at the Teacher and Class Level: The Experts' View," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 32, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 329–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1240339>; Sonja Krämer, Jens Möller, and Friederike Zimmermann, "Inclusive Education of Students With General Learning Difficulties: A Meta-Analysis," *Review of Educational Research* 91, no. 3 (June 17, 2021): 432–78, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321998072>.

¹⁴ Bešić et al., "Inclusive Practices at the Teacher and Class Level: The Experts' View."

¹⁵ Sophia Kapcia, "Enabling Access: Reflecting on Inclusive Education Practice," *Support for Learning* 39, no. 4 (November 18, 2024): 203–7, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12506>.

¹⁶ Kapcia.

¹⁷ James M. Kauffman and Garry Hornby, "Inclusive Vision Versus Special Education Reality," *Education Sciences* 10, no. 9 (September 22, 2020): 258, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10090258>.

¹⁸ Jean-Francois Trani et al., "Stigma of Persons with Disabilities in South Africa: Uncovering Pathways from Discrimination to Depression and Low Self-Esteem," *Social Science & Medicine* 265 (November 2020): 113449, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113449>.

¹⁹ Leda T. Baluyot, Osias Kit T. Kilag, and Raquel H. Noguera, "The Role of Inclusive Education in Enhancing Self-Esteem and Social Interaction among Students with Disabilities," *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, n.d.

²⁰ Baluyot, Kilag, and Noguera.

concept and academic achievements. This plight generates rejection and promotes isolation among students. It also increases bullying, diminishes social connectedness, and contradicts inclusion. These obstacles further compound the abilities of exceptional students to manage their emotions during routine changes or transitions.²¹ According to Han and Park, such impediments also demotivate them and grossly impede their cognitive, social, and academic abilities.²² Further, they cannot achieve as their peers, their learning is curtailed, their aspirations are diminished, their self-concept is deflated, and they become pessimistic and lose hope.

Inclusion and Special Students

According to the literature,²³ Special students routinely have a poor image of themselves, and their inferiority widens when they study apart from their peers. When they learn together, it boosts their self-worth. In addition, inclusive classrooms offer greater opportunities to socialize and augment cognition. In this way, students can interact freely with others, which helps to build a positive self-image and self-confidence, which are integral components of life. Haug argued that because inclusion is chiefly concerned with placing all students in the same classroom, it does not satisfactorily meet all needs.²⁴ To address this notion, Haug surmised that it is better to view inclusion as providing the best learning environments for students.²⁵ When deciding where to educate students, the top priority must be where and how they can accentuate their learning potential. This ought to be the guiding objective of inclusion, where meeting the needs of students is superior to just placing them in classrooms. This notion could be substantial grounds for retaining special schools within an inclusive ideology.²⁶ According to Fulcher, inclusion could be a segregated predicament.²⁷ On the other hand, the tension between inclusion as learning opportunities and inclusion as placement in schools for all is convoluted.²⁸ It illustrates the quandary of a multi-oriented concept of inclusion. The difficulty is that students with disabilities taught in the ordinary class

²¹ Baluyot, Kilag, and Noguera.

²² Hi-Yoean Han and Soon-Gil Park, "A Study on the Correlations of Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Learning Motivations of Underachieving Elementary School Students," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Convergent Research Interchange* 6, no. 8 (August 31, 2020): 79–89, <https://doi.org/10.47116/apjcri.2020.08.08>.

²³ Ghaleb H. Alnahdi and Susanne Schwab, "Special Education Major or Attitudes to Predict Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Teaching in Inclusive Education," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (June 30, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.680909>; Hannu Savolainen, Olli-Pekka Malinen, and Susanne Schwab, "Teacher Efficacy Predicts Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion – a Longitudinal Cross-Lagged Analysis," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 26, no. 9 (July 29, 2022): 958–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1752826>; Susanne Schwab, "Inclusive and Special Education in Europe," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (Oxford University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1230>; Silvio Marcello Pagliara et al., "The Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Inclusive Education: A Scoping Review," October 21, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202410.1386.v1>.

²⁴ Peder Haug, "Understanding Inclusive Education: Ideals and Reality," *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 19, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 206–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15017419.2016.1224778>.

²⁵ Haug.

²⁶ Haug.

²⁷ G Fulcher, *Disabling Policies?: A Comparative Approach to Education Policy and Disability*, Routledge Library Editions: Children and Disability (Taylor & Francis, 2015), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=qVdACwAAQBAJ>.

²⁸ Brahm Norwich, "Dilemmas of Difference, Inclusion and Disability: International Perspectives on Placement," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 23, no. 4 (November 2008): 287–304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250802387166>.

had less access to specialist services and that separate settings could result in exclusion and devaluation.²⁹ The inclusive solution is to bring these two alternatives together and combine them. In practice, however, the location question often prioritizes how the students should be educated. Mention must be made that inclusive education is practiced differently in various countries. Allan conjectured that there is deep uncertainty about how to create inclusive environments within schools and about how to teach inclusively.³⁰ Almost all countries have a gap between formulations and realizations of inclusive education and little mention of the correlation with student self-esteem.³¹

Gap in literature

A noteworthy gap in inclusion lies in its outcomes of inclusion. Because there is no explicit agreement about what inclusion is and how it might be realized, it is also difficult to establish consensus about the results. This raises two pivotal questions. What are the consequences of inclusion? How can they be measured?³² According to Leijen et al., children with physical disabilities can benefit from inclusion. However, it is problematic to incorporate those who have been raised according to very different principles or who have significant cognitive disabilities.³³ Arcidiacono and Baucal argued that inclusive education would be possible in homogeneous societies because of family values and the upbringing of children.³⁴ This would result in a situation where there are few differences between children's behaviors, and the same value system is used as a guiding principle. Hence, there must be various kinds of learning environments for different children.

Self-Concept and Inclusive Education

Krauss and Orth state that self-concept forms personal characteristics and influences students' work.³⁵ Self-concept is an individual's perspective about themselves and is often associated with the educational sphere. Hence, an elevated self-concept enhances academic performance, reduces dropout rates, and minimizes the chances of students engaging in academic dishonesty.³⁶ According to Monteiro et al. and Abdulghani et al., there are different

²⁹ Norwich.

³⁰ Julie Allan, *Rethinking Inclusive Education: The Philosophers of Difference in Practice*, vol. 5, Inclusive Education: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6093-9>.

³¹ Ian Hardy and Stuart Woodcock, "Inclusive Education Policies: Discourses of Difference, Diversity and Deficit," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 19, no. 2 (February 2015): 141–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2014.908965>.

³² Ann Cheryl Armstrong, Derrick Armstrong, and Ilektra Spandagou, *Inclusive Education: International Policy & Practice* (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221990>.

³³ Āli Leijen, Francesco Arcidiacono, and Aleksandar Baucal, "The Dilemma of Inclusive Education: Inclusion for Some or Inclusion for All," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (September 10, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.633066>.

³⁴ Francesco Arcidiacono and Aleksandar Baucal, "Towards Teacher Professionalization for Inclusive Education: Reflections from the Perspective of a Socio-Cultural Approach," *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri. Estonian Journal of Education* 8, no. 1 (May 1, 2020): 26–47, <https://doi.org/10.12697/eha.2020.8.1.02b>.

³⁵ Samantha Krauss and Ulrich Orth, "Work Experiences and Self-Esteem Development: A Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies," *European Journal of Personality* 36, no. 6 (November 21, 2022): 849–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08902070211027142>.

³⁶ M Rosenberg, *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*, Princeton Legacy Library (Princeton University Press, 2015), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=YR3WCgAAQBAJ>; Wenjing Yu et al., "The Role of Self-Esteem in the Academic

levels of self-esteem.³⁷ Those with high esteem fully accept themselves, those with medium esteem accept themselves and recognize a need for improvement, and those with low esteem consider themselves inferior. Although Zheng et al. noted that research has shown that self-concept is associated with academic achievement, they do not make an adequate connection between self-concept and inclusion.³⁸ They further indicated that students with high self-esteem also achieved significantly in their studies but did not specifically mention special students. According to Al-Obaydi et al., self-concept is an important developmental component that involves self-evaluation.³⁹ They also affirmed that self-concept is pivotal in education since students with elevated self-concepts usually achieve greater success than those with low self-concepts. Al-Obaydi et al. conjectured that poor achievement habitually causes students to feel demotivated, insecure, and excluded and could negatively affect their behavior and interactions with peers.⁴⁰ Orth and Robins opined that a good self-concept enhances social behavior and promotes academic achievement.⁴¹ Coaquira et al. argued that self-concept is central for students because it motivates them to achieve excellence.⁴² It is also the internal force that governs human behavior and maintains the internal consistency of behavior. Students with positive self-concepts use their abilities and skills to achieve greater success and live more comfortably.⁴³ According to Alkhasawneh et al., self-concept is a prominent variable in the development of the lives of exceptional students.⁴⁴ They further indicated that the fundamental concept of personality incorporates self-realization, self-concept, and self-efficacy. These are necessary for survival because they allow individuals to distinguish themselves from others and adapt to the environment.⁴⁵

According to Harris and Orth and Hidalgo-Fuentes et al., there is a good connection between self-concept and social relationships, and the latter is rudimentary in shaping the

Performance of Rural Students in China," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 20 (October 15, 2022): 13317, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192013317>; Lucy R. Zheng et al., "Are Self-esteem and Academic Achievement Reciprocally Related? Findings from a Longitudinal Study of Mexican-origin Youth," *Journal of Personality* 88, no. 6 (December 22, 2020): 1058–74, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12550>; Priscila Fabra et al., "Changes in Drop Out Intentions: Implications of the Motivational Climate, Goal Orientations and Aspects of Self-Worth across a Youth Sport Season," *Sustainability* 13, no. 24 (December 15, 2021): 13850, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132413850>.

³⁷ Renan P. Monteiro et al., "The Efficient Assessment of Self-Esteem: Proposing the Brief Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale," *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 17, no. 2 (April 27, 2022): 931–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-021-09936-4>; Afnan Hamza Abdulghani et al., "Does Self-Esteem Lead to High Achievement of the Science College's Students? A Study from the Six Health Science Colleges," *Saudi Journal of Biological Sciences* 27, no. 2 (February 2020): 636–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sjbs.2019.11.026>.

³⁸ Zheng et al., "Are Self-esteem and Academic Achievement Reciprocally Related? Findings from a Longitudinal Study of Mexican-origin Youth."

³⁹ Liqaa Habeb Al-Obaydi, "EFL College Students' Self-Esteem and Its Correlation to Their Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education," *Journal of Educational Sciences, Theory and Practice* 16, no. 1 (2021): 27–34, <https://doi.org/10.46763/JESPT211610027ao>.

⁴⁰ Al-Obaydi.

⁴¹ Ulrich Orth and Richard W. Robins, "Is High Self-Esteem Beneficial? Revisiting a Classic Question.," *American Psychologist* 77, no. 1 (January 2022): 5–17, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000922>.

⁴² Ronald Garnique-Hinostroza et al., "Self-Esteem and Family Satisfaction as Predictors of Life Satisfaction in Peruvian Highland University Students," *Frontiers in Education* 9 (February 27, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1182446>.

⁴³ Garnique-Hinostroza et al.

⁴⁴ T. Alkhasawneh et al., "'Self-Esteem and Its Relationship to Some Demographic Variables among S' by T. Alkhasawneh, A. S Al-Shaar et Al.," accessed April 17, 2025, <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/isl/vol11/iss6/9/>.

⁴⁵ Alkhasawneh et al.

self-esteem of individuals.⁴⁶ They further indicated that healthy relationships with parents and significant others habitually strengthen children's self-concept, enhancing positive relationships among peers. Al-Obaydi noted that Kurt Goldstein first used the term self-actualization because everyone has dignity and is motivated to achieve their best.⁴⁷ Al-Obaydi also mentioned a close connection between self-actualization and the educational environment because the latter represents where students spend most of their time.⁴⁸

According to Yao and Kabir, the core of Roger's theory is person-centered and is rooted in the philosophy that people are inherently motivated toward achieving positive psychological functioning.⁴⁹ Hence, people control their destinies and are often considered the experts in their lives, while therapists, counselors, and educators assume a non-directive role. Similarly, Hill and Nakayama mentioned that therapists, counselors, and educators habitually provide the required space for this process.⁵⁰ Students can explore their feelings, understand themselves better, and achieve psychological and cognitive growth in such an atmosphere. Therapists, counselors, and educators try to comprehend students' self-understanding through reflection. Some of the tenets of Roger's theory incorporate reflective listening, empathy, and acceptance. Since it does not seek to interpret behaviors or unconscious drives, it is apt for inclusion (Hill & Nakayama 2000).⁵¹ According to Rogers, negative self-perceptions can prevent people from realizing self-actualization.⁵² Thus, a state of incongruence between self-image and reality could exist with students. This incongruence generally causes them to feel susceptible and uneasy and leads to feelings of vulnerability and anxiety. Because Roger's client-centered theory supports the philosophy that people are inherently motivated and have the capacity for growth and self-actualization, and this notion is the changing agent.⁵³ In this regard, educators must provide non-judgmental environments where students can honestly study and deeply reflect on their lives and achieve growth and development. This non-judgmental process augments self-understanding and demystifies dissonance, which is suitable for special children in inclusive environments. Goodman et al. further indicated that the role and function of educators are climactic because they reinforce students' self-concept.⁵⁴ Through this activity, self-exploration and reinforcement of the

⁴⁶ Michelle A. Harris and Ulrich Orth, "The Link between Self-Esteem and Social Relationships: A Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 119, no. 6 (December 2020): 1459–77, <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000265>; Sergio Hidalgo-Fuentes et al., "The Role of Big Five Traits and Self-Esteem on Academic Procrastination in Honduran and Spanish University Students: A Cross-Cultural Study," *Heliyon* 10, no. 16 (August 2024): e36172, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36172>.

⁴⁷ Liqaa Habeb Al-Obaydi, "Risk-Taking and Self-Actualization in EFL Positive Classroom Environment," *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* 3, no. 3 (September 25, 2020): 352–65, <https://doi.org/10.34050/elsjsh.v3i3.10877>.

⁴⁸ Al-Obaydi.

⁴⁹ Lucy Yao and Rian Kabir, "Person-Centered Therapy (Rogerian Therapy)," *StatPearls*, February 9, 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK589708/>.

⁵⁰ Clara E. Hill and Emilie Y. Nakayama, "Client-Centered Therapy: Where Has It Been and Where Is It Going? A Comment on Hathaway (1948)," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 56, no. 7 (July 2000): 861–75, [https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-4679\(200007\)56:7<861::AID-JCLP5>3.0.CO;2-J](https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-4679(200007)56:7<861::AID-JCLP5>3.0.CO;2-J).

⁵¹ Hill and Nakayama.

⁵² Carl R. Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change.," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 21, no. 2 (1957): 95–103, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045357>.

⁵³ Rogers.

⁵⁴ Robin F. Goodman et al., "Letting the Story Unfold: A Case Study of Client-Centered Therapy for Childhood Traumatic Grief," *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 12, no. 4 (July 2004): 199–212, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10673220490509534>.

worth and dignity of students coupled with a client-centered approach magnifies the esteem of students. It flourishes and blossoms, giving students tremendous confidence in themselves and their decisions.

Rogers also felt that three dispositions, accurate empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard, on the part of therapists, counselors, and educators are rudimentary.⁵⁵ This researcher examines the merits and demerits of these three principles in inclusion. According to Rogers, accurate empathy involves active listening.⁵⁶ Educators must carefully consider students' feelings, emotions, and thoughts. This process incorporates strategies such as paraphrasing and summarizing the feeling to maintain focus and ascertain correct information. To guarantee that similitude is present, educators genuinely convey their feelings, emotions, concerns, and thoughts to impel students further. Although educators are strongly encouraged to share their issues, they must always ensure that the focus is on the students.⁵⁷ In this way, educators create warm environments that convey that students are accepted unconditionally. It does not involve making judgments, approving, disapproving, or casting aspersions. When the views and opinions of the students are respected, they speak without inhibition and direct their self-exploration as they deem appropriate.⁵⁸

Although the philosophy offered by Rogers is worthwhile, it cannot always support inclusive education and affirm students' self-concept.⁵⁹ Because the principles of person-centered therapy are vague and unclear, they are not always beneficial in establishing self-concept among students in inclusive environments.⁶⁰ It can also be argued that the person-centered approach is ineffective for students who have difficulty expressing themselves or have mental disorders that alter their perceptions of reality. According to Hill and Nakayama, there is insufficient research on the efficacy of person-centered therapy, and no objective data suggests its efficacy was due to its distinctive features.⁶¹ While Grover et al. and Meister et al. pioneered the idea that person-centered therapy can be used in various settings because it is flexible, it cannot always apply to inclusion since educators have the principal goal of delivering the curricula.⁶² Because it relies heavily on the active participation of students, it may not be appropriate for those who lack motivation or insight into their emotions and behaviors.⁶³

⁵⁵ Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change."

⁵⁶ C. R. Rogers, "Significant Aspects of Client-Centered Therapy.," *American Psychologist* 1, no. 10 (1946): 415–22, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0060866>.

⁵⁷ Rogers.

⁵⁸ Rogers.

⁵⁹ Rogers; Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change."

⁶⁰ Hill and Nakayama, "Client-Centered Therapy: Where Has It Been and Where Is It Going? A Comment on Hathaway (1948)."

⁶¹ Hill and Nakayama.

⁶² Sandeep Grover, Ajit Avasthi, and Mukesh Jagiwal, "Clinical Practice Guidelines for Practice of Supportive Psychotherapy," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 62, no. 8 (2020): 173, https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_768_19; Ramona Meister et al., "Adverse Events during a Disorder-specific Psychotherapy Compared to a Nonspecific Psychotherapy in Patients with Chronic Depression," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 76, no. 1 (January 2020): 7–19, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22869>.

⁶³ Michael Barkham et al., "Person-Centred Experiential Therapy versus Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Delivered in the English Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Service for the Treatment of Moderate or Severe Depression (PRaCTICED): A Pragmatic, Randomised, Non-inferiority," *The Lancet Psychiatry* 8, no. 6 (June 2021): 487–99, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(21\)00083-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00083-3).

It is interesting to mention that Maslow first introduced the notion of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper titled *A Theory of Human Motivation* and again in his subsequent book, *Motivation and Personality*, in 1970.⁶⁴ This hierarchy suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. He categorized needs under five headings: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Some physiological needs include food, water, clothing, and shelter. The safety needs are health, personal, emotional, and financial security. Love and belonging incorporate family, friendship, intimacy, trust, and acceptance.

While esteem incorporates respect for self and others, Maslow affirmed that most people need stable esteem based on achievement.⁶⁵ In the lower level of esteem, people rely on respect from others, which may include a need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. In the higher level of esteem, there is a need for self-respect that includes a desire for strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence, and freedom. Self-actualization is attained when people realize their full potential. Maslow described this as the wish to accomplish everything.⁶⁶ People may have a strong desire to become ideal parents, succeed athletically, or create paintings, pictures, or inventions, but to reach this level, they must master all previous needs. Self-actualization is a value-based system when discussing its role in motivation. It is understood as the goal or explicit motive, and the previous stages in Maslow's hierarchy fall in line to become the step-by-step process by which self-actualization is achievable; an explicit motive is the objective of a reward-based system that is used to drive the completion of specific values or goals intrinsically. Individuals motivated to pursue this goal seek and understand how their needs, relationships, and sense of self are expressed through their behavior. Self-actualization includes partner acquisition, parenting, utilizing and developing talents and abilities and pursuing goals.⁶⁷

This well-being causes people to express their inherent potential freely, and when parents fail to provide safe, nurturing environments, their children develop deep feelings of insecurity. Kasser and Sheldon also suggested that feelings of insecurity produce materialistic behavior and heighten cognitive dissonance.⁶⁸ Abulof and Navy noted that Maslow's hierarchy of needs has significantly contributed to scholarships. This hierarchy captured the world's imagination by suggesting that humans are sequentially driven by innate needs for survival, safety, love, belonging, esteem, and self-realization.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation.," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (July 1943): 370–96, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>; A H Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper's Psychological Series (Harper & Row, 1970), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=0V5qAAAAMAAJ>.

⁶⁵ Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation.,"; Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*.

⁶⁶ Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation.,"; Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*.

⁶⁷ Matthew J. Monnot and Terry A. Beehr, "The Good Life Versus the 'Goods Life': An Investigation of Goal Contents Theory and Employee Subjective Well-Being Across Asian Countries," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 23, no. 3 (March 8, 2022): 1215–44, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-021-00447-5>.

⁶⁸ Tim Kasser and Kennon M. Sheldon, "Of Wealth and Death: Materialism, Mortality Salience, and Consumption Behavior," *Psychological Science* 11, no. 4 (July 1, 2000): 348–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.00269>.

⁶⁹ Uriel Abulof, "Introduction: Why We Need Maslow in the Twenty-First Century," *Society* 54, no. 6 (December 15, 2017): 508–9, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-017-0198-6>; Shannon L. Navy, "Theory of Human Motivation—Abraham Maslow," 2020, 17–28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43620-9_2.

Papaleontiou-Louca et al. argued that Maslow's theory could be instructive because of its heavy emphasis on self-actualization and achieving goals and objectives.⁷⁰ Because there is a substantial accentuation on self-actualization, it could be seen as individualistic and can encourage narrow-mindedness, contrary to inclusion. Noltemeyer et al. conjectured that although Maslow's theory speaks about needs starting from the lower level to the higher level, not much attention was given to whether empirical data support the theory, and further examination of this theory is warranted and may not be beneficial in inclusion.⁷¹ According to Rojas et al., needs cannot be satisfied sequentially. Although income is significant in satisfying physiological needs, its relevance is modest in the case of satisfying other important needs.⁷² They further argued that a hierarchy of needs is non-existent, and in inclusive education, not many students can achieve the highest level of self-actualization. Rojas et al. further indicated that although Maslow proposed a pyramid of needs, not all are equal.⁷³ This inequality is a direct contrast to the philosophy of inclusion. The basic needs are at the lower level, and the non-basic needs are at the top. To achieve self-actualization, students must gradually progress from one stage to the next, and needs are satisfied concurrently, which is impossible for most students.

METHOD

The non-empirical research tried to validate the significance of inclusive education and the relationship with self-concept in students. The two research questions guided this study. Is there a relationship between inclusive education and the self-concept of students? How does inclusion nurture self-concept among students? How does inclusion nurture self-concept? The following academic databases were utilized to source supportive literature. Web of Science is a collection of databases that index the leading scholarly literature in the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities, as published in journals, conference proceedings, symposia, seminars, colloquia, workshops, and conventions globally. SCOPUS is an extensive, multidisciplinary database of peer-reviewed literature, scientific journals, and books. It offers a comprehensive overview of the world's science, technology, medicine, social science, and arts and humanities research output. Google Scholar is a search engine that provides academic resources and scholarly literature from various publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities, and other websites. ERIC is a database of education literature and resources.

⁷⁰ Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca, Saeed Esmailnia, and Niki Thoma, "A Critical Review of Maslow's Theory of Spirituality," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 24, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 327–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2021.1932694>.

⁷¹ Amity Noltemeyer et al., "The Relationship between Deficiency Needs and Growth Needs: The Continuing Investigation of Maslow's Theory," *Child & Youth Services* 42, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 24–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0145935X.2020.1818558>.

⁷² Mariano Rojas, Alfonso Méndez, and Karen Watkins-Fassler, "The Hierarchy of Needs Empirical Examination of Maslow's Theory and Lessons for Development," *World Development* 165 (May 2023): 106185, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106185>.

⁷³ Rojas, Méndez, and Watkins-Fassler.

Methodological Search

A systematic and comprehensive search of journals was conducted in special and inclusive education and educational research. The articles considered adequate were sorted by the journal title in which they were published. This author followed the guidelines provided by the United Nations Convention (Citation 2007) and reviewed thirteen selected journals. They are the American Educational Research Journal, Australasian Journal of Special Education, Educational Researcher, European Journal of Special Needs Education, Frontline Learning Research, International Journal of Inclusive Education, International Journal of Special Education, Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, Journal of Teacher Education, Learning and Instruction, Teacher Education and Special Education, Teaching and Teacher Education, and the Journal of Special Education. This review was conducted from June 2024 to December 2024. To competently guide the research and keep the goal and aim, the following terms and words were used: inclusive education, self-esteem, self-concept, self-actualization, exceptional children, and disability. This researcher also used text criticism, critically examining biographical studies and narrative analysis. The articles were categorized according to the theoretical underpinnings or frameworks used to support the narrative of inclusive education and self-esteem and inclusion, and the two research questions were addressed. From a comprehensive review of scholarly articles, the research is valuable for scholars, educators, and policymakers who want to deepen their knowledge about inclusion and its relationship with self-esteem. Mention must be made that no primary data were collected and that ethical review was not applicable. Nonetheless, Data were collated, analyzed, triangulated, and documented in a narrative form using two thematic headings: Role of Educators in enhancing self-concept in classrooms and strategies to accentuate positive reinforcement.

Limitations

This conceptual review contributed to understanding how inclusive education relates to student self-esteem. It presented the gap in the literature, and limitations were established. The methods only accentuated perspectives, integrative literature, opinions on current events, and the authority and experience of the different authors. It was not grounded in clinical observation and experimentation. Hence, empirical data does not substantiate the arguments; they are open to criticism. It was not possible to incorporate all the data available in online databases. This research did not include fieldwork. Hence, the experiences, viewpoints, and opinions of those involved in inclusion are absent. Further studies could integrate both non-empirical and empirical methods. These methods could enhance the field of science and the research outcome.

DISCUSSION

Result and Discussion

Role of Educators in Enhancing Self-concept in Classrooms

According to Rana, self-concept refers to the perception people have of themselves.⁷⁴ It also incorporates beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and values and is instrumental in forming a personality. Further, it informs social competence since it influences how people feel, think, learn, value themselves, and behave. People with good self-concept tend to be more accepting of others and view criticism and suggestions to accentuate cognition. Schuetze et al. argued that positive reinforcement addresses the relationship between students' behavior and the corresponding consequences.⁷⁵ This relationship is conceptualized as reinforcement if the consequences accelerate the likelihood that behaviors will be maintained. Schuetze et al. also noted that one of the principal objectives of reinforcement is to support students and help them acquire new skills and continuously use them over time in diverse settings and the presence of different individuals.⁷⁶

Morin opined that while inclusion educates all students in the same classrooms, their needs must be met, and this means that educators will have to use various teaching strategies to address students' concerns.⁷⁷ This allows students with different abilities to experience multiple ways of learning. Inclusion also gives students grand opportunities to establish genuine friendships and behavior models in social gatherings. Upadhyay also conjectured that successful communication with peers is essential since it is the first step in allowing them to interact successfully with people in the real world.⁷⁸ Rotta et al. conjectured that educators can use positive reinforcement to foster academic achievement and accelerate student self-esteem.⁷⁹ Similarly, Malaco et al. mentioned that positive reinforcement can motivate students to copy good behaviors and habits.⁸⁰ Educators can determine which reward will motivate which student. According to Gena and Jabeen et al., when students get a specified type of positive reinforcement, the reward is more effective in repeating good behaviors.⁸¹ This can magnify their self-esteem, encourage good social skills, and increase academics.

⁷⁴ Nishta Rana, "Self-Concept Of Children With Special Needs Studying In Inclusive Setting," *Disabilities and Impairments* 34, no. 2 (2020): 141–51, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344453200_Self-Concept_Of_Children_With_Special_Needs_Studying_In_Inclusive_Setting.

⁷⁵ Manuela Schuetze et al., "Reinforcement Learning in Autism Spectrum Disorder," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (November 21, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02035>.

⁷⁶ Schuetze et al.

⁷⁷ Danielle Morin, "The Effects of Inclusion and Positive Reinforcement Within the Classroom," *Honors Program Contracts*, April 1, 2017, https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/honors_component/4.

⁷⁸ Usha Tiwari Upadhyay, "Improving Well-Being, Academic Self-Concept and Academic Achievement of Indian Children with Specific Learning Disability by Utilising Positive Psychology Intervention," *Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development* 32, no. 3 (October 26, 2021): 105, <https://doi.org/10.47985/dcidj.491>.

⁷⁹ Katarina Rotta, Aidyn Raaymakers, and Alan Poling, "Using Positive Reinforcement to Increase the Physical Activity of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: A Review," *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities* 35, no. 4 (August 7, 2023): 551–75, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-022-09873-6>.

⁸⁰ Amera Malaco et al., "Role of Positive Reinforcement to the Social Skills of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder," 2020, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.25456.07683>.

⁸¹ Angeliki Gena, "The Effects of Prompting and Social Reinforcement on Establishing Social Interactions with Peers during the Inclusion of Four Children with Autism in Preschool," *International Journal of Psychology* 41, no. 6 (December 24, 2006): 541–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207590500492658>; Sadaf Jabeen et al., "(PDF) Effect of Positive Reinforcement on Social Skills of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Primary Level 2431 LINGUISTICA ANTVERPIENSIA," accessed April 17, 2025, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357646609_Effect_of_Positive_Reinforcement_on_Social_Skills_of_Students_with_Autism_Spectrum_Disorder_at_Primary_Level_2431_LINGUISTICA_ANTVERPIENSIA.

Positive reinforcements habitually represent pleasant moods and emotions such as contentment, pleasure, affection, interest, engagement, and joy, accentuating cognition.⁸²

Strategies to Accentuate Positive Reinforcement

According to Rafi et al., positive reinforcement is a behavior modification technique used to encourage and increase the occurrence of desired behaviors.⁸³ It involves rewarding or providing positive consequences to students after they exhibit a specific behavior to buttress and bolster that behavior. The basic philosophy of positive reinforcement requires motivating good behaviors and achievements with positive outcomes. Through these gestures, it is hoped that students will continue in this pattern. This technique is widely used in many educational institutions to encourage students to improve their performance.⁸⁴ There are several reasons why positive reinforcement is so effective in classrooms. First, it helps to build trust and healthy relationships between educators and students. By recognizing and rewarding positive behaviors, educators can demonstrate their appreciation for students' efforts, which can contribute to creating supportive and effective class environments. Second, positive reinforcement can help to amplify the morale of students. Freeman opined that when students feel their hard work is being recognized and rewarded, they are likelier to stay engaged and committed to their studies.⁸⁵ This can lead to increased productivity, better quality of academics, and more meaningful classroom environments. Finally, positive reinforcement can help affirm behaviors critical to students' achievements. Bross et al. claimed that by focusing on the behaviors that lead to success, educators can help to ensure that their team members are performing at their best and achieving their goals.⁸⁶

An outstanding way to foster self-confidence among students is to teach them how to solve and unravel problems. It is important to help them to develop adequate coping strategies to deal with challenges in life. Educators must be specific when providing verbal and non-verbal praise and written approval. Students are often motivated to excel and accomplish when given special recognition and privileges.⁸⁷ When students are provided with tangible incentives and are publicly acknowledged, their welfare is magnified, and their self-concept is deepened. Positive reinforcement must be done soon after behaviors occur so that students can make a direct correlation. Rewards must be engaging, meaningful, attractive,

⁸² Kelly M. Schieltz et al., "Evaluating the Effects of Positive Reinforcement, Instructional Strategies, and Negative Reinforcement on Problem Behavior and Academic Performance: An Experimental Analysis," *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities* 32, no. 2 (April 6, 2020): 339–63, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-019-09696-y>.

⁸³ Aisha Rafi, Ambreen Ansar, and Muneeza Amir Sami, "The Implication of Positive Reinforcement Strategy in Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour in the Classroom: A Scoping Review," *Journal of Rawalpindi Medical College* 24, no. 2 (June 26, 2020): 173–79, <https://doi.org/10.37939/jrmc.v24i2.1190>.

⁸⁴ Robin Parks Ennis et al., "Precorrection: An Effective, Efficient, Low-Intensity Strategy to Support Student Success," *Beyond Behavior* 27, no. 3 (December 11, 2018): 146–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618799360>.

⁸⁵ Jennifer Freeman, "Effective Low-Intensity Strategies to Enhance School Success: What Every Educator Needs to Know—A Closing Commentary," *Beyond Behavior* 27, no. 3 (December 7, 2018): 175–76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618799082>.

⁸⁶ Leslie Ann Bross et al., "High-Probability Request Sequence: An Effective, Efficient Low-Intensity Strategy to Support Student Success," *Beyond Behavior* 27, no. 3 (December 4, 2018): 140–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618798615>.

⁸⁷ Kathleen Lynne Lane et al., "Effective Low-Intensity Strategies to Enhance School Success: What Every Educator Needs to Know," *Beyond Behavior* 27, no. 3 (December 6, 2018): 128–33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618799044>.

and sustainable over some time. Educators can collaborate with different classes, school administration, and parents to select appropriate rewards. While positive reinforcement is instrumental in motivating students and curbing behaviors, the needs of students frequently change. Thus, accentuating positive reinforcement is a dynamic and continuous process, but it is profitable and beneficial to students when done effectively.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive education positively shapes students' self-concept through several interrelated mechanisms. Classrooms that employ differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, and universal learning design cultivate a robust sense of belonging, autonomy, and competence among learners. Educators' person-centered attitudes—marked by accurate empathy, unconditional positive regard, and proactive reinforcement—further strengthen students' self-perception, particularly for those with special needs. Institutional supports such as collaborative teaching teams, comprehensive inclusion policies, and targeted professional development underpin the practical enactment of inclusive practices and help to mitigate stigma. These factors create a reinforcing cycle in which positive reinforcement strategies bolster academic behaviors and enhance socio-emotional well-being, thereby sustaining students' confidence and engagement.

Despite these promising conceptual insights, this review is limited by its reliance on secondary sources and the absence of original data collection or statistical analysis. The synthesis reflects literature published only up to December 2024, potentially overlooking more recent developments, and variations in how “inclusion” and “self-concept” are defined across studies restrict direct comparability. Moreover, contextual factors—such as cultural norms or socioeconomic disparities—that may moderate the effects of inclusive practices were not examined. To address these limitations, future research should employ empirical methodologies, including longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-methods designs, and incorporate the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents via interviews, focus groups, or surveys. Such studies would provide the evidence base to refine inclusive strategies, ensure cultural responsiveness, and translate theoretical ideals into transformative educational practice.

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