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Self-Efficacy And Pedagogical Practices Of General Education School Teachers For Teaching Students With Diversity In Regular Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The growing diversity of learners in regular elementary classrooms has increased the need for teachers who are both confident in their ability to teach diverse learners and able to use effective pedagogical practices in everyday classroom work. In Pakistan, inclusive education has gained policy attention, yet classroom-level practice still depends greatly on what teachers believe they can do and what they actually do in regular classrooms. Against this background, the present study examined the self-efficacy of general education elementary school teachers, the pedagogical practices they employ for teaching diverse learners, and the relationship between these two variables. The study was guided by three objectives: to determine the level of teachers' self-efficacy, to investigate the pedagogical practices used by teachers, and to examine the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their pedagogical practices in regular classrooms. A quantitative survey research design was used. The population consisted of 980 government elementary school teachers from three districts of Punjab Khanewal, Vehari, and Sahiwal through two-stage proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire with three sections: demographics, a 12-item self-efficacy scale, and a 12-item pedagogical practices scale. Data were analysed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA. The findings showed that teachers reported a positive level of self-efficacy ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.21$) and a high level of pedagogical practices ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.21$). The correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and pedagogical practices ($r = 0.319$, $p = 0.048$), indicating that teachers with stronger self-efficacy also tended to report stronger pedagogical practices. Group comparisons showed only small mean differences across gender, district, age, and teaching experience, while qualification-based differences in teaching practices were not statistically meaningful. Item-wise findings further showed strong agreement with positive statements related to both constructs. The study concludes that teachers' self-efficacy and pedagogical practices move in the same positive direction and together provide an important basis for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms. It is recommended that teacher education institutions, school leaders, and government bodies strengthen practice-based professional development, inclusive pedagogy training, and school-level support systems to help teachers sustain inclusive teaching more effectively.



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Keywords: Teacher Self-Efficacy, Pedagogical Practices, Diverse Learners, Inclusive Education, Regular Classrooms, Elementary School Teachers

Introduction:

In many countries the regular elementary classrooms are becoming more diverse regarding the students' abilities, languages, cultural backgrounds and socio-emotional needs. Inclusive education reform hopes that the majority of children, including those with special educational needs, will be educated in general education classrooms instead of being split off in separate classrooms. Large-scale reviews have demonstrated that success of these reforms is dependent in important ways on what classroom teachers believe and do in their daily practice, particularly their attitudes and sense of capability for teaching diverse students (Dignath et al., 2022; Long et al., 2025). Teacher self-efficacy for inclusion is a teacher's belief that he or she is able to manage classrooms, differentiate instruction, and work with others to serve all students, including students who have disabilities or learning difficulties. Recent empirical work indicates that higher self-efficacy is related to more frequent usage of inclusive strategies, as well as positive belief about teaching in mixed ability classrooms (Havik, 2025). However, meta-analyses have also indicated that considerable numbers of teachers report still only moderate levels of self-efficacy for inclusion, in particular in regular schools where support and training are low (Dignath et al., 2022; Long et al., 2025).

Alongside beliefs, teachers' pedagogical practices shape how diversity is experienced in the classroom. Approaches such as differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and varied assessment are frequently described as key ways of responding to different readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles within one class (Gheysens et al., 2023; Hameed et al., 2024). Studies from different contexts show that teachers generally endorse the idea of adapting instruction but often feel unsure about how to translate this into everyday practice with large classes and limited resources (Hameed et al., 2024).

Despite growing international evidence, there is still a need for context-specific understanding of how general education elementary teachers view their own capability and what pedagogical practices they actually use when teaching students with diverse learning needs in regular classrooms. The present study focuses on the self-efficacy and pedagogical practices of general education school teachers for teaching students with diversity in regular elementary classrooms.

Classrooms today bring together learners who differ in language, culture, ability, interests, and life experiences. In many education systems, children who might previously have been taught in separate settings such as those with disabilities, learning difficulties, or different mother tongues are now learning alongside their peers in regular schools. Studies from primary and secondary schools show that teachers increasingly work with groups that are heterogeneous not only academically but also socially and culturally (Kolaj, 2022).

Diversity in classrooms commonly includes variations in ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, home language, and family background. Research on ethnic and cultural diversity in schooling highlights that learners may bring different worldviews and communication styles into the same classroom space (Loader, 2025). At the same time, there is growing recognition of "invisible" dimensions of diversity, such as neurodiversity, mental health needs, and differences in prior learning opportunities, which may not be immediately apparent but strongly shape how students participate in lessons (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024; Singh, 2023).

In both higher and basic education, the findings imply that the various classrooms can be



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very enriching in regard to peer learning and the development of social relationships, but they also present the important instructional and relational challenges to the teacher (Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025). Teachers often report to necessity of balancing between wide differences of readiness levels, while retaining a sense of community and fairness among students (Kolaj, 2022). In inclusive primary schools and secondary schools, many teachers recognize that they have not had enough training to be fully equipped to respond to this variety of needs in their early preparation, especially if they have large classes and few resources (Darwish, 2025). The research questions of the study: What is the level of self-efficacy among general education elementary school teachers for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms? What pedagogical practices are employed by general education elementary school teachers for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms? What is the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their pedagogical practices for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms?

Research Objectives:

To determine the level of self-efficacy among general education elementary school teachers for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms.

To investigate the pedagogical practices employed by general education elementary school teachers for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms.

To examine the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their pedagogical practices for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms.

Literature Review

The current literature in the field of inclusive education indicates that the existing regular classrooms are more varied in terms of ability, language, disability, learning speed, behaviour, emotional needs, socioeconomic status and previous learning experiences. This diversity has transformed the job of the general education teacher as inclusion is now more than having students with different needs in the same classroom. The effective inclusion of children is related to teachers' lesson planning, adaptation of instruction, behaviour management, assessment of children's learning, and support of learning in the classroom. In a systematic review of 71 studies, Wray et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy has a strong link to inclusive practice as teacher self-efficacy (TSSE) impacts their reactions to students with diverse needs. This is significant because while policy may provide access, it is teachers who provide participation, through the classroom practice. Teachers' self-efficacy is in this sense, not just a personal belief, but a professional condition for inclusive teaching.

Teacher self-efficacy is the amount of confidence the teacher has in his/her ability to successfully manage the teaching tasks, to support learners, and to achieve positive learning outcomes. This belief is more challenging in classrooms where the students are mixed. They may have a student who has a learning difficulty, physical and/or sensory disability, attention related issues, emotional issues, slow academic progress and/or weak family support. A positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and attitude toward inclusive education was indicated by Yada et al. (2022) based on the results of a meta-analysis of 41 studies. The finding they have made indicates that those teachers who perceive their competence level higher tend to have positive attitudes towards inclusion and are more willing to have students with SEN placed in the mainstream. But these are to be read critically. Inclusive teaching is not necessarily being practised well as a result of positive attitude and high levels of confidence. While a teacher might agree that it is good to be inclusive, they might still find it hard to modify lessons, to supervise large groups or to make a fair assessment of diverse learners. So, self-efficacy only makes



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sense if it is put into action as pedagogical practice.

However, Woodcock et al. (2022) explored how primary teachers define self-efficacy and inclusive practices and concluded that while there may be similarities between teachers with high and low levels of SE, teachers' behaviors differ in their classrooms. High-efficacy teachers are more likely to see accessibility, participation, student confidence, and student success as issues in relation to the inclusion of students and those that are low-efficacy are more likely to see issues in relation to difficulty, behaviour, and learner limitation. This demonstrates that knowledge of inclusion is not sufficient – teachers must also be confident, skilled and supported to apply inclusion. Long et al. (2025) echoed this in their findings, with teacher self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusion also being related, but not as much as some contexts and teacher preparation. The results are of great importance to general education teachers who are expected to teach all kinds of learners without having all the necessary expertise to teach them as a special educator.

Inclusive education is the visible part of the pedagogical practices. Such practice involves differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, using visual and concrete materials, peer support, changing assessment, giving feedback to the individual, classroom adaptations and working with parents or support staff. Gheysens et al. (2023) contended that differentiated instruction is not just a set of teaching techniques, but a pedagogical approach that reflects the learning readiness, interests and learning profile of the students. This idea comes in handy for regular elementary classrooms as teachers often have students in their classrooms that learn at different rates during one lesson. However, differentiated instruction is challenging to do when teachers are required to work with large classes, scarce supplies, the pressure of exams, and insufficient training. This is the reason behind the literature warning of the non-romanticization of inclusive pedagogy. It is effective only if teachers are practically ready, and if there is sufficient time, material, and institutional support provided at the school.

Professional learning experiences for differentiated instruction that are effective typically involve active learning, collaboration, reflection, modelling, and ongoing support. (Langelaan et al., 2024) This in turn implies that single day workshops or general lectures on inclusion will not affect classroom practice. Teachers require ongoing and multiple opportunities to see inclusive teaching, try out lesson adaptations, discuss issues that arise in classrooms, and get feedback. In a 489 elementary school teacher study, Kalinowski et al. (2024) found a positive relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher enthusiasm and teacher reported use of differentiated instruction. This reinforces the case for inclusive practice as not just a skill, but also one that is related to teacher confidence and motivation. Yet, it is also indicated that teachers might be able to differentiate better for achievement differences than disability differences, behaviour differences, language differences or emotional differences. This reflects the reality that many classrooms experience in terms of diversity, only seeing it in terms of academic difference.

Teachers must keep the class disciplined, establish an emotional safety zone, ensure participation and ensure that no student is excluded or labeled in the diverse classrooms. With low teacher self-efficacy, teachers can perceive diversity as a burden and rely more on lecture teaching, given a set of tasks and strict control. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more willing to employ questioning and feedback, flexible grouping, and supportive routines. Burić and Kim (2020) determined that there was a connection between teacher self-efficacy and the quality of instruction and students' motivational beliefs. This is evidence for how teachers' confidence can impact the quality of



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classroom interaction. But it is not always easy. Workload, leadership, class size, support and student background are also influential factors to teaching quality. Therefore, the only thing that can be blamed is not the teacher, but weak institutional conditions, as this may be a cause of low pedagogical practice.

In the study of Wang et al. (2025), which was a scoping review on social participation of students with special needs in inclusive schools, they indicated that social participation in inclusive schools can't be measured without considering participation, peer relations and belonging. This is significant as a student can be physically in a regular classroom, but not be part of the learning activity or group work or classroom discussion. This hidden exclusion can be minimised through pedagogical approaches like cooperative learning, peer tutoring, inclusive questioning, and different kinds of assessment. Kart and Kart (2021) also claimed that inclusive education can be used to make both academic and social outcomes, but the benefits will depend on how it is implemented. It implies that inclusion is effective with the use of effective, intentional strategies and not just the placement of the student in the same room without adapting.

Wray et al., (2022) identified several influential factors for inclusive self-efficacy which include, prior experience with students with disabilities, teacher education, collaboration and school level support. This is crucial in contexts of study in developing contexts as teachers may be in favour of including learners in the classroom but may feel inadequate due to limited resources and lack of training. Inclusive education is also a systemic issue and not only an issue for individual teachers as also noted by Ainscow (2020) and Van Miegheem et al. (2020). Leadership, collaboration, flexible curriculum and supportive policy structures are needed in schools. If these are not in place the teacher might say that the attitudes are good, but continue with their previous pedagogical approach as inclusive practice is not made easy.

Though inclusive education has been highlighted as a policy in Pakistan, its implementation in the classroom varies. According to Kamran and Thomas (2022), teachers' sense of self-efficacy is also significant in the context of inclusive education in Pakistan as teachers are the key players to implement the policy to practice. Kamran et al., (2023) also pointed out that teachers' attitude is a factor affecting inclusive education of students with mild learning disabilities, and Kazmi et al., (2023) mentioned that inclusive education still has some challenges in Pakistan including lack of resources, lack of expertise and poor awareness of supporting learners with behavioural difficulties. These studies indicate that inclusive education in Pakistan is not just a policy issue but is significantly related to teachers' capacity, attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education in practice.

Pakistani and international literature analysed have three gaps. Firstly, while numerous studies have been written about attitudes towards inclusion, less research has been carried out on the relationship between self-efficacy and the pedagogy of general education teachers. Second, the majority of research is about disability specific inclusion, and classroom diversity is more than just disability related and includes academic, linguistic, behavioural, emotional and socioeconomic differences. Third, there is little local evidence from government grade schools in particular from Punjab districts where teachers are required to teach large classes of mixed ability, with little specialist support. The current study fills this void by looking at self-efficacy and pedagogical practices of general education elementary school teachers in teaching in the regular classroom. This is a significant emphasis as the effectiveness of inclusive education relies on teacher beliefs as well as teacher classroom practices.



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Research methodology:

This study uses a quantitative survey research design. The purpose is to capture, at one point in time, how government elementary-school teachers working across three different districts understand classroom diversity, what challenges they face, and which strategies they actually use in their daily teaching. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended items was used so that teachers' views can be measured, compared, and analysed statistically. This design is suitable because the study is not testing an intervention; it is describing existing patterns and relationships between:

teachers' self-efficacy for teaching diverse learners,
pedagogical practices they report using in regular classrooms,
the pedagogical and classroom-management practices they report using.

This cross-sectional survey approach follows common guidance for educational research where attitudes, perceptions, and self-reported practices are examined in a large teacher population. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of 980 respondents. The sample included 421 male teachers and 559 female teachers. District-wise, 359 teachers (36.63%) were from Khanewal, 320 (32.65%) from Vehari, and 301 (30.71%) from Sahiwal. Teaching experience was almost evenly distributed, with the highest group being 6–10 years (203, 20.71%) and the lowest being 21+ years (187, 19.08%). Most respondents were aged 31–35 years (250, 25.51%), followed by 26–30 years (230, 23.47%). In academic qualification, the majority held MA/MSc degrees (520, 53.06%), while B.Ed was the most common professional qualification (420, 42.86%). Most teachers had not received inclusive education training (600, 61.22%), but 710 teachers (72.45%) had experience teaching students with diverse needs. Among training types, most reported no training received (600, 61.22%), while workshops were the most common formal training type (150, 15.31%).

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 980)

Category	Respondents	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	421	42.96
	Female	559	57.04
District	Khanewal	359	36.63
	Vehari	320	32.65
	Sahiwal	301	30.71
Teaching Experience	0–5 years	196	20.00
	6–10 years	203	20.71
	11–15 years	197	20.10
	16–20 years	197	20.10
	21+ years	187	19.08
Age Group	20–25 years	160	16.33
	26–30 years	230	23.47
	31–35 years	250	25.51
	36–40 years	190	19.39
	41+ years	150	15.31
Highest Qualification	Academic BA/BSc	260	26.53
	MA/MSc	520	53.06
	MPhil	150	15.31
	PhD	30	3.06
	Other	20	2.04



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Professional Qualification	Teaching	B.Ed	420	42.86
		M.Ed	260	26.53
		ADE/Diploma	240	24.49
		Other	60	6.12
Inclusive Education Training	Teaching	Yes	380	38.78
		No	600	61.22
Experience	Teaching	Yes	710	72.45
		No	270	27.55
Students with Diverse Needs	Teaching	Yes	710	72.45
		No	270	27.55
Type of Diversity / Inclusive Training Received	Teaching	No training received	600	61.22
		Workshop	150	15.31
		Seminar	80	8.16
		In-service course	60	6.12
		Online course	60	6.12
		Other	30	3.06

Instrument Development:

In this research, the researcher adopted a self-administered composite questionnaire which was designed via close supervisory direction and considering the pertinent literature on factors of teacher self-efficacy, inclusive schooling, and teaching practices. The instrument was made as simple and straightforward as it needed to be, but including enough constructs of the study that easily captured these frameworks in a dependable manner, appropriate to the elementary-school teachers. The self-efficacy scale consisted of 12 items and showed acceptable reliability with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.74. The pedagogical practices scale also consisted of 12 items and showed acceptable reliability with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76, indicating a high level of reported pedagogical practices among teachers.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the statistical findings of the study based on data collected from 980 government elementary school teachers. The results cover respondents' demographic profile, descriptive statistics of the study variables, item-wise responses, and group comparisons through t-test and ANOVA. The analysis mainly focuses on teachers' self-efficacy, their pedagogical practices, and the relationship between both variables in teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms.

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 3: Item-wise Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy and Pedagogical Practices

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-Efficacy	980	3.79	0.21	3.08	4.33
Teaching Practices	980	4.19	0.21	3.50	4.83

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the two main study variables. The self-efficacy score ranged from 3.08 to 4.33, with a mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 0.21, showing that teachers reported a positive level of confidence in teaching diverse learners. Teaching practices had a higher mean score of 4.19 with a standard deviation of 0.21, and scores ranged from 3.50 to 4.83. This indicates that teachers reported a strong use of pedagogical practices for supporting students with diversity in regular classrooms.



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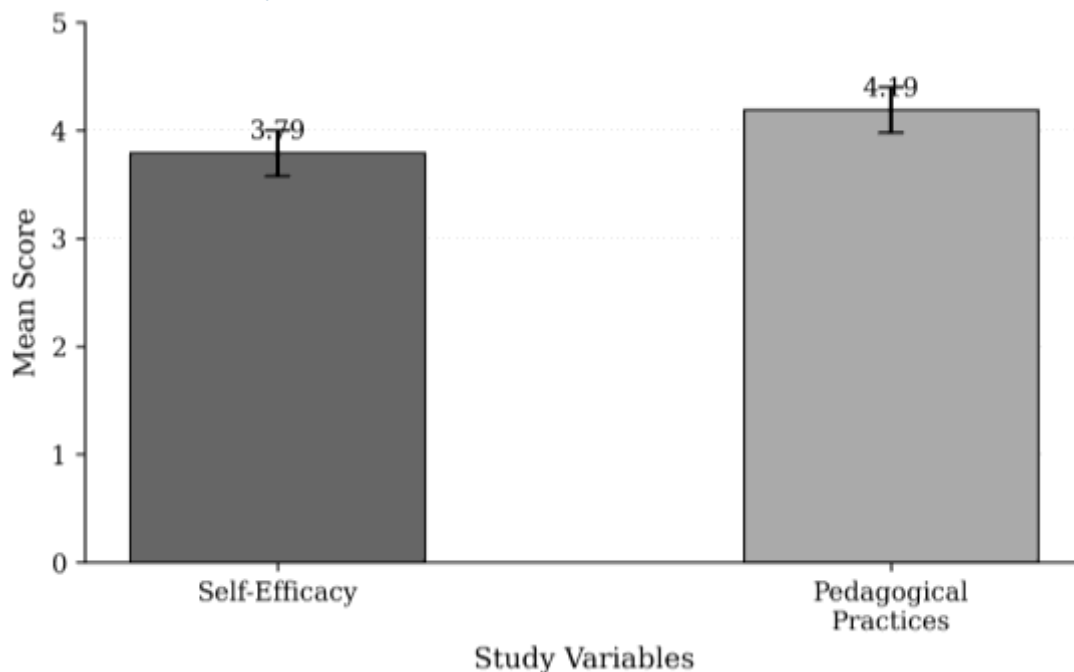


Figure 1.1: Graphical Representation of Average Mean Scores of Self-Efficacy and Pedagogical Practices

Independent Samples t-test

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test for Self-Efficacy and Pedagogical Practices by Gender and Inclusive Training

Factor	Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig.
Gender	Self-Efficacy	Male	421	3.79	0.21	-0.04	0.048
		Female	559	3.79	0.21		
	Pedagogical Practices	Male	421	4.20	0.20	1.03	0.036
		Female	559	4.18	0.22		
Inclusive Training	Self-Efficacy	Yes	380	3.78	0.22	-1.33	0.012
		No	600	3.80	0.21		
	Pedagogical Practices	Yes	380	4.18	0.22	-0.54	0.014
		No	600	4.19	0.21		

Table 4 presents the independent samples t-test results for gender and inclusive training. For gender, male and female teachers reported the same mean score for self-efficacy (M = 3.79, SD = 0.21), with t = -0.04 and p = 0.048. For pedagogical practices, male teachers showed a slightly higher mean score (M = 4.20, SD = 0.20) than female teachers (M = 4.18, SD = 0.22), with t = 1.03 and p = 0.036. Regarding inclusive training, teachers who had received training reported a self-efficacy mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.22), while those without training reported a slightly higher mean of 3.80 (SD = 0.21), with t = -1.33 and p = 0.012. For pedagogical practices, trained teachers had a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.22), and untrained teachers had a mean of 4.19 (SD = 0.21), with t = -0.54 and p = 0.014. Mean differences were small, but the reported significance values indicate statistically meaningful differences across gender and inclusive training groups.



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One-Way ANOVA

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA for Self-Efficacy and Pedagogical Practices by Demographic Variables

Factor	Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	F-value	Sig.		
District	Self-Efficacy	Khanewal	359	3.80	0.21	0.04	0.042		
		Vehari	320	3.79	0.21				
		Sahiwal	301	3.79	0.22				
	Pedagogical Practices	Khanewal	359	4.19	0.21	0.44	0.043		
		Vehari	320	4.19	0.21				
		Sahiwal	301	4.18	0.21				
Teaching Experience	Self-Efficacy	0–5 years	196	3.80	0.22	0.78	0.041		
		6–10 years	203	3.77	0.21				
		11–15 years	197	3.81	0.21				
		16–20 years	197	3.79	0.20				
		21+ years	187	3.79	0.22				
		Pedagogical Practices	0–5 years	196	4.21			0.22	1.60
	6–10 years	203	4.19	0.20					
	11–15 years	197	4.18	0.21					
	16–20 years	197	4.17	0.21					
	21+ years	187	4.20	0.21					
	Self-Efficacy	20–25 years	160	3.78	0.22	0.32	0.046		
		26–30 years	230	3.79	0.21				
		31–35 years	250	3.81	0.20				
		36–40 years	190	3.77	0.21				
		41+ years	150	3.80	0.22				
Pedagogical Practices		20–25 years	160	4.18	0.21			1.14	0.037
		26–30 years	230	4.20	0.20				
		31–35 years	250	4.21	0.21				
		36–40 years	190	4.17	0.22				
	41+ years	150	4.19	0.21					
	Self-Efficacy	BA/BSc	260	3.78	0.22	0.36	0.067		
MA/MSc		520	3.79	0.21					



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	MPhil	150	3.81	0.20		
	PhD	30	3.80	0.22		
	Other	20	3.77	0.23		
Pedagogical Practices	BA/BSc	260	4.18	0.21	0.42	0.064
	MA/MSc	520	4.19	0.21		
	MPhil	150	4.20	0.20		
	PhD	30	4.21	0.21		
	Other	20	4.17	0.22		

Table 5 presents the one-way ANOVA results for self-efficacy and pedagogical practices in terms of district, teaching experience, age group and highest academic qualification. District-wise, the mean scores for self-efficacy were very close across Khanewal ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.21$), Vehari ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.21$), and Sahiwal ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.22$), with $F = 0.04$ and $p = 0.042$. This indicates that teachers in all three districts were at a similar level of confidence when it came to teaching diverse learners. Similarly, there was a minor difference among the districts as Khanewal and Vehari reported $M = 4.19$ with $F = 0.44$ and $p = 0.043$ and Sahiwal reported $M = 4.18$. This reflects that teachers' classroom practices were positive and were generally similar among the three districts. The teaching experience scores were between 3.77 and 3.81. Teachers with 11-15 years of experience had the highest mean of self-efficacy ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.21$) while teachers with 6-10 years of experience had the lowest mean of self-efficacy ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.21$) with $F = 0.78$ and $p = 0.041$. Pedagogical practices ranged from 4.17 to 4.21, with the highest mean among teachers with 0-5 years of experience ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.22$) and the lowest among those with 16-20 years of experience ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.21$), with $F = 1.60$ and $p = 0.042$. The findings demonstrate positive scores for all teacher experience groups, but that the differences between groups were small. Age-wise, self-efficacy was highest among teachers aged 31-35 years ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.20$) and lowest among those aged 36-40 years ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.21$), with $F = 0.32$ and $p = 0.046$. For pedagogical practices, the highest mean was also reported by teachers aged 31-35 years ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.21$), while the lowest mean was found among teachers aged 36-40 years ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.22$), with $F = 1.14$ and $p = 0.037$. This indicates that the 31-35 age group was somewhat more confident and had more positive classroom practices, while the overall trend was positive for all age groups. The mean of teachers with MPhil ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.20$) was the highest and those with PhD ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.22$) was the second highest followed by "Other" ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.23$) with $F = 0.36$ and $p = 0.067$. Pedagogical practices were highest among PhD teachers ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.21$), followed by MPhil teachers ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.20$), while the lowest mean was again found in the "Other" group ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.22$), with $F = 0.42$ and $p = 0.064$. Results of the ANOVA indicate that overall, teachers' self-efficacy and pedagogical practices were positive regardless of the demographic, with mean differences that were small.

Findings

The first major finding of the study is that general education elementary school teachers indicated a strong general level of self-efficacy for teaching diverse learners in general education classrooms. The overall mean score for self-efficacy was 3.79 with a standard deviation of 0.21, which indicates that on average, teachers had a fairly confident opinion of themselves as being able to manage teaching in diverse classroom settings. The observed scores ranged from 3.08 to 4.33 which implies that although there was some



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variation, the general pattern was positive for the entire sample. This finding is even more apparent when the descriptive comparisons are taken into account. Male and female teachers reported the same mean self-efficacy score (3.79), showing that confidence in teaching diverse learners was stable across gender groups. In the same way, teachers from Khanewal, Vehari, and Sahiwal also reported nearly identical self-efficacy levels, ranging only from 3.79 to 3.80. Across teaching-experience categories as well, self-efficacy remained consistently strong, with means staying close to the same level. This finding suggests that the teachers in the study generally believed they were capable of planning, adjusting, and responding effectively to the needs of diverse learners in regular classrooms. The second major finding of the study is that general education elementary school teachers reported a high level of positive pedagogical practices for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms. The overall mean score for teaching practices was 4.19 with a standard deviation of 0.21 which indicates that the vast majority of teachers considered themselves as using supportive and inclusive classroom practices on a regular basis. The scores also stayed within a positive range, between 3.50 and 4.83, which means the general trend was always strong throughout the sample. This pattern is further supported by the item wise results. Teachers reported comparatively stronger practices in areas such as working with support staff, adapting quizzes and tests, using quick checks to identify students' needs, and providing clear feedback, with these items receiving mean scores around 4.21 to 4.22. Other important practices, including differentiated planning, use of varied teaching methods, parental communication, and classroom adjustments for learners with physical or sensory needs, also showed similarly positive mean scores. The agreement index strengthened this finding, showing that positive responses on teaching-practice items generally ranged from about 77.76% to 80.41%. Finding suggests that the teachers in the study were not only aware of inclusive teaching practices, but were also generally applying them in their regular classrooms in a positive and practical way. The third major finding of the study is that there was a positive relationship between self-efficacy of the teachers and their pedagogical practices in regular classroom. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a correlation value of $r = 0.319$ with a reported $p = 0.048$ showing that teachers who felt more confident in their ability to teach diverse learners tended to also report more positive and supportive classroom practices. This finding is meaningful because it draws the link between the two main variables of the study in a clear way. The results suggest that self-efficacy was not a personal belief in isolation but was associated with what teachers said they actually do in the classroom. Teachers who believed they were able to plan lessons, deal with class diversity, provide accommodations, and address different needs of students were also more likely to report use of practices such as differentiated instruction, assessment accommodations, feedback, and other inclusive strategies. This pattern too is consistent with the conceptual direction of the study, which hypothesized that the stronger the self-efficacy, the stronger the pedagogical practices. Finding shows that teachers own confidence and their motivations in the classroom practice went in the same direction, indicating that higher self-efficacy may help more effective teaching practices with diverse learners.

Discussion

The results of the current study indicate that general education elementary school teachers experienced a positive self-efficacy with regard to teaching a diverse population in the regular classroom. The overall mean score for self-efficacy was 3.79 and standard deviation of 0.21, reflecting that overall teachers believe they are able to plan lessons,



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manage the needs of students in a diverse classroom, use accommodations in the classroom, and support students with varying abilities. This is in line with the findings of Wray et al. (2022) who found that teachers' self-efficacy is one of the key teacher-related factors that influence inclusive education, as it determines how teachers interpret and tackle learner diversity. Yada et al. (2022) further reported that there is a positive correlation between teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education, indicating that teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to be more positive about students with diverse needs, with them usually being more willing to educate students with diverse needs in mainstream schools. But, the current discovery needs to be studied closely. However, a positive self-efficacy score does not necessarily reflect that all-inclusive practices are firmly entrenched in classroom practices. It primarily indicates a teacher's level of confidence, which may not necessarily influence how they implement the framework in their actual classrooms and may be dependent on other factors such as class size, resources, quality of training, school leadership and specialist support.

The mean score for pedagogical practices ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.21$) indicates that teachers reported that they used inclusive and supportive teaching practices often. These practices ranged from differentiated activities, visual and concrete support, additional time, modified quizzes, feedback, parent communication and collaboration with support staff. This finding is consistent with Gheysens et al. (2023) who suggested that differentiated instruction is one of the pathways to enhance inclusive classrooms' responsiveness to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Also, Langelaan et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of structured professional development, modelling, and reflection on the classroom for differentiated instruction. Teachers' reported practices were even higher than their self-efficacy score in this study, which may indicate that teachers are already using practical adaptations even though their self-efficacy score is slightly lower. However, sometimes self-reported practice is more positive than observed practice, particularly when teachers answer social desirable items. Hence, future research is suggested to involve classroom observations or interviews to verify the application of the practices in actual classroom settings.

The findings by item provides a better understanding of the strengths of teachers. The highest scores for self-efficacy were in designing UDL based lesson flows and providing valid assessment accommodations. This means that teachers were confident in adapting lessons to make them accessible in various ways and in adapting assessments without compromising fairness. This is consistent with Linder and Schwab et al. (2020) who connected UDL with differentiated instruction to lessen barriers prior to them becoming learning issues. As mentioned above, Kalinowski et al. (2024) also identified positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and enthusiasm and the application of differentiated instruction in elementary classrooms. Meanwhile, the reverse-coded items had low mean scores, a good indicator as teachers did not strongly agree that the items featured doubt or uncertainty. This indicates that teachers were, on the whole, prepared to implement the use of a wide range of learners, but perhaps further training in more specific areas like AAC, sensory support or individual plans may be needed.

The items pertaining to pedagogical practice also had high scores throughout. Teachers indicated good practices in collaboration with support staff, modifications to tests, use of quick formative checks, provision of clear feedback and communication with parents. This is significant as inclusive education is not solely reliant on one approach to teaching, but upon planning, classroom management, assessment, feedback, collaboration and follow-up. Pozas et al. (2020) suggested that teachers can apply differentiated instruction differently, based on the needs of the classroom, and Lindner



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and Schwab (2020) highlighted the importance of differentiation and individualization as challenging aspects of inclusive education. The current results indicate that the teachers in this sample are aware of a number of inclusive strategies and are reporting positive use of these. The question, however, is whether a systematic application of these strategies is implemented with all learners or just when the difficulty becomes apparent.

The Pearson correlation result indicated that there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and pedagogical practices ($r = .319$, $p = .048$). This suggests that there was a positive correlation between teachers' confidence and their inclusive teaching practices. The relationship is positive but moderate and it is significant because it indicates a level of connection, but not necessarily that self-efficacy is the sole factor involved in pedagogical practice. Woodcock et al. (2022) has demonstrated that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to interact positively with inclusive practice, as well as that practice can be influenced by teacher's conceptions of inclusion. Burić and Kim (2020) also correlated teacher self-efficacy to instructional quality and student motivation. The present finding corroborates this overall finding but it also indicates that other factors should be taken into account. Teachers might feel confident, but be constrained by rigid curriculum, time pressures, poor resources, large classes and a lack of support. So, self-efficacy must be viewed as a factor to consider in practice and not as a sole driver of effective inclusive practice.

Results of the t-tests revealed that there were only slight differences in the means between gender and inclusive training groups. The mean of male teachers ($M = 3.79$) was the same as that of female teachers, and the mean of pedagogical practices of the male teachers ($M = 4.20$) was slightly higher than that of the female teachers ($M = 4.18$). These differences are expressed statistically but in practical terms are very small. This indicates that gender did not seem to be a significant practical barrier to teachers' confidence or classroom practice. Likewise, there were no significant differences between the self-efficacy of teachers without inclusive training and trained teachers ($M = 3.80$) and their pedagogical practices ($M = 4.19$). This is an interesting finding as the expectation with training is that confidence and practice is expected to increase. This may be due to the training that teachers received being short, general or not practice based. Shaukat and Sharma (2025) suggested that the gap between theory and practice should be filled in the case of inclusive teacher preparation. Training can have a limited impact if it is only conceptual and doesn't actually develop skills in the classroom.

Self-efficacy and pedagogical practices were found to be positive in each district, teaching experience, age group and academic qualification, based on the ANOVA results. There were very small differences between the district mean scores with Khanewal, Vehari and Sahiwal districts having almost similar mean scores. This suggests that there were relatively common levels of confidence and practice by teachers in the three districts. Teachers reported varying degrees of experience and some differences were found, with teachers having between 11-15 years' experience reporting the highest self-efficacy, and teachers with 0-5 years reporting the highest pedagogical practice score. This trend indicates that experience might be a contributing factor in confidence, but newer teachers may be more inclined to report active application of inclusive practices perhaps because they have recently been exposed to newer practices. In terms of age, teachers in the age range of 31- to 35 years had slightly higher self-efficacy and pedagogical practices. In terms of qualification, the scores of the MPhil teachers were the highest and the scores of the PhD teachers were the highest in relation to pedagogical practices, but the significance value for qualification was $> .05$, which means that there was no statistically meaningful difference between academic qualification. This is a good



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indicator that inclusive practice is less about level of degree and more about preparation and school supports that are applied.

The results are also applicable to the Pakistani context where inclusive education has been taken up in policy but implementation in the classroom is still inconsistent. Kamran and Thomas (2022) emphasized the significance of teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive education in Pakistan and Kamran et al. (2023) indicated that teachers' attitudes have a significant role in supporting students with mild learning disabilities. Moreover, Kazmi et al. (2023) mentioned that there are still some challenges in Pakistan, which include limited resources, lack of expertise, and lack of awareness in supporting diverse learners. The present study contributes to this local evidence by demonstrating that government elementary teachers had positive self-efficacy and high-quality pedagogical practices, but the small gap between teachers of different training and qualification indicates that the formal preparation is not yet strong enough to make significant differences in practice.

The self-efficacy and pedagogy of teachers go hand in hand and both are in a positive direction. This is consistent with international evidence of the links between teacher beliefs and classroom practice but is also consistent with the evidence that such links are not automatic. Van Mieghem et al. (2020) noticed that a number of studies on inclusive education consistently identified the interplay between teacher attitudes, classroom practice, and system-level support. Ainscow (2020) also stated that inclusion cannot be about equity alone, but must be about school improvement as well. Teachers in the current study seem ready and able to cater for differentiated learners, however, further professional development, in-class mentoring, practice in differentiated teaching, assessment accommodation and behaviour support is required. Wang et al. (2025) highlighted that inclusion is not just about where a student is placed, but how they are included and how they feel included. Thus, the true significance of teachers' self-efficacy is its consistence in engaging, learning and feeling supported by different types of students within the regular classroom.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to examine the self-efficacy of general education elementary school teachers, the pedagogical practices they employ for teaching diverse learners in regular classrooms, and the relationship between these two variables. The findings of the study lead to a clear overall conclusion that teachers in the selected districts generally reported positive self-efficacy and positive pedagogical practices, and that these two aspects were meaningfully connected. In relation to the first objective, the study found that teachers showed a strong level of self-efficacy, with an overall mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.21). This suggests that most teachers believed they were reasonably capable of planning instruction, managing diverse classrooms, and supporting learners with different needs in regular classroom settings. In relation to the second objective, the study concluded that teachers were also using positive pedagogical practices for diverse learners. The overall mean score for teaching practices was 4.19 (SD = 0.21), which was slightly higher than self-efficacy and indicates that teachers generally reported supportive classroom practices such as adaptation, feedback, collaboration, and instructional flexibility. The descriptive pattern across gender, district, and teaching-experience groups also remained quite similar, which shows that these positive practices were not limited to only one subgroup of teachers. With reference to the third objective, the study concluded that teachers' self-efficacy and pedagogical practices were positively related. This means that teachers who felt more confident in their ability to teach diverse learners also tended to report better classroom practices.



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Overall, the study shows that self-efficacy and pedagogical practices work in the same direction and together form an important basis for teaching diverse learners effectively in regular classrooms.

Recommendations

Schools should develop regular systems of teacher support within the school. They need peer discussions, mentoring, co-planning and opportunities to share out strategies that work with diverse learners. This will help ensure that confidence is turned into more stable and consistent classroom practice.

Classroom strategies need to be strengthened in all the areas already identified by the study. Some positive uses of feedback, collaboration, quick checks, adaptation of assessment and varied teaching methods were reported by teachers. These areas should be further strengthened since they are practical entry points for a better inclusion without overburdening teachers.

Students should be supported through flexible teaching as opposed to one fixed teaching approach.

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