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Psychological Drivers of Teachers' Sustainable Behaviour and Inclusion in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study examines how teachers' attitudes, concerns, and spirituality relate to sustainable behaviours and intentions to foster inclusive education (IE) in Indian higher education, drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). We conducted a two-wave survey of 237 teachers from multiple institutions using closed-ended measures. Variance-based modelling (PLS-SEM) tested direct and mediated relationships, and fsQCA identified configurational pathways sufficient for high IE intention. PLS-SEM shows that attitudes and spirituality are positively associated with IE intention, and that sustainable behaviours operate as a pivotal mediator, translating psychological factors (attitudes, concerns, spirituality) into stronger intentions to adopt IE practices. fsQCA reveals multiple equifinal combinations including configurations where high attitudes and spirituality, with present sustainable behaviours, are sufficient for elevated IE intention highlighting complementarities not visible in net-effect models. By integrating TPB with a focus on sustainable behaviours as a behavioural mediator and combining PLS-SEM with fsQCA, the study advances a comprehensive account of how psychological antecedents translate into intentions for inclusive practice in higher education in India.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Teacher Attitudes; Sustainable Behaviour; Spirituality; Teacher Concerns; PLS-SEM; fsQCA; Higher Education (India); Sustainaible Development Goals (SDG's)

Introduction

Inclusive education is a fundamental driver of social equity and sustainable development, ensuring that learners from diverse backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic conditions have equal opportunities to thrive. Recognized under Goal 4 (Quality Education) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), inclusive education promotes accessibility, equity, and lifelong learning for all (António et al., 2024). In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reinforces this vision by advocating for universal access, flexible curricula, multilingual education, and technology-driven solutions to address learning disparities. By integrating global sustainability goals with national education policies, inclusive education fosters economic mobility, social justice, and innovation, thereby strengthening India's commitment to equitable and quality education for all (Balasubramanian et al., 2024). Inclusive education refers to educational practices designed to accommodate and support the learning needs of all students, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, abilities, or challenges. It emphasizes removing barriers to participation and learning for students with disabilities, special educational

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needs, and those from socially marginalized groups. This approach fosters equitable access and aims to create learning environments where diversity is valued and accommodated (Lindner et al., 2025).

Inclusive education stands as a foundational pillar in the pursuit of equitable access to quality education for every learner, transcending differences in abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and identities. Recognizing diversity as a strength, inclusive education seeks to dismantle barriers that hinder participation and learning, ensuring that all students thrive within the same educational environment. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India underscores this vision, advocating for an education system rooted in accessibility, equity, and holistic development. It calls for the creation of inclusive classrooms where teachers are equipped to cater to varied learning needs, fostering an environment that values empathy, respect, and mutual growth (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Despite growing policy emphasis, the successful implementation of inclusive education continues to face challenges (Lindner et al., 2025; Dignath et. al., 2022; Singh et al., 2022). Research has consistently highlighted the critical role of teachers' attitudes, their level of concern for students with special needs, and their underlying belief systems, including spirituality, in shaping the effectiveness of inclusive practices (Adams & Adigun, 2021; Johnson, 2019; Platash et al., 2021; Wiens et al., 2025). However, these psychological factors are often studied in isolation, leaving a fragmented understanding of their collective influence. This paper seeks to bridge this conceptual gap by examining the interplay between teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, and the emerging role of sustainable behavior in enhancing inclusive education outcomes.

The context of this study is rooted in the complex socio-cultural landscape of India, characterized by historic and ongoing divisions related to caste, religion, gender, socio-economic status, rurality, and language. Social stratifications and discrimination have long influenced access to education, with marginalized groups such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) facing systemic barriers. The Indian government's quota system and affirmative policies seek to address these inequalities, yet challenges remain in fostering inclusive classrooms that truly accommodate students' diverse learning needs and backgrounds.
Hence, promoting intention toward inclusive education transcends individual choice; it reflects a collaborative response to evolving societal principles emphasizing equity and diversity. Inclusion in higher education must address not only learners with special educational needs but also adult learners from varied social and cultural identities. Understanding the wider socio-political context is essential in directing educational practices toward a future that is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diversity inherent in India's population.

The uniqueness of this research resides in its integrative framework, framing sustainable behaviour as a moderating variable that enhances the influence of psychological factors on inclusive education. Sustainable behaviour includes actions that put long-term health, fairness, and care for the environment first (Duong et al., 2024). Teachers who engage in such behaviour are more inclined to cultivate inclusive environments that foster both immediate academic achievement and long-term personal growth among students. Previous research (Doe, 2021; Smith, 2020; Gupta et al., 2025) has highlighted the importance of positive attitudes and empathy in promoting inclusivity; however, the role of sustainable behaviour as a potential catalyst in this process has yet to be thoroughly examined.

Additionally, this study presents spirituality as a

transformative factor frequently neglected in educational discussions. Spirituality, characterised as an inherent sense of purpose, interconnectedness, and ethical dedication, can motivate educators to accept diversity and implement practices that elevate each student (Lüddeckens et al., 2022; Platash et al., 2021; Srivastava et al., 2025).

Teachers possessing a strong spiritual foundation are more predisposed to engage in sustainable practices, fostering inclusive environments characterised by compassion, equity, and enduring educational fairness. This study provides a comprehensive framework to promote inclusive education by examining the synergies among teaching attitudes, teacher concerns, spirituality, and sustainable behaviour. It corresponds with the NEP 2020's vision of reshaping the educational landscape via teacher empowerment and innovative pedagogical methodologies. The study seeks to tackle the subsequent research enquiries:

RQ1*: *How does sustainable behavior mediate the relationship between teachers' psychological factors (attitudes, concerns, and spirituality) and their intention to implement inclusive education?

RQ2: *To what extent does spirituality influence teachers' sustainable behavior, and how does this interplay impact their commitment to fostering inclusive education?* The findings of the study aim to inform policymaking, enhance teacher training programs, and foster educational ecosystems where inclusivity and sustainability coexist seamlessly. Ultimately, this research aspires to redefine how educators and institutions navigate diversity, paving the way for a future where every student is valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

Literature review

Theoretical background

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been extensively employed in the modelling and prediction of behavioural intentions and behaviour (Madden, Ellen, and Ajzen, 1992). The theory of planned behaviour, developed by Ajzen (1991), is a psychological model that focuses on predicting behavioural intentions. The purpose of this is to elucidate the factors that influence an individual's "intention to perform a behaviour." According to the theory, a behavioural intention can only be translated into action if the individual believes that they have control over that behaviour. This implies that the individual must perceive themselves as having complete authority over the choice of whether or not to engage in the behaviour. One can deduce a person's willingness to participate in a specific behaviour and the level of effort they expect to invest in achieving that behaviour based on their intentions. According to Ajzen (1991), there is a positive correlation between the strength of a person's intention to perform a behaviour and the likelihood of them actually performing that behaviour. Moreover, in accordance with this theory, an individual's conduct can be anticipated by considering their attitude and the subjective norms they follow. The individual's behaviour is governed by their behavioural goals, which are influenced by their attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms. Consequently, a person's actions are determined by their behavioural intentions. The degree of exertion individuals are willing to exert in order to accomplish their objectives is encapsulated by their behavioural intentions (Azjen, 1991). Within the TPB framework, behavioural intention is regarded as the paramount determinant of actual behaviour.

The TPB highlights the significance of psychological factors in shaping individual behaviour and is widely employed to gain a deeper

comprehension of various individual behaviours (Emmers et al., 2020; Opoku et al., 2020a). The current research employs the attitude-intention relationship described in TPB. As per the TPB, an individual's attitude, along with other factors, determines their inclination to take action, which subsequently influences their behaviour. Prior studies on inclusive education have also revealed that the teacher's intention to embrace inclusive practices is crucial for accurately predicting their actual conduct in the classroom (Opoku et al., 2020b). This section will discuss the literature pertaining to teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, and sustainable behaviour, and how these factors influence their intention to adopt inclusive behaviour. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of the pertinent literature is conducted to formulate the hypotheses in accordance with the research objective.

Teacher's Attitude towards Inclusive education

According to prior studies, Teacher' attitude play a crucial role in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Perla et al.m, 2025; Ewing et al., 2018; Saloviita, 2020; Yada et. al., 2018; Scanlon et. al., 2022; Alene et al., 2025). Moreover, the attitude and disposition of a teacher play a vital role in establishing whether a classroom is suitable for inclusive education (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014). Hence, educators must take into account teachers' positive or negative dispositions towards inclusion to aid them in establishing inclusive classrooms. Prior studies have demonstrated that in order to be successful inclusive practitioners, educators need to acquire and retain skills and knowledge, as well as maintain a positive attitude towards inclusive education (e.g., Dally et al., 2019; Krishnaswamy, 2019; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Bodhi et al., 2024). Adverse teacher attitudes can impede inclusive education and lead to a less inclusive classroom (Moria, 2017). Hence, cultivating an optimistic mindset is paramount in fostering inclusivity. Therefore, fostering a positive attitude is crucial for promoting inclusiveness.

Teacher's Concern about inclusive education

Faculty concern is crucial in the implementation of inclusive education policies (Shah et al., 2013). According to Fuller (1969), Faculty's concerns can be defined as "beliefs and attitudes that changes over time and progress through different stages." Nevertheless, it is imperative for any change endeavour, such as the implementation of inclusive education, to methodically tackle the perceived apprehensions of the faculty. Neglecting to address these concerns may lead to complications in the implementation process (Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025; Sharma, 2001). Similarly, Stoler (1992) recognises that faculty concerns act as obstacles to the effective execution of inclusive programmes. Hence, achieving genuine educational inclusivity necessitates the systematic identification and resolution of Faculty concerns.

Spirituality

Boswell et al. (2006) defined spirituality as the personal experience of an individual seeking meaning, a greater force, or the sacred through inner serenity, harmony, or connectedness with self and others. It is considered a more personal experience, impacted by a person's social, cultural, and historical circumstances (Testerman, 1997). However, individuals who possess a strong spiritual inclination and uphold compassionate principles are driven by ethical aspirations that compel them to act in accordance with what is morally correct. Furthermore, it allows individuals to perceive themselves as integral parts of a larger, transcendent entity (Piedmont, 1999; Fuloria & Roy, 2025). Therefore, we expect that spirituality will exhibit a positive correlation with responsible behaviours, such as inclusive education.

Sustainable Behaviour

From a psychological standpoint, "sustainability" encompasses the promotion of enrichment, growth, and adaptability to secure the long-term well-being and contentment of all individuals in relation to environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects (Basiago, 1998; Algül, 2013). Hence, sustainable development is perceived as a development endeavour that is complex and requires a significant amount of work. According to Tapia-Fonllem et al. (2017), sustainable behaviour refers to the intentional and effective actions taken by individuals and society to achieve sustainability at both individual and societal levels. It involves fair behaviour, which includes fairness and justice for everyone. In their study, Shahzalal & Hassan (2019) discovered a noteworthy correlation between the intention to adapt and sustainable behaviour. However, the intention to engage in sustainable practices is contingent upon various factors, such as individuals' perception of sustainability, their emotional and cognitive understanding of sustainability, specifically their confidence in effecting change or adapting to new circumstances, and the impact of social influences, including self-respect and concern for others, on their behavioural intentions (Fang, 2017; Patra & Bansal, 2025). In contrast, the intention to implement inclusive education has not yet been thoroughly examined in relation to sustainable behaviour. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate this pivotal correlation.

Intention to Include Inclusive Education

In contemporary perspectives, inclusive education is considered a fundamental aspect of a human rights-centered approach to social interactions and relationships, in line with a wider societal vision (Emmers et al., 2020). Education plays a crucial role in shaping an inclusive society that embraces individuals from various backgrounds. Recognising this, an individual's intention becomes a vital factor that provides insights into their dedication to actively participate in inclusive education practices (Wall, 2017). Ajzen's (2011) comprehensive model emphasises that intentions are closely linked to associated beliefs, which include behavioural norms and control factors. The complexity of intention formation influences both individual and collective levels, ultimately shaping the overall dedication to inclusive education.

Recent research highlights the crucial correlation between intention and the practical implementation of inclusive practices (Walsh & Dodds, 2022; Hamid et al., 2021). Garcia and Ortiz (2022) highlight the significance of individual intentions in converting inclusive education goals into concrete actions in educational environments. Furthermore, the societal trend towards acknowledging and appreciating diversity strengthens the communal aspect of intentions, highlighting the wider influence of individual commitments on the inclusive structure of society (Smith, 2021). Hence, the focus on intention in promoting inclusive education is not just an individual decision but a collaborative effort that corresponds to changing societal principles and goals. Intention plays a crucial role in directing educational practices towards a future that is more inclusive, equitable, and diverse in this ever-changing environment.

Hypothesis development

Teacher's Attitude to Intention to Incorporate IE

According to the theory of planned behaviour, a person's behavioural intentions are influenced by both their attitude and the subjective norms that they adhere to. This is one of the basic tenets of the theory. Afterward, the individual's actions are influenced by his behavioural intentions (Kan et al., 2017; Yunaini et al., 2025). Prior researchers have found a significant association between teacher's attitude and inclusive education (Saloviita, et al.,

2016; Monsen, 2014). A recent study by Hamid et al. (2021) observed a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and their intentions to implement inclusive education. Similarly, Bodhi et al. (2021) found a positive and significant effect of teacher's attitude on Intention to include inclusive education. In another recent study conducted by Opoku et al., (2020) found attitude to be a strong predictor of intention to implement the inclusive education. Hence, we propose following hypotheses:

H1: Teacher's attitude is positively associated with intention to incorporate inclusive education.

Teacher's Attitude to sustainable Behaviour

Prior researchers have found a significant association between attitude and sustainable behaviour (Walsh & Dodds, 2022; Domínguez-Valerio et al., 2019). According to Kaliyaperumal (2004), attitude is characterised by his feelings towards something and on predetermined opinions. TPB, explains that a person's behaviour is influenced by his attitude and subjective norms. Furthermore, it describes that people's views, social norms, and perceived behavioural control influence their intentions to behave in particular ways, which in turn influence their actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Hence, in order to explain this relationship in our study we formulate second hypotheses:

H2: Teacher's attitude is positively associated with sustainable behaviour.

Sustainable Behaviour to Intention to Incorporate IE

There is a significant correlation between the intention to implement inclusive education and sustainable behaviour, as supported by the research of Shahzalal and Hassan (2019), which indicates a positive association between the two variables. Prior consumption influences current intentions and future behaviours, according to the findings of Lee (2014), suggesting a temporal relationship between intention and behaviour. Joshi et al. (2019) revealed a comparable finding, which stated that future intentions towards responsible consumption can be predicted by prior responsible consumption. Through capitalising on these observations, we propose that the degree to which an individual is presently engaged in sustainable behaviour will have a positive impact on their intention to participate in inclusive behaviour. The distinctive aspect of this hypothesis is its incorporation of sustainable behaviour into the context of intentions regarding inclusive education. Prior research (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019; Lee, 2014; Joshi et al., 2019) has examined the correlation between intentions and sustainable behaviour in various settings. However, our hypothesis is the initial attempt to apply this correlation specifically to the domain of inclusive education. Our hypothesis makes a scholarly contribution by establishing a connection between the intention to integrate inclusive education and sustainable behaviour, thereby bridging the gap between sustainable practices and the promotion of inclusive learning environments. This innovative correlation acknowledges the possible influence of sustainable behaviour on educators' propensity to adopt inclusive education techniques, thus contributing an extra dimension to the comprehension of the elements that affect inclusivity in education.

It is hypothesised that sustainable behaviour will serve as a positive mediator between teacher attitudes and the intention to incorporate the inclusive education. This proposition builds upon the correlation between intention and sustainable behaviour that Shahzalal and Hassan (2019) have previously established. This hypothesis presents a novel approach by emphasising the mediating function of sustainable behaviour in the relationship between inclusive education-related teacher attitudes and intentions. The significance of positive teacher attitude in promoting inclusive

practices has been recognised in the literature (Doe, 2021). However, our hypothesis contributes a distinct viewpoint by considering sustainable behaviour as a mediator in this connection. This methodology is consistent with the notion that future intentions are temporally influenced by previous actions, as highlighted by Lee (2014) and Joshi et al. (2019). As a result, it is anticipated that educators who possess positive attitudes, as substantiated by Doe (2021), will demonstrate elevated standards of sustainable conduct. This, in turn, will have a favourable impact on their intentions to integrate inclusive education. This hypothesis enhances our comprehension of the complex mechanisms at play in influencing the intentions of educators in the realm of inclusive education by highlighting the dynamic interaction between psychological variables and sustainable conduct. We therefore predict:

H3: Sustainable behaviour is positively associated with intention to incorporate inclusive education.

H3a: Sustainable behaviour positively mediates between teacher's attitude and intention to incorporate inclusive education.

Teaching's Concern to Intention to Incorporate IE

In contrast to prevailing assumptions, our hypothesis proposes that there exists a negative association between teachers concern and their intention to incorporate inclusive education. The importance of faculty engagement in the implementation of inclusive education policies has been emphasised previously (Shah et al., 2013). However, Smith (2018) has recently unveiled an unexpected aspect in his research. Teachers who reported greater concern for inclusive education were more likely to proactively devise and execute strategies aimed at assisting students from diverse backgrounds, according to the findings of Smith's study. On the contrary to the results presented, we suggest that excessive levels of concern could potentially be associated with an unwillingness or apprehension to integrate inclusive practices.

This hypothesis distinguishes itself from prior research by questioning the dominant belief that increased levels of teacher concern consistently result in favourable contributions to intentions towards inclusive education. This hypothesis acknowledges the potential complexities in the relationship between teacher concern and intentions by introducing the possibility of a negative association. As a result, conventional assumptions are prompted to be reconsidered. Furthermore, although previous studies have examined the impact of infrastructure amenities on teacher concern (Lin et al., 2025; Shah et al., 2016), our hypothesis adds a novel dimension by underscoring the necessity for additional research to explore this correlation. Through offering a distinct viewpoint, this study seeks to enhance the collective comprehension of the complex relationship between teacher concern and intentions regarding inclusive education. In doing so, it will provide educational policymakers and practitioners with invaluable insights. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is posited.

H4: Teacher's concern is negatively associated with intention to incorporate inclusive education.

Teacher's Concern to Sustainable Behaviour

The hypothesis proposes a negative association between teacher's concern and sustainable behaviour, challenging previous assertions about the positive relationship between sustainable practices and concern (Chan et al., 2014; Pearson et al., 2011; Waite & Kersh, 2014). Although sustainability has been a prominent area of interest since the 1980s (WCED, 1987), the study of the relationship between Teacher's Concern and Sustainable Behaviour is a recently developed field. In contrast to the positive associations identified in previous investigations, a recent study

conducted by Bodhi et al. (2022) revealed a negative correlation between teachers' concern and sustainable development. This proposition presents a new and different idea that questions traditional viewpoints and encourages a reassessment of the assumed connection between caring and sustainable actions.

Based on the unexpected negative relationship identified in recent scholarly investigation (Bodhi et al., 2022), we put forward a mediation hypothesis. Sustainable behaviour is proposed to function as a beneficial intermediary between a teacher's concern and their intention to incorporate inclusive education. The unconventional relationship between concern and sustainable behaviour challenges conventional understanding, but the role of education in persuading individuals to change their behaviour for sustainability suggests a more complex relationship. This hypothesis presents a novel viewpoint by examining how sustainable behaviour can act as a mediator, converting a teacher's concern into positive intentions for inclusive education. Therefore, our hypothesis introduces a new aspect to the discussion, enhancing our knowledge of the complex relationships between a teacher's concern, sustainable behaviour, and intentions towards inclusive education. Hence, we propose:

H5: Teacher's concern is negatively associated with sustainable behaviour.

H5a: Sustainable behaviour positively mediates teacher's concern and intention to incorporate inclusive education.

Spirituality to Intention to Incorporate IE

The relationship between spirituality and intention to incorporate inclusive education is a complex and multifaceted one, but research suggests that incorporating both can lead to positive outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds. Spirituality in education refers to the integration of spiritual practices and values into the curriculum and classroom environment. This can include incorporating meditation, mindfulness, and other spiritual practices into the classroom, as well as creating an environment that is supportive of students' development (Loyola, 2013; Waldia et.al.,2024; Singh & Bodhi 2025; Mishra et al., 2022). Intentionality in education, on the other hand, refers to the deliberate and purposeful actions taken by educators to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment. This can include setting clear learning goals, creating a positive classroom culture, and actively working to address issues of bias and discrimination (Jones, 2015). When both spirituality and intentionality are incorporated into inclusive education, students from diverse backgrounds can experience improved motivation and engagement, a greater sense of belonging and inclusivity, and better academic outcomes (Smith, 2018). For example, a study by Smith (2018) found that when teachers actively incorporated spiritual practices and intentional teaching strategies, students from diverse backgrounds reported feeling more included in the classroom and had better academic outcomes. Hence, we predict

H6: Spirituality is positively associated with intention to incorporate to inclusive education.

Spirituality to Sustainable Behaviour

Our hypothesis posits a positive association between spirituality and the intention to engage in sustainable behaviour. This is supported by existing literature, indicating that individuals with a strong sense of spirituality demonstrate a heightened concern for the environment and are more inclined to adopt sustainable behaviors (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Additionally, spirituality serves as a motivating factor, providing individuals with a sense of purpose and meaning beyond self-interest, contributing to their engagement in sustainable practices (Dietz and O'Neill, 2013). Allen et al.

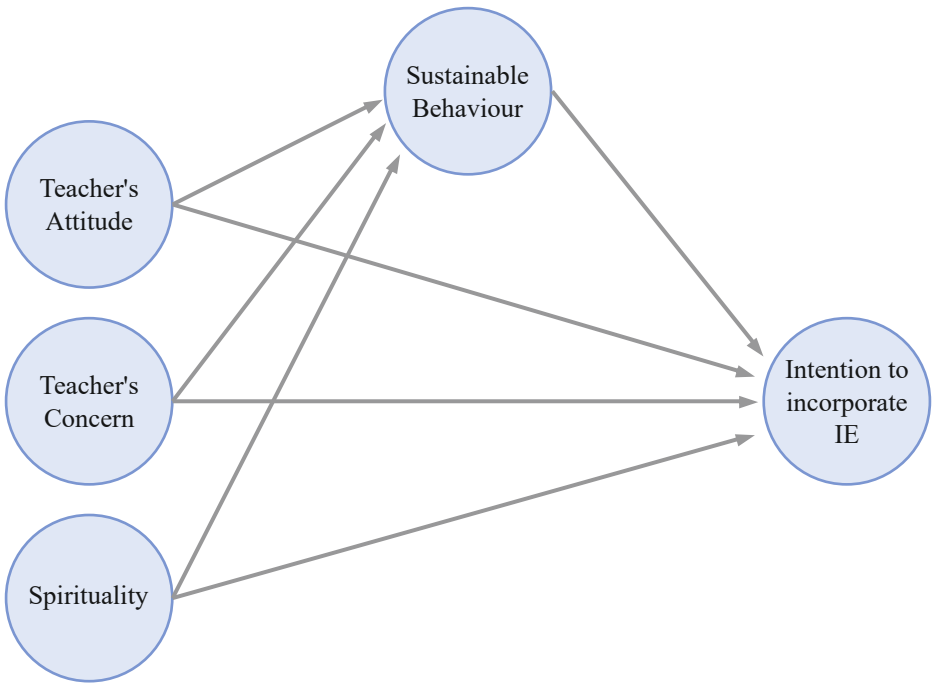
(2019) study further reinforces this connection, highlighting that individuals with higher levels of spiritual well-being are more likely to actively participate in sustainable behavior.

Building on the established positive association between spirituality and sustainable behavior, we propose that sustainable behavior acts as a positive mediator between spirituality and the intention to incorporate inclusive education. This mediation hypothesis is unique in its focus on spirituality as a motivating force for sustainable behavior, linking it to a broader intention related to inclusive education. While previous studies have explored the connection between spirituality and sustainability, our hypothesis introduces a novel perspective by investigating how sustainable behavior, influenced by spirituality, may extend its impact to intentions for fostering inclusive education. This unique angle enriches the discourse by connecting spirituality, sustainable behavior, and inclusive education intentions in a comprehensive manner, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the motivational factors shaping sustainable practices in educational contexts. Hence, we formulate following hypotheses:

H7: Spirituality is positively associated with intention to sustainable behaviour.

H7a: Sustainable behaviour positively mediates spirituality and intention to incorporate inclusive education.

Figure 1. Proposed Model



Source: Author's own work

Material and methods

The present study adopted a two-wave survey method using a close-ended questionnaire to test the hypotheses. A two-wave design was employed to mitigate common method bias and enhance the robustness of the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The survey method was chosen for its "strength in capturing the essence of fieldwork without sacrificing generality" (Wang et al., 2021). In the first wave, respondents were invited through e-mail and social media applications to participate in an

online questionnaire. The sample was drawn from faculty members employed at various academic institutions across India, including universities, private colleges, and government institutes to ensure representative institutional diversity. These institutions were situated in different regions—North, South, East, West, and Central India—allowing for regional variation in the sample.

Across these universities and colleges, faculty represented a variety of disciplines such as engineering, management, social sciences, and humanities, and included professional levels from Assistant Professors to Full Professors. Furthermore, the sample included individuals from different social categories, including General Category (GC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST), thereby reflecting a breadth of social backgrounds. For outreach, the questionnaire was circulated both independently and via popular social media groups (e.g., WhatsApp), a widely used messaging platform in India. More than 400 faculty members were initially contacted, with 345 responses received. After removing 45 responses due to duplication or incomplete data, 300 valid responses remained for analysis.

A second wave was conducted following a four-week interval, re-contacting the original respondents for a follow-up survey. Of the initial valid participants, 237 completed the second questionnaire, providing a final matched sample of 237 faculty responses. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized throughout to foster honest participation. The final sample had a notable sex imbalance (68.9% male), which is acknowledged as a limitation and may reflect broader trends in faculty composition within Indian higher education. Faculty ages ranged from 28 to 54 years; however, recognizing that formal faculty appointments in India generally do not begin at age 18, this age range likely reflects the lower bound for teaching assistants, guest faculty, or entry-level contractual staff rather than regular academic appointments, a methodological limitation which should be noted and addressed in future sampling strategies.

Including information on discipline, region, institutional type, social background (GC, OBC, SC/ST), professional level, and noting the sex disparity and possible age misclassification strengthens the transparency of our study's limitations. Future research is encouraged to adopt targeted sampling approaches to ensure a more inclusive and demographically representative faculty sample. Additionally, efforts should be made to verify employment status and age to enhance the accuracy of professional profiles in higher education research in India.

In order to be ethically open, this study got permission from the Doctoral Research Committee ahead of time and followed the informed consent procedures that were built into the beginning of each survey. These procedures made it clear that participation was voluntary, that participants could withdraw at any time, and that there would be no penalties or incentives (to avoid undue influence). Since we were hiring people from all over India online (through institutional emails and WhatsApp groups), we got permission from the group admins and didn't collect employer identifiers to lower the risk of power imbalance and re-identification. All data were pseudonymized, stored in encrypted repositories with limited access, and analysed at the aggregate level; free-text fields were minimised to prevent accidental disclosure. Since the study posed little risk and did not involve deception or vulnerable groups, it was classified as "under"; any use of publicly available institutional contact information for initial outreach was considered an exemption from consent for contact (but not for participation), in accordance with policy.

Scale of Measurement

Teachers' attitude was assessed using a three-item scale developed by Mahat (2008). Teachers' concern was measured using a three-item scale formulated by Sharma and Desai (2002). Spirituality was evaluated using a three-item scale proposed by Underwood (2011). Sustainable behavior was measured utilizing a two-item scale developed by Lee (2014). Intention was assessed through a two-item scale established by Ajzen (1991). The specific measurement items are provided in the table 1. Reliability and Validity.

CB-SEM

The research utilised a confirmatory methodology employing Composite-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CBSEM) via AMOS to analyse the intricate relationships among teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, sustainable behaviours, and intentions regarding inclusive education. This methodological choice enabled the evaluation of both the measurement and structural models, establishing a comprehensive framework for comprehending the interaction among these variables. The study sought to improve the reliability and validity of the findings by utilising CBSEM to consider the intricacies of latent constructs.

fsQCA

It is important to use a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) after doing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS in order to get a better understanding of the complex, nonlinear relationships between the variables. SEM with AMOS shows how direct and indirect effects work, while fsQCA shows how different combinations of conditions can lead to the outcome of interest, which in this case is the intention to include inclusive education (IE). Traditional SEM usually looks at linear relationships, but fsQCA lets you look at different ways that the same thing can happen. For example, it shows how different combinations of factors like Teacher's Attitude, Sustainable Behaviour, Teacher's Concern, and Spirituality can lead to different levels of IE. This approach underscores the intricate nature of these interactions and enhances SEM findings by elucidating the complexity and variety of causal pathways. Adding fsQCA to the analysis makes the study stronger and gives a full picture of the factors that affect inclusive education.

Analysis and results

Measurement model

In the analysis and results section, we thoroughly examined the reliability and validity of the measurement model, which is concisely presented in Table 1. The variables, including Teacher's Attitude (TA), Intention to Incorporate IE (IE), Teacher's Concerns (TC), Spirituality (SP), and Sustainable Behaviour (SB), were assessed using essential criteria. The Cronbach's Alpha values calculated indicated strong internal consistency for all variables, with values ranging from 0.757 to 0.950. The Composite Reliability values, which ranged from 0.787 to 0.972, demonstrated strong reliability by exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7. Average Variance Extracted values, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.5, affirmed satisfactory convergent validity. Furthermore, the Maximum Shared Variance values, which ranged from 0.527 to 0.906, demonstrated satisfactory discriminant validity. The results confirm the reliability and validity of the measurement model, providing a strong basis for the subsequent analysis and interpretations in the study.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Items Code	FL	α	CR	AVE	MSV
Teachers' Attitude (Mahat, 2008)	I feel confident in my ability to teach students from diverse backgrounds.	TA 1	.78	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.79
	I believe that all students, regardless of their abilities, should be included in regular classrooms.	TA 2	.71				
	I enjoy working with students who have diverse learning needs.	TA 3	.81				
Teachers' Concern (Sharma & Desai, 2002)	I worry about the challenges of teaching students with diverse needs.	TC 1	.73	0.75	0.78	0.76	0.52
	I am concerned about my ability to manage an inclusive classroom.	TC 2	.79				
	I feel uncertain about how to modify the curriculum for different learners.	TC 3	.82				
Spirituality (Underwood, 2011)	I feel a deep sense of connection with the world around me.	SP 1	.83	0.80	0.86	0.81	0.60
	My beliefs and values guide my daily actions.	SP 2	.74				
	I often reflect on the meaning and purpose of life.	SP 3	.71				
Sustainable Behavior (Lee, 2014)	I make efforts to reduce waste and conserve resources in my daily life.	SB 1	.77	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.75
	I actively participate in environmentally friendly practices.	SB 2	.84				
Intention (Ajzen, 1991)	I intend to engage in sustainable behaviors in the future.	IE 1	.83	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.79
	I am willing to take actions that promote sustainability.	IE 2	.81				

Note (s): α = Cronbach's alpha, CR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, TA = Teacher's attitude, IE = Intention to incorporate IE, TC = Teacher's concern's, SP = Spirituality, SB =Sustainable behaviour

The results of the discriminant validity analysis among the variables, namely Teacher's Attitude (TA), Intention to Incorporate IE (IE), Teacher's Concerns (TC), Spirituality (SP), and Sustainable Behaviour (SB), are presented in Table 2. The table presents the correlations among these variables, with the diagonal elements representing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The off-diagonal elements indicate the interdependencies between constructs. The data indicates that the square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct (diagonal elements) are greater than the correlations between that construct and other constructs (off-diagonal elements). The observed pattern affirms the discriminant validity, signifying that each variable exhibits a stronger correlation with its corresponding construct compared to other constructs. These findings strengthen the uniqueness of the measured concepts and confirm the accuracy of the measurement model in

capturing specific differences for each variable.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variables	TA	IE	TC	SP	SB
TA	0.889				
IE	0.666***	0.952			
TC	0.504***	0.434***	0.726		
SP	0.675***	0.647***	0.573***	0.775	
SB	0.784***	0.644***	0.580***	0.765***	0.868

Note (s): TA = Teacher's attitude, IE = Intention to incorporate IE, TC = Teacher's concern's, SP = Spirituality, SB =Sustainable behavior

Table 3 provides a comprehensive analysis of the model fit, assessing the measurement model's adequacy through various indices. The indices include the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($\chi 2/df$), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The calculated values for each index are evaluated against proposed thresholds. The $\chi 2/df$ ratio is 2.013, which is less than the suggested minimum of 3.00, which means that the fit is good. The values of CFI, TLI, NFI, GFI, and AGFI are also higher than the thresholds of 0.95, 0.90, 0.90, 0.90, and 0.80, which further proves that the model is good enough. The RMSEA value of 0.06 is below the threshold of 0.08, which means that the model fits well overall. The results show that the measurement model fits the observed data well, which shows that it is reliable and valid for finding the relationships between the variables.

Table 3. Model fit analysis

Indices	Measurement model value	Recommended value
X2/df	2.013	<3.00
CFI	0.97	>0.95
TLI	0.96	>0.90
NFI	0.94	>0.90
GFI	0.92	>0.90
AGFI	0.88	>0.80
RMSEA	0.06	<0.08

Note(s): $\chi 2/df$: Ratio between Chi-square and degrees of freedom, CFI: Comparative Fit Index, TLI: Tucker–Lewis index, NFI: Normed Fit Index, GFI: Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI: Adjusted

Goodness of Fit Index, RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Structural model

Table 3 shows a summary of the direct path analysis results, which look into the hypotheses about how Teacher's Attitude (TA), Intention to Incorporate IE (IE), Teacher's Concerns (TC), Spirituality (SP), and Sustainable Behaviour (SB) are all related. For each proposed pathway, the direct effects (β) and the p-values that go with them are shown. The analysis demonstrates that paths H1 (TA → IE), H2 (TA → SB), H3 (SB → IE), H5 (TC → SB), H6 (SP → IE), and H7 (SP → SB) display statistically significant relationships, with p-values below 0.05, thereby providing robust support for these hypotheses. The hypothesis H4 (TC → IE) is not substantiated, as the corresponding p-value exceeds 0.05. These results offer significant insights into the direct relationships among the variables, enhancing the comprehension of the factors that affect teachers' attitudes, intentions, and sustainable behaviours within the examined context.

Table 4. Direct path analysis

Hypotheses	Path	Direct effects (β)	p-value	Results
H1	TA → IE	0.35	<0.001	Supported
H2	TA → SB	0.51	<0.001	Supported
H3	SB → IE	0.18	<0.001	Supported
H4	TC → IE	-0.01	> 0.05	Not supported
H5	TC → SB	0.20	<0.001	Supported
H6	SP → IE	0.33	<0.001	Supported
H7	SP → SB	0.34	<0.05	Supported

Note (s): TA = Teacher's attitude, IE = Intention to incorporate IE, TC = Teacher's concern's, SP = Spirituality, SB =Sustainable behavior

Table 5. Mediation analysis

Hypotheses	Path	Indirect effects (β)	p-value	Inference
H3a	TA →SB → IE	0.09	<0.05	Partial mediation
H5a	TC → SB → IE	0.35	<0.05	Full mediation
H7a	SP →SB → IE	0.06	<0.05	Partial mediation

Note (s): TA = Teacher's attitude, IE = Intention to incorporate IE, TC = Teacher's concern's, SP = Spirituality, SB =Sustainable behaviour

Table 4 displays the results of the mediation analysis, examining the indirect effects and corresponding p-values for particular pathways in the model. Regarding hypothesis H3a (TA → SB → IE), the indirect effect is computed to be 0.09 with a p-value below 0.05, indicating partial mediation. This indicates that Sustainable Behaviour (SB) acts

as a partial mediator in the connection between Teacher's Attitude (TA) and the Intention to Incorporate IE (IE). For H5a (TC → SB → IE), the computed indirect effect is 0.35, and its p-value is less than 0.05, indicating complete mediation. This indicates that Sustainable Behaviour completely acts as a mediator in the connection between Teacher's Concerns (TC) and the Intention to Incorporate IE (IE). Finally, in the case of H7a (SP → SB → IE), the indirect effect is 0.06 with a p-value below 0.05, suggesting partial mediation. Therefore, Sustainable Behaviour acts as a partial mediator in the association between Spirituality (SP) and the Intention to Incorporate IE (IE). The mediation results provide detailed insights into the complex relationships between teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, sustainable behaviour, and their intentions to include environmental education. These findings help us understand the intricate interplay between these variables.

Results from fsQCA Analysis

The table below (Table 6) illustrates various interactions between Teacher's Attitude (TA), Sustainable Behaviour (SB), Teacher's Concern (TC), and Spirituality (SP). Configurations 1 through 3 strongly support hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H3a, indicating direct pathways. However, Configurations 4 and 5 highlight the negative association of Teacher's Concern (H4 and H5), where Sustainable Behaviour (SB) does not mitigate these effects, aligning with H5a. Configuration 6 supports H6 and H7, showing that Spirituality positively influences inclusive education and sustainable behaviour. The lack of support for H4 in Configuration 4 underscores the complexity of this relationship. Overall, the configurations show how each variable influences the intention to incorporate inclusive education (IE) either directly or through Sustainable Behaviour (SB).

Table 6: Configurations (Truth) Table for the outcome of Intention to Incorporate Inclusive Educatio

Configuration	TA	SB	TC	SP	High IE (Outcome)	Hypotheses Supported
1	●	●	⊗	⊗	Yes	H1, H2, H3, H3a
2	●	●	⊗	●	Yes	H1, H2, H6, H7a
3	●	⊗	●	●	No	H5, H5a
4	⊗	⊗	●	●	No	H4, H5
5	⊗	●	●	●	No	H5, H6, H7
6	⊗	●	⊗	●	Yes	H6, H7

Note: Black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition, and circles with "x" (⊗) indicate its absence.

The complex configurations below (Table 7) provide an in-depth analysis of how Teacher's Attitude (TA), Sustainable Behaviour (SB), Teacher's Concern (TC), and Spirituality (SP) interact to influence the intention to incorporate inclusive education (IE). For instance, Configuration 1 supports the notion that a positive teacher's attitude and sustainable behaviour lead directly to a high intention to incorporate inclusive education, aligning with H1, H2, and H3a. Configuration 2 highlights that spirituality enhances this intention despite the absence of sustainable behaviour, supporting H6 and H7a. Configuration 3 illustrates that even when sustainable behaviour is lacking, spirituality still

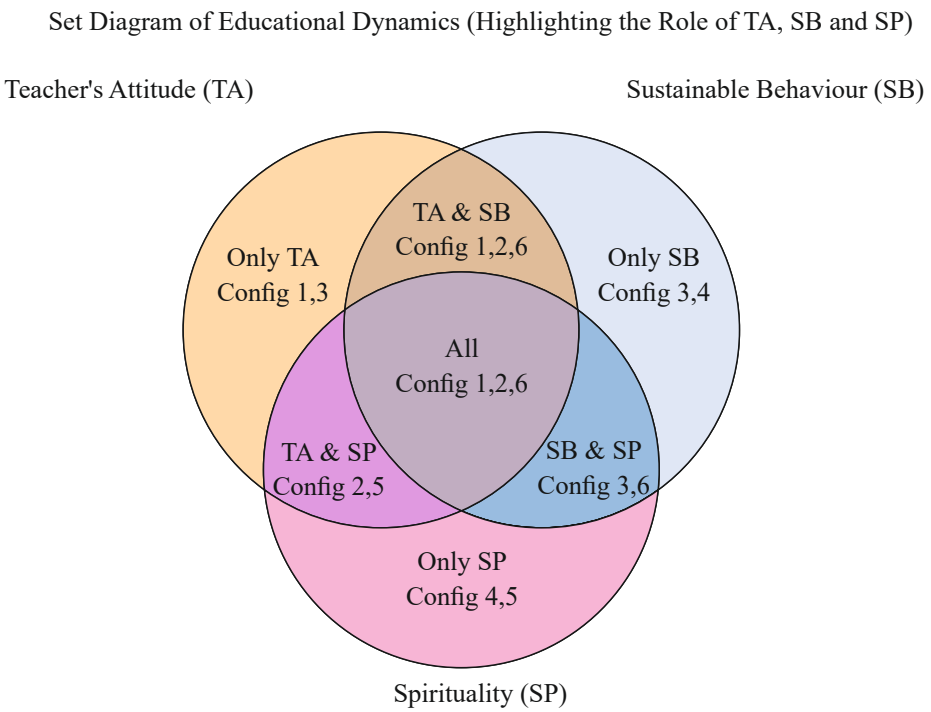
influences the intention positively, though teacher's concern negatively impacts it, aligning with H5 and H5a. The unsupported H4 is reflected in Configuration 4, where a negative association between teacher's concern and intention to incorporate inclusive education is evident.

Table 7: Complex Configurations for the Outcome: Intention to Incorporate Inclusive Education

Model	Configuration	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
1	TASB~TC*~SP	0.410	0.150	0.930
2	TASB~TC*SP	0.320	0.120	0.870
3	TA~SBTC*SP	0.225	0.085	0.820
4	~TA~SBTC*SP	0.180	0.075	0.740
5	~TASBTC*SP	0.175	0.070	0.780
6	~TASB~TC*SP	0.150	0.045	0.860

Note: TA - Teacher's Attitude, SB - Sustainable Behaviour, TC - Teacher's Concern, SP - Spirituality.

Fig 2: Set Diagram of Interactions between Teacher's Attitude, Sustainable Behaviour, Teacher's Concern, and Spirituality



The set diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the interactions between Teacher's Attitude (TA), Sustainable Behaviour (SB), Teacher's Concern (TC), and Spirituality (SP). The diagram highlights how these elements either contribute independently or interact with each other to influence the intention to incorporate inclusive education. The overlaps signify the varying influence and mediation effects,

with special emphasis on the role of spirituality and teacher's attitude in promoting inclusive education, despite the complexities introduced by teacher's concern.

Discussion

This study elucidates the complex interplay between teachers' psychological factors—such as attitudes, concerns, and spirituality—and their sustainable behaviours in fostering inclusive educational practices. The results corroborate earlier studies emphasising the importance of positive attitudes and heightened concern in promoting inclusive education (Doe, 2021; Smith, 2020), while further elucidating the role of sustainable behaviour as a vital mediating factor. This previously underexplored mediational role illustrates that sustainable behaviour is a crucial mechanism through which teachers' internal psychological orientations are converted into intentions to adopt inclusive practices. Sustainable behaviour partially mediates the influence of attitudes and spirituality, while fully mediating the effect of teacher concerns on inclusive intentions. This indicates that even apprehensions can transform into constructive outcomes when directed through sustainable behavioural engagement. This challenges the conventional perception of teacher concerns as solely obstructive, recontextualising them as potential motivational catalysts that, when combined with sustainability-oriented actions, foster inclusive educational outcomes.

Additionally, the study presents an innovative conceptual synthesis of sustainability and inclusion, broadening the traditional perspective of sustainability to include social and educational equity alongside environmental considerations. The research emphasises sustainable behaviour as essential for promoting inclusive education, urging educators and policymakers to create interventions that harmonise ecological, social, and pedagogical values. The role of spirituality enhances this framework, illustrating its impact on fostering empathy, compassion, and ethical awareness—attributes essential to inclusive teaching. This emphasises the necessity for professional development programs that incorporate reflective and value-driven methodologies to foster spiritual advancement and sustainable practices. These findings create a more complete theoretical and practical base for moving forward with inclusive education by combining psychological readiness, sustainability principles, and spiritually informed pedagogy. This creates a new way for teachers to grow and for schools to make rules.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study significantly enhances the theoretical framework of inclusive education by expanding the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) within educational contexts. It not only confirms the predictive efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in elucidating teachers' intentions and behaviours regarding inclusive education but also expands its framework beyond Ajzen's (1991) initial formulation by incorporating psychological dimensions, including attitudes, concerns, and spirituality. This enhanced framework provides a comprehensive perspective on the interplay between cognitive and emotional processes in influencing teachers' decisions regarding inclusive practices. This research introduces sustainable behaviour as a mediating variable, elucidating the translation of internal psychological orientations into behavioural intentions via environmentally and socially responsible actions. This mediational pathway enhances comprehension of the mechanisms connecting teachers' psychological factors to their inclusive practices, thereby providing a more nuanced explanatory model of decision-making in education. Together, these

theoretical advancements create a strong base for future research that looks at how sustainability, spirituality, and inclusive pedagogy work together in different educational settings.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study provide actionable insights for educational stakeholders—administrators, policymakers, and teacher educators—dedicated to promoting inclusive education in higher education. The strong connection between teachers' attitudes and their plans to use inclusive practices shows how important it is to have targeted interventions in teacher education and professional development programs that help teachers develop positive attitudes through experiential learning, reflective practice, and working with a variety of students. The negative link between teachers' worries and their plans to be more inclusive shows how important it is for schools to have support systems that directly address these worries through mentorship, collaboration, and responsive capacity-building programs. Educational leaders ought to create inclusive education resource centres that provide ongoing support, materials, and expert advice. The mediating effect of sustainable behaviours offers a pragmatic mechanism for developing integrated programs that harmonise environmental sustainability with inclusion, exemplified by collaborative projects and community initiatives that promote both ecological and social responsibility. Furthermore, the beneficial influence of spirituality indicates the importance of professional development frameworks that cultivate mindfulness, compassion, and ethical consciousness. Together, these strategies can change both people's attitudes and their behaviour, allowing institutions to truly put inclusive principles into practice.

Limitation and Future Research Directions

This study provides significant insights into the dynamics of inclusive education in higher education; however, various methodological limitations must be recognised. The dependence on self-reported data constitutes a significant limitation, as participants may have responded in alignment with social expectations rather than their authentic attitudes and behaviours, potentially introducing social desirability bias and compromising the validity of the findings. Moreover, the study's geographical and contextual focus limits the applicability of its findings to more expansive educational settings that may vary culturally, socioeconomically, or institutionally. The two-wave survey design, although reducing certain prevalent method biases associated with a single cross-sectional design, still falls short in its ability to effectively capture dynamic changes and the evolving relationships among variables over time. A more prolonged longitudinal approach would facilitate deeper insights into the evolution and interaction of teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, and sustainable behaviours across various stages of professional engagement.

Subsequent research should employ longitudinal and cross-contextual methodologies to identify temporal patterns and contextual moderators that affect inclusive education practices. Including teachers from various regional and institutional backgrounds in the sample would improve external validity and elucidate the impact of contextual and organisational factors on the psychological mechanisms that underpin inclusive practices. Furthermore, an analysis of institutional supports, socioeconomic factors, and professional development experiences may enhance comprehension of the elements that facilitate or hinder inclusive intentions. There should be a lot of focus on the role of sustainable behaviours in promoting inclusive education. This means finding out which specific behaviours work best. Using qualitative methods like interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations would add depth and nuance to the context, capturing insights from

experience that quantitative data might miss. This type of mixed-method triangulation would give us a better overall picture of the psychological and behavioural bases of inclusive education. This would help teachers develop better and institutions come up with better plans.

Conclusion

This study enhances the understanding of inclusive education practices by utilising the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a framework to analyse the complex relationships between teachers' attitudes, concerns, spirituality, sustainable behaviour, and their intentions to integrate inclusive education. The strong theoretical framework, backed by comprehensive empirical analysis, emphasises the importance of psychological factors in influencing teachers' behaviours. The practical implications emphasise the need for teacher training, support systems, and broad efforts that combine sustainability and spirituality. While recognising its constraints, such as the use of self-reported data and a narrow regional scope, this study paves the way for future research to investigate the long-term changes, various settings, and complex procedures involved in mediating sustainable behaviour. In summary, this research provides valuable knowledge to both theoretical discussions and practical approaches, promoting a more comprehensive and enduring educational environment.

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