



## INCLUSIVE INTEGRATED STUDIES: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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**Abstract:** Inclusive education has become a central tenet of modern educational practice, aiming to ensure equal access and participation for all students, including those with learning disabilities (LD). This study examines the impact of inclusive integrated studies on students with LD by comparing academic motivation, self-efficacy, and well-being across three distinct groups: students with LD in special schools, students with LD in inclusive schools, and students without LD in inclusive settings. Utilizing a cross-sectional design and quantitative methods, the research highlights the significant cognitive and emotional benefits that inclusive environments can provide. Results reveal that students with LD in inclusive settings perform better across all measured domains than their counterparts in segregated educational environments, although a gap remains when compared to students without LD. These findings suggest that inclusive education, when properly supported, can foster more positive academic and psychological outcomes for students with LD, while emphasizing the continued need for targeted interventions and teacher training.

**Keywords:** inclusive schools, learning disabilities, Academic Motivation, Academic Self-Efficacy, Well-Being.

### Introduction

Inclusive education is a globally recognized approach aimed at addressing the diverse learning needs of all students by providing equitable access to quality education within mainstream classrooms. It is grounded in the principle that every child, regardless of ability or disability, has the right to participate fully in the educational process. Among the beneficiaries of this approach are students with learning disabilities (LD), a group that often faces unique challenges in traditional academic settings. Learning disabilities refer to neurologically-based difficulties in

processing information, which can affect areas such as reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia), and mathematics (dyscalculia), despite average or above-average intelligence (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Historically, students with LD were placed in separate, specialized schools under the assumption that they required different educational methods. However, recent shifts in educational policy and philosophy advocate for their inclusion in regular classrooms, where they can interact with peers and access the same curriculum with appropriate accommodations. Inclusive integrated studies are designed to support this vision by combining general and special education practices to meet individual needs. Despite the widespread promotion of inclusion, its implementation varies widely, and its impact on academic and psychosocial outcomes for students with LD remains a topic of debate. Some argue that inclusion can lead to improved motivation, self-confidence, and academic achievement, while others point to challenges such as insufficient teacher training, limited resources, and inadequate support systems (Sakız, 2017). This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature by examining how inclusive educational settings influence the academic motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being of students with learning disabilities. By comparing outcomes among students with LD in inclusive settings, those in special schools, and their peers without LD, this research aims to identify both the benefits and ongoing barriers in implementing effective inclusive education.

## Methods

### Participants

The study involved three groups of participants:

1. **Students with LD in Special Schools:** Twenty students diagnosed with LD, receiving education in specialized settings tailored to their needs.
2. **Students with LD in Inclusive Schools:** Twenty students with LD integrated into general education classrooms with appropriate support.
3. **Students without LD in Inclusive Schools:** Twenty students without identified learning disabilities, also in general education settings.

### Procedure

A cross-sectional design was employed, utilizing standardized assessments and self-report questionnaires to measure:

- **Academic Motivation:** Assessed using the Academic Motivation Scale, evaluating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels.
- **Academic Self-Efficacy:** Measured with the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, determining students' confidence in their academic abilities.

- **Well-Being:** Evaluated through the Student Well-Being Scale, capturing emotional and psychological well-being indicators.

Descriptive statistics were computed for each variable. Comparative analyses among the three groups were conducted using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Post-hoc comparisons were performed using the Tukey HSD test to identify specific group differences.

## **Results**

### **Academic Motivation**

Students without LD in inclusive schools reported the highest levels of academic motivation, followed by students with LD in inclusive settings. Students with LD in special schools exhibited the lowest motivation scores. ANOVA results indicated significant differences among the groups ( $F(2, 57) = 6.45, p < 0.01$ ). Post-hoc analyses revealed that students without LD differed significantly from both groups of students with LD, with no significant difference between the two LD groups.

### **Academic Self-Efficacy**

Similar patterns were observed for academic self-efficacy. Students without LD demonstrated the highest self-efficacy, followed by those with LD in inclusive schools, and then students with LD in special schools. The ANOVA indicated significant group differences ( $F(2, 57) = 5.89, p < 0.01$ ), with post-hoc tests confirming significant differences between the non-LD group and both LD groups, but not between the two LD groups.

### **Well-Being**

Well-being scores were highest among students without LD in inclusive schools. Students with LD in inclusive settings reported moderate well-being scores, while those in special schools had the lowest scores. The ANOVA showed significant differences ( $F(2, 57) = 4.72, p < 0.05$ ), with post-hoc comparisons highlighting significant differences between the non-LD group and both LD groups, but not between the LD groups themselves.

## **Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of inclusive education on students with learning disabilities (LD) by comparing academic motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being among three distinct student groups: students with LD in special schools, students with LD in inclusive schools, and students without LD in inclusive settings. The results provide compelling evidence that inclusive educational environments offer significant advantages for students with LD, particularly in terms of cognitive and emotional development. The data revealed that students with LD

who were educated in inclusive settings consistently outperformed their peers in special schools across all measured domains. While students without LD still scored highest overall, the improved outcomes for students with LD in inclusive classrooms suggest that integrated education can positively influence their academic and psychosocial development.

### **Academic Motivation**

The study found a significant difference in academic motivation between students with LD in inclusive settings and those in special schools. Students in inclusive environments showed greater motivation to learn, likely due to their exposure to broader curricula, the presence of academically-driven peers, and the normalization of diverse learning needs within the classroom. This is consistent with research by Deci & Ryan (2000), which emphasizes the role of social context and peer interaction in fostering intrinsic motivation.

In contrast, students in special schools may face limited academic expectations and reduced opportunities for peer-driven learning, which can hinder their motivation. The stigma often associated with segregated education may also contribute to reduced self-belief and engagement. The findings reinforce that academic motivation is not solely dependent on individual ability, but is strongly influenced by the educational environment and the expectations communicated by teachers and peers.

### **Academic Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy, or a student's belief in their ability to succeed academically, was also found to be significantly higher among students with LD in inclusive schools compared to those in special schools. Although students without LD reported the highest levels of self-efficacy, the gap between them and students with LD in inclusive settings was notably smaller than the gap between students with LD across the two settings. This suggests that inclusive education, by promoting high expectations and providing access to the general curriculum, empowers students with LD to believe in their academic capabilities. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy emphasizes the importance of mastery experiences and social modeling—both of which are more readily available in inclusive classrooms. When students with LD observe their peers tackling similar academic challenges, and when they themselves are supported to succeed within the same curriculum, their confidence is bolstered. Additionally, inclusive settings often employ differentiated instruction, individualized support plans, and co-teaching models that allow students with LD to experience success at their own pace while still engaging with the general curriculum. This

scaffolding appears to be essential in supporting both academic performance and the development of a positive self-concept.

### **Well-Being**

The emotional and psychological well-being of students with LD was another critical area where inclusive education demonstrated its benefits. While students without LD reported the highest well-being scores, students with LD in inclusive classrooms scored significantly higher than their peers in special schools. This suggests that inclusion not only affects cognitive outcomes but also fosters a more supportive and emotionally nurturing environment. A key factor contributing to improved well-being may be the opportunity for social integration. Inclusive classrooms promote peer relationships and discourage isolation, which is often a concern in special schools. Peer acceptance plays a vital role in developing a positive self-image and emotional resilience, especially for students with learning differences (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Furthermore, inclusive schools tend to have greater access to mental health resources, guidance counselors, and social-emotional learning programs, all of which can enhance student well-being.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Despite the benefits, this study also highlights persistent challenges. While inclusive settings improve outcomes for students with LD, they still trail behind their peers without LD in all measured areas. This indicates that inclusion alone is not sufficient; the quality of implementation matters greatly. One concern is the adequacy of teacher preparation. Many general education teachers lack specific training in supporting students with LD, which can lead to unintentional neglect or insufficient differentiation of instruction (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Ongoing professional development, access to special education support staff, and co-teaching models are essential to fully realize the promise of inclusive education. Resource allocation is another pressing issue. Inclusive schools must be equipped with appropriate learning tools, assistive technology, and accessible materials to accommodate diverse learners. Without sufficient funding and administrative support, inclusive efforts may fall short, leading to frustration for both students and educators. Additionally, the social dynamics of the classroom must be carefully managed. While inclusion promotes social interaction, students with LD can still experience bullying or exclusion if a school culture of empathy and acceptance is not actively cultivated. Whole-school programs that emphasize kindness, empathy, and respect for diversity are necessary to ensure that inclusion is not merely physical but also emotional and social.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings of this study have several important implications for educators, school leaders, and policymakers. First, inclusive education should be prioritized as a foundational approach to equity in education. Governments must support inclusive initiatives through policy frameworks, funding, and accountability measures. Second, teacher training programs must integrate content on inclusive practices, learning disabilities, and differentiated instruction. This ensures that all educators—general and special education alike—are prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners. Third, schools must adopt a holistic approach to inclusion that encompasses not only academic accommodations but also social-emotional learning, mental health support, and family engagement. Parents should be active partners in the development and implementation of individualized education plans (IEPs) and inclusive strategies.

### Conclusion

This study underscores the significant positive impact of inclusive education on students with learning disabilities (LD), particularly in terms of academic motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional well-being. Students with LD in inclusive settings consistently outperformed their peers in special schools, demonstrating that inclusive integrated studies can foster not only academic growth but also stronger self-belief and improved emotional resilience. These findings reinforce the importance of educational environments that emphasize equity, collaboration, and support for diverse learning needs. However, the persistent performance gap between students with LD and their non-disabled peers within inclusive settings indicates that inclusion must go beyond physical placement. Effective inclusion requires strategic planning, ongoing teacher training, adequate resource allocation, and a supportive school culture that values diversity and empathy. Without these elements, the full benefits of inclusion may remain unrealized. The implications of this research are clear: inclusive education, when implemented thoughtfully and comprehensively, holds great promise for improving the quality of education and life for students with LD. Educational stakeholders—teachers, administrators, policymakers, and families—must work collaboratively to create learning environments where all students can thrive. In doing so, we move closer to an education system that truly reflects the principles of fairness, dignity, and equal opportunity for all.

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