New Zealand-Trained Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences of Inclusive Education in International Contexts

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Abstract

Inclusive education is widely adopted in education contexts internationally, building on advocacy efforts for the rights of all learners. Yet, the implementation of inclusive education is shaped by cultural and social factors. There is little research exploring teachers' experiences moving to teaching roles in international settings, and even less related to their experiences of inclusive education in these contexts. Prompted by this gap, this qualitative research study explored New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education when teaching in international contexts. The study gathered data from a diverse range of teachers currently teaching in international settings, to explore their perceptions and experiences in implementing inclusive education. The research used a case study approach where data was gathered through six online interviews with teachers living and working in Indonesia, England, Germany, the United Arab Emirates and Thailand. Data was analysed using thematic analysis, adopting a reflexive approach to define the key messages within the individual cases and then through cross-case analysis. Findings from this study affirm the influential role teachers have in implementing inclusive education and the influence of the social and cultural context in inclusive practice. Results suggest teachers' implementation of inclusive education can be influenced by factors in three areas: structural and systemic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. These factors are interconnected and act dynamically to influence teachers as they work to support learners with diverse needs in inclusive ways. Teachers were also found to experience tensions when their personal beliefs and experiences did not align with those in their international context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study explored New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education when teaching in international contexts. The study identified and analysed the factors that influence these perceptions and experiences, presented through the voices of teachers who had moved from New Zealand to international contexts. The study also identified the tensions that arose as these teachers navigated the complexities of implementing inclusive education across different international contexts.

This qualitative study drew on the perceptions and experiences of six New Zealand-trained teachers teaching in Indonesia, England, Germany, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Thailand. An interpretivist approach was adopted, which guided the thematic analysis to understand the perceptions and experiences of the interviewed teachers.

To set the context for this study, this chapter begins with an outline of my background, reflecting my views as a researcher and my experiences as a teacher in an international context. It then provides an overview of inclusive education, with an emphasis on the New Zealand context, and it identifies the important influence of the globalisation of education. The rationale and aims for the study follow, which stem from the current limited research on teachers' experiences with inclusive education in international contexts. The research questions which guided the study are then introduced. Finally, this chapter includes definitions of key terms and a summary of the thesis organisation.

1.2 Researcher Background

Originally from New Zealand, I experienced inclusive education through my schooling and teacher training. Through these experiences, I developed strong beliefs that inclusive education benefits all learners and that schools should work to implement it effectively. My professional teaching journey began in Thailand in 2014, where I have worked in both local Thai schools and international schools. While teaching in Thailand, I have observed that despite comprehensive inclusive education policies, schools often fail to provide adequate support and quality education for learners with diverse needs (LDN). The contrast between my perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in New Zealand and those in Thailand ignited my interest

in how different countries perceive and implement inclusive education and what factors influence teachers' experiences in international contexts. My interest in these experiences led to the current study, to explore the experiences of other New Zealand-trained teachers working internationally and to seek to understand the influences and tensions they have experienced in their particular contexts.

It is important to hear and examine these experiences to critically reflect on inclusive education practices in New Zealand and abroad, and to ensure teachers looking to move internationally are well prepared. Understanding teachers' experiences of inclusive education also promotes the development of inclusive education globally. It enables us to consider how teachers can be supported to create school environments where LDN are not only included but also valued, allowing them to thrive as equal members of both the school and the broader community.

1.3 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has become a common feature in education policy and is considered the most widely adopted education policy globally (Aktan, 2021). Since the 2009 ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), many countries have endeavoured to create more inclusive schools to guarantee the rights of all children to quality education (Miesera et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2005).

Inclusive education policies have been met with positive and negative responses, mainly due to the complexity of inclusive education and systemic issues of funding, resourcing and adequate support. According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education strives to promote diversity as an enrichment of classrooms rather than a problem to be fixed. However, inclusive education relies on the acceptance and practices of teachers and school leaders; the lived experiences of learners, families and teachers; as well as on broader systemic policy and cultural factors. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the inclusion of learners with diverse education needs, including disability and neurodiversity, though other areas of diversity, such as culture and language, were also acknowledged by the teachers in this study.

1.4 Inclusive Education in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the principle of inclusive education has gained traction and it is commonplace for LDN to attend class in their local schools (McMenamin, 2009). This is in part

due to New Zealand's relatively long history of inclusive education, even before being officially introduced in legislation (McMenamin, 2017). Multiple pieces of legislation have advanced the implementation of inclusive education in New Zealand, beginning with the Education Act of 1989, which ensured all students could enrol at their local school (Thomson et al., 2003; Wills, 2006). An initiative, Special Education 2000, was later introduced with the aim of achieving a world-class inclusive education system providing equitable learning opportunities for all students (Millar & Morton, 2007). This initiative aligned with a broad vision of New Zealand as an inclusive society where every individual is accepted and valued (Kearney & Kane, 2006). In New Zealand, inclusive education is now defined by the Ministry of Education (2018) as welcoming all learners and supporting them to participate and contribute by identifying and removing barriers to learning. This definition is underpinned by two principles: every learner has the potential to make valuable contributions and diversity is a strength.

New Zealand's history of promoting inclusive education means many New Zealand-trained teachers have experienced inclusive practices throughout their own schooling and observed its implementation first-hand in their initial teacher education (ITE) experiences. Yet questions remain about the effectiveness of inclusive education in New Zealand's education system and about gaps between policy and practical application due to historical and systemic barriers (Selvaraj, 2016).

1.5 Globalisation of Teaching

Both the number of international schools and the number of teachers working abroad in local and international schools have grown significantly in recent decades (Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021). There are several reasons for this growth. Burke (2017) identified global changes such as the rise and ease of global communication, the dominance of English as the international language of trade and business, the increased availability of improved technology and the interdependency of national finance systems as reasons for the increase in the relocation of Western teachers. Burke also reported that these changes have led to increased numbers of teachers relocating to new countries for professional development (PD) and potential travel opportunities. Additionally, Savva (2013) highlighted the growth of international companies and organisations, along with an increase in the number of professionals and their families moving to different countries, as contributing to the growing number of international schools and teachers moving abroad. Savva noted a resulting high demand for qualified English-speaking teachers

around the world, but investigations into their experiences teaching abroad are still limited (Tasdemir & Gümüsok, 2022).

1.6 Rationale for the Research Project

The rationale for this study stems from the influential role teachers play in inclusive education. To support teachers implementing inclusive education, their voices need to be heard to fully understand their experiences. Through my experiences, I have seen the challenges faced by teachers and the lack of voice they have to effect change and improve the implementation of inclusive education in schools. By understanding teachers' experiences, we can help identify the factors that impact their attitudes and actions. As Aktan (2021) highlighted, a deep understanding of teachers' experiences can guide the evaluation of inclusive practices, ensuring that teachers are supported in the areas most needed. Successful experiences and practices should be shared to inspire other teachers and highlight the successes of inclusive education. At the same time, teachers' challenging experiences can provide lessons for all stakeholders involved.

Variations in the implementation of inclusive education across countries, schools and teachers can create challenges for teachers who move to different countries, and encounter different interpretations and practices of inclusive education. This transition may be particularly complex for New Zealand-trained teachers who have experienced inclusive education embedded in policies and training, and then moved abroad to countries where such inclusive approaches may be less accepted and embedded.

Research investigating New Zealand teachers' experiences in international contexts is sparse, leaving a gap in the understanding of how they perceive and adapt to contexts that interpret and practice inclusive education differently. Furthermore, most existing research on inclusive education in international contexts focuses on single countries, regions or schools. This study addresses this gap by exploring teachers' experiences in multiple international contexts, providing a broader range of experiences to better understand inclusive education globally, a need identified by Lane (2020).

1.7 Aims of the Research Project

This study aimed to explore and understand New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in international contexts. The research sought to identify the

challenges, strategies and factors that influence teachers' experiences when in international teaching roles.

Limited research exists on teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in different international contexts. There is also a notable gap in the literature on New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences when moving to teach in international contexts. It is important to report the voices of teachers who have been through these changes. Therefore, the aims of this research were to:

- Identify and explore the factors that influence New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences of inclusive education in international contexts; and
- Identify and explore the tensions evident when New Zealand-trained teachers implement inclusive education in international contexts.

1.8 Research Questions

The rationale and aims of the study led to the formation of the following two research questions to be investigated through this research:

1. What factors influence teachers' perceptions and experiences implementing inclusive education in international contexts?
2. What tensions are evident when teachers implement inclusive education in international contexts

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

This section defines key terms used throughout this study. Terms have been used in line with those commonly used in New Zealand. In some quotations and descriptions, context-specific terms have been used to maintain authenticity. It is acknowledged that the teachers in this study may have defined or described particular terms based on their own perspectives and experiences, reflecting the different international contexts and education systems they work in.

International School. There is no universally agreed definition of an international school, and it does not always mean an international education is delivered (Savva, 2013). However, in the context of this study, it refers to schools where content and curriculum are taught in English and may provide a curriculum different from the local education system.

Learners with Diverse Needs (LDN). LDN refers to learners who require different levels and types of support to fully engage in the educational content. These learners may have

physical, cognitive, emotional, social or behavioural needs which affect their ability to participate and succeed in traditional learning environments without support. LDN can include specific educational needs; physical or medical conditions; emotional and behavioural difficulties; giftedness; and cultural, linguistic or socio-economic diversity.

Mainstreaming. Mainstreaming is a limited form of inclusion where LDN are placed in classrooms with their typically developing peers. The focus in mainstreaming is that LDN are present in the classroom but does not specifically address their participation or value in the classroom.

Practicum. Practicums are the time student teachers spend gaining practical experience in schools as part of their ITE.

Special Education Teachers and General Education Teachers. Special education teachers are trained to work specifically with LDN, while general education teachers work with all learners.

Teacher Aides (TAs). TAs are also known as teaching assistants, shadow teachers, para-educators, classroom aides, instructional assistants and educational assistants. They are employed to support the needs of specific or multiple learners and their duties may involve supervising, adapting and preparing materials, implementing behavioural interventions, personal care and providing direct instruction.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

The remainder of the thesis is organised into four chapters. Chapter Two examines, analyses and reviews literature related to inclusive education in New Zealand and other countries. This is followed by an analysis of different aspects of inclusive education and the stakeholders involved before discussing the impacts of the globalisation of education and its impacts on teachers and inclusive education itself.

Chapter Three outlines the qualitative research design of the study, detailing methodological choices, including the data collection method, sampling methods and participant information. Thematic analysis, the data analysis method used, research trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also detailed.

Chapter Four provides detailed descriptions of the data collected and analysed. The findings are presented by the key themes identified through thematic analysis. Findings are first reported for each of the six teachers interviewed, followed by a cross-case analysis.

In Chapter Five, the findings are discussed and analysed in light of the research questions. The implications for teachers and other stakeholders are highlighted. The strengths and limitations of the study are outlined, along with possible future research suggestions. Chapter Five closes with the final reflections and conclusion of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Inclusive education has been introduced in many countries, following the adoption of legislation, to ensure that every child's right to education is met. However, there is international variance in the resulting inclusive education policy and practice, leading to inconsistencies both in defining inclusive education and in determining the most effective means of implementation. These differences have also led to different perceptions and experiences for the teachers who implement inclusive education in different contexts. The following literature review explores current literature on inclusive education, both in New Zealand and international contexts. First, the review presents different definitions and lenses through which inclusive education is viewed and examines the literature regarding the factors influencing the successful implementation of inclusive education. Next, key stressors and challenges are identified, including teacher training and the role of teacher aides (TAs). The review then considers the implications of the globalisation of teaching and its relationship with inclusive education. This leads to the identification of teachers' professional and personal adaptations when teaching in new international contexts. The chapter concludes with the gaps in the current literature and outlines the research questions that framed the current study.

2.2 Defining Inclusive Education

Definitions of inclusive education are important to consider as language is powerful and can influence behaviour and perceptions, which can promote or reduce equity (Likis, 2021). Within the literature, definitions of inclusive education vary (Millar & Morton, 2007). Typical definitions commonly situate inclusive education as having learners with diverse needs (LDN) participating in classrooms with other learners unless it is against the best interests of any learners (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). Inclusive education has also been described as ensuring all learners are supported in the same environment, in age-appropriate classes, while experiencing equal opportunities (Hosshan et al., 2020; Leung & Mak, 2010). Some literature emphasises that inclusive education goes beyond mainstreaming, which focuses on LDN being physically present in the classroom, arguing that physical presence does not automatically equate to inclusion (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Miesera et al., 2021). LDN also

need to be included socially and academically to ensure they are valued and respected, and that all learners are present, participating and succeeding in a high-quality education system (MacArthur & Rutherford, 2016; Miesera et al., 2021).

Defining inclusive education is further complicated due to the changing nature of language use in the disability space and its various interpretations by different people and different countries. There is no universal agreement on preferred terminology within this space and this is compounded by the rapidly evolving nature of inclusive language. For example, the term 'special education' is no longer used by some but remains common for others. On the other hand, what is considered inclusive education in some countries might be classified as special education in others (Lane, 2020). In some countries, inclusive education emphasises moving away from the sorting, labelling and categorising associated with special education (Kauffman & Hornby, 2020). However, in other contexts, the terms are used interchangeably. MacArthur and Rutherford (2016) argued this is contradictory, as special education focuses on fixing learner deficits, while inclusive education aims to address and remove barriers to learning. Kantavong (2018) highlighted the increasing complexity of defining inclusive education as it may include learners with disabilities, learning difficulties and other marginalised or vulnerable groups. For these reasons, it is unlikely there will ever be a high level of consensus among all stakeholders regarding the definition of inclusive education and it will continue to be a term that holds different meanings for different people and countries. A lack of consensus on the definition of inclusive education is not as important, though, as the differences in how it is implemented in practice.

To further understand inclusive education, particularly in different contexts, it is important to understand the international agreements that have promoted it, the discourses through which it can be viewed and the language that has influenced the definitions. Inclusive education is often considered from a rights perspective, with Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stating that "everyone has the right to education" (United Nations, 1948, p. 7). Two key documents, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Salamanca Statement, have since further highlighted the rights of all children to education, including those with diverse learning needs. Article 24 of the UNCRPD states that LDN have the right to equal access to the general education system (United Nations, 2006). The Salamanca Statement asserts that every child has

the right to education and that learners' diverse characteristics and needs should be considered to create welcoming school environments (Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013). All three documents have influenced inclusive education policies and legislation in many parts of the world (Hosshan et al., 2020). This has included a focus on the rights of all learners, leading to the principle that inclusive education involves respect for all groups, social fairness and the development of human relationships (Hosshan et al., 2020). Furthermore, inclusive education reinforces the idea that differences should be accepted and respected in society, and that everyone has equal rights (Millar & Morton, 2007).

Inclusion based on human rights has created a paradigm shift where the focus is no longer simply on learners adapting to school environments. Instead, schools are working to adapt to the individual needs of all learners and to ensure that all children can attend school, while they work to overcome obstacles, decrease fears and increase tolerance (Goldan & Schwab, 2020; Yılmaz & Yeganeh, 2021). One participating school principal in a study by Poon-McBrayer and Wong (2013) demonstrated this focus on the rights of all learners in the response, “we should not select who we teach but educate all who are in our school” (p.1522). However, the success of schools adapting to the rights and needs of all learners is not a simple task and is influenced by many factors.

One of the factors affecting schools’ success in adapting to the needs of all learners is the increasing number of learners classified as having diverse learning needs. For example, since 1977, the United States has reported a 300% increase in the number of learners classified as having specific learning disorders (McLaughlin et al., 2006). It is unclear whether there is an actual increase in LDN, or that more learners are being identified due to increased awareness and referral opportunities. Regardless of the size of the increase and its causes, the increase in LDN requires schools and teachers to adapt and meet their needs.

There are multiple discourses informing current conceptions of LDN. One of the most influential discourses is the medical discourse (Millar & Morton, 2007), which focuses on the body and its deficits. Within this discourse, professionals view diverse needs as a problem to fix rather than a difference to be celebrated. This does not align with the idea of inclusive education as encouraging and celebrating diversity rather than ‘fixing’ perceived problems. Millar and Morton also discussed the ecological discourse that focuses on the external factors that create learning barriers; thus, it focuses on adapting the learning environment to meet the learners’

needs, instead of what is wrong with the learner. Similarly, social discourse describes inclusive education as considering diverse needs as socially constructed and influenced by socio-cultural values (McMaster, 2015). McIntyre (2013) summed up the views of ecological and social discourses by stating that inclusive education requires a shift from viewing the learners as the problem to viewing the education system as the problem.

As this research focuses on New Zealand-trained teachers, the definition from the New Zealand Ministry of Education is used. The Ministry of Education (2018) defined inclusive education as welcoming and supporting all learners to participate and contribute by identifying and removing barriers to learning. The Ministry of Education emphasised diversity as a strength, with every learner having the potential to make valuable contributions.

2.3 Factors for the Successful Implementation of Inclusive Education

For inclusive education to be successful, commitment and collaboration are required from all stakeholders, including governments, training institutes, school staff and the community; noting in particular the key role teachers play in developing inclusive education in classrooms (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Sharma et al., 2006). The literature highlights how those involved, particularly teachers, are influenced by a range of structural and systemic, physical, and teacher-related factors. Structural and systemic factors include policies, leadership, funding and resources, as well as socio-cultural dynamics such as socioeconomic disparities, race or gender inequality, political influence and societal expectations. Specific structural and systemic factors, as identified by Sukbunpant et al. (2013), include inclusive education policy, support and promotion from government agencies, and effective follow-up strategies throughout the education system. Participants in Sukbunpant et al.'s study of preschool teachers' views of inclusive education for Thai LDN, recommended that attention to these factors to improve inclusive education overall, highlighting how structural and systemic factors are important in guiding schools' implementation of inclusive education and setting standards for its success. However, Tungaraza (2014) noted that while effective strategies for implementing inclusive education are essential to its success, well-written policies with good intentions are only a small factor.

School leadership plays an important role in moving systems towards being more inclusive and promoting sustainable change within schools (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). According to Ackah-Jnr and Fluckiger (2023) shared leadership that promotes a collaborative

environment for all teachers is essential to inclusive education's success. As including all learners requires ongoing support from school leadership, schools with strong support programmes have strong advocates for inclusive education in their leadership (International Schools Collaborative, 2020). Strategies to support leadership's positive influence on the implementation of inclusive education are identified in the literature. Three strategies were identified by participants in a study by Poon-McBrayer and Wong (2013) for school leaders to build collaboration and a shared vision. These strategies were: clearly communicating school leaders' vision, developing trusting relationships with teachers and empowering middle leaders. However, one significant challenge for many schools, particularly international schools, is that school administrators often change every three to five years, which can cause a lot of changes in school culture and practices, including those relating to inclusive education (Lane, 2020).

Physical resources, including classroom space and resources, contribute to the success of inclusive education. Yılmaz and Yeganeh (2021) found that crowded classrooms negatively impact teachers' ability to implement inclusive education effectively. They argued that reducing class sizes is an effective way to positively impact the use of classroom space and resources. As well as the provision of adequate educational materials and school budgets, as proposed by the teachers in their study, Sukbunpant et al. (2013) also recommended the utilisation of special education teachers and TAs to support learners in the classroom. Appropriate physical resources, readily available, are seen to help teachers meet the needs of all learners in their classrooms.

Teachers' actions and attitudes are frequently discussed in the literature as integral factors in the successful implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are often reported as the main agents of educational reform and critical to the success of inclusive education (Leung & Mak, 2010; Miesera et al., 2021). Teachers' attitudes, in particular, are considered one of the most influential factors contributing to the implementation of inclusive education (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014; Loreman et al., 2007). Sharma et al. (2008) stated that teachers with positive attitudes are more prepared to change and adapt to ensure their teaching benefits all learners, especially those with diverse learning needs. Positive teacher attitudes can also increase expectations and learning opportunities for all learners (Tiwari et al., 2015). The literature identified several variables that could influence teachers' attitudes in being more positive or more negative, such as the type and level of learners' needs, teachers' previous experiences with inclusive education and

teacher education, including initial teacher education (ITE) and professional development (PD) (De Boer et al., 2011; Miesera et al., 2021).

Miesera et al. (2021) reported that contact with people with diverse needs in school and private situations leads to more positive attitudes among teachers. At the same time, multiple factors can lead to teachers having negative attitudes towards inclusive education, including feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their learners. For example, Sharma et al. (2006) found that many newly graduated teachers in Australia thought they lacked the essential skills needed to meet the diverse needs of an inclusive classroom. Interestingly, this was despite inclusive education being implemented for over two decades in Australia, meaning many newly graduated teachers had likely experienced inclusive schooling themselves. Clark-Howard (2019) reported that past experiences, such as inclusive education throughout one's schooling, influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, suggesting that participants may have had negative experiences of inclusive education in their schooling or that inclusive education was not implemented effectively. In another study of Australian teachers, Anderson et al. (2007) suggested that teachers appreciated the need for inclusion of all learners and the philosophical principles of inclusive education, but stated that teachers were responsible for translating this philosophy into practice in increasingly challenging conditions. They highlighted that teachers' positive beliefs were coupled with the realism of the difficulties associated with implementing inclusive education. This idea was supported by De Boer et al. (2011), who noted that teachers may support inclusive education in principle and the philosophy behind it, but can be challenged when faced with barriers to implementation in the classroom.

Other studies have also highlighted a range of factors can lead some teachers to express negative attitudes towards inclusive education. In their research of ten head teachers and 52 teachers from schools in Tanzania, Tungaraza (2014) found that many teachers held negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Some teachers believed that inclusive education would negatively impact other learners' academic achievement and cause disturbances in the classroom. Tungaraza identified that negative comments often reflected teachers' feelings of inadequacy and incompetence relating to inclusive education, although some teachers recognised that inclusive education could reduce stigmatisation and help LDN academically. Tungaraza concluded that inclusive education would not be successful without well-trained teachers with positive attitudes.

Overall, these findings indicate that levels of competence and perceptions of skills impact teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

However, recent research suggests that low levels of competence do not always lead to negative attitudes. Raguindin et al. (2020), in a survey of Filipino and Thai teachers, found that despite lacking competencies to implement inclusive education, teachers were still working towards the goals of inclusive education. They concluded that inclusive policies create a plan, but teachers are at the frontline of implementing inclusive education and need to be supported accordingly. Teacher positivity in the face of challenges was echoed by Kantavong (2018), who investigated inclusive education practices in Northeastern Thailand through surveys and focus groups with school administrators, teachers and parents of LDN. Kantavong found that teachers could still manage inclusive classrooms because of their compassion and sense of duty towards all learners despite a lack of knowledge, training, resources and support. There was also a clear desire for teachers to obtain further training, which highlights the important role that attitudes towards inclusive education play in its implementation. Sukbunpant et al. (2013) recommended that in-service training be provided for teachers to continue developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes towards inclusive education.

Countries have introduced different inclusive education policies reflecting their own legal and curriculum frameworks. This has led to different outcomes in understanding and implementing inclusive education (Miesera et al., 2021). For example, in Hong Kong it is optional for schools to join the inclusive education movement (Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013), while in Germany, inclusive education only focuses on a small range of needs without the concept of inclusive education applying for all learners (Miesera et al., 2021). While differences between countries' attitudes and beliefs regarding inclusive education are significant, they can be expected due to the varying understanding and interpretations of inclusive education around the world.

Despite the challenges of determining the most effective inclusive teaching methods for classrooms, particular methods have become commonplace. One common method to accommodate all learners is differentiation. Differentiation creates environments where all learners can succeed by having different levels of expectations for tasks and units to meet the varying learning profiles (Lawrence-Brown, 2004). Following their survey of 34 Hong Kong primary school teachers on meeting the personal and academic classroom needs of LDN, Yuen et

al. (2005) reported that differentiation involves adapting subject content, teaching strategies, grouping methods and teaching resources to meet the needs of all learners in a classroom, not just LDN. Interestingly, Yuen et al. found that teachers working in Hong Kong did not make adaptations to meet the specific needs of different learners in their classrooms and relied on other learners to provide peer assistance. It was unclear whether this was due to outside pressure on teachers to cover the set syllabus and treat all learners equally, or the teachers' lack of knowledge and skills to adapt their lessons. Also, Yuen et al. did not specify whether participants worked at schools implementing inclusive education as it used the term 'mainstream classes'.

Dema et al. (2022) explored the perceptions of 185 teachers in Bhutan towards differentiation. They found that most teachers had positive attitudes towards differentiation, although special education teachers tended to hold more positive attitudes than general education teachers. Furthermore, they found teachers who had completed PD on differentiation held more positive attitudes towards it. However, despite the positive attitudes, most teachers still perceived differentiation as challenging and requiring a lot of time for planning and implementation, which they attributed to their lack of knowledge and skills. This could indicate a need for further training in strategies that support inclusive education in the classroom.

2.4 Stressors and Challenges Experienced by Teachers Implementing Inclusive Education

Teachers experience a wide range of challenges in implementing inclusive education, including the socio-cultural context, personal beliefs, financial resources, personnel support and teachers' perceptions of their own lack of knowledge and training. Stressors and challenges are reported among teachers of varying years of experience and training (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). They are also consistently reported across international contexts, demonstrating their significant influence on teachers implementing inclusive education (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Goldan & Schwab, 2020; Jackson, 2023; Tungaraza, 2014; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014).

The socio-cultural context and personal beliefs create barriers and tensions in implementing inclusive education. In some countries, societal views make it difficult for families to accept that their children have diverse needs (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015; Goldan & Schwab, 2020). For example, in Thailand, due to strong Buddhist beliefs, many parents do not address challenges observed in their children as it is often considered caused by bad karma from a previous life (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). This is accompanied by a general lack of parental understanding regarding child development. Many parents believe if their child can talk, walk

and play without issues, their child is developing typically (Saihong, 2010). Jackson (2023) discussed the social stigma of diverse needs in the UAE and the clash of individualisation in inclusive education with the collectivist culture of that country. These socio-cultural contexts can significantly impact individual teachers' personal views and expectations and to what extent they are willing to adapt to meet the needs of all learners (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016).

Inadequate financial resources also act to constrain the implementation of inclusive education. Tungaraza (2014) examined inclusive education practices in Tanzania. Tungaraza found that many teachers reported a lack of teaching and learning materials for LDN. They concluded that extra funds were required to guarantee effective education for all learners. Studies in the UAE and Thailand also reported a lack of funding to support the implementation of inclusive education (Jackson, 2023; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). The lack of funding creates challenges in providing personnel support, the availability of educational resources, and the opportunity for training and development for teachers.

One impact of inadequate funding is issues with personnel support. Aktan (2021) described the extra responsibility placed on teachers when including LDN, and the lack of expert support teachers and learners receive. Tiwari et al. (2015) highlighted high teacher-student ratios as a significant concern, particularly when combined with a lack of TA or other personnel support. This impacts all learners, not just LDN, as teachers have less time and attention for all students. It may also impact teachers' well-being as they manage the additional responsibility. This highlights the need for more support from administration, specialists and other personnel to improve the quality of inclusive education (Cooc, 2019; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016; Raguindin et al., 2020; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014).

Lack of knowledge and training are among the most frequently mentioned challenges to the effective implementation of inclusive education. In several international studies, teachers have reported lacking the confidence and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of all learners and that they require more training and development in inclusive education (Dema et al., 2022; Hosshan et al., 2020; Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016; Poon-McBrayer & Wong, 2013; Raguindin et al., 2020; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Tiwari et al. (2015) interviewed 15 teachers in Delhi, India and found that teachers' overall knowledge of inclusive policies was limited, and only a few teachers viewed inclusive education as a favourable option to teach LDN. Cooc (2019) speculated that teachers' need for more knowledge and training is because policy changes have

outpaced pre- and in-service training. Cooc also reported a lack of research identifying which teachers perceive a need for more training, and what types of PD are needed. Leung and Mak (2010) reported that teachers in their study identified developing their understanding of specific disorders and curriculum design for inclusive education as important areas for further training. Further understanding of the most needed types of training and PD is important given teachers' key role, and simply increasing teachers' knowledge about inclusive legislation and policy will not address specific concerns or the perceived stress of implementing an inclusive classroom (Forlin et al., 2011).

Parents have also raised concerns about a lack of teachers' knowledge and skills to teach in inclusive classrooms, further increasing stress for teachers. Aktan (2021) reported that parents are concerned about teachers' lack of knowledge about inclusive education and how LDN may affect typically developing children in the same classroom. Parents in the study were unsure teachers had the knowledge and skills to effectively navigate multiple needs within a classroom and ensure that, while some LDN may receive more attention, other learners' education was not neglected.

2.4.1 Need for Further Training

A lack of knowledge and training are frequently mentioned challenges to implementing inclusive education and there are calls for more training for pre- and in-service teachers in inclusive education. Hosshan et al. (2020) reported that most teachers in Southeast Asia receive no formal training in teaching LDN. Kantavong (2018) also reported that there is no established system of specialised training in the Asian region. Leung and Mak (2010) reported that 56.9% of their participants said they needed more training in inclusive education to do their job effectively. Leung and Mak concluded that, in Hong Kong, there was a lack of understanding among principals and teachers about inclusive education combined with a lack of effective training.

Effective ITE and in-service PD can positively impact teachers' attitudes, which are critical to successful inclusive education. Research has found a strong relationship between training in inclusive education, along with experience working with LDN, and the use of more adaptive teaching practices (Kuyini & Desai, 2008). Avramidis et al. (2019) found that better-trained inclusive education teachers had higher efficacy in adopting inclusive practices and collaborating with parents and other professionals. This supports the benefits of inclusive education training for teachers. Other studies have also found that including TAs in training and

exposing them to LDN positively impacts attitudes towards inclusion (Hosshan et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2006).

Despite the calls for more teacher training, the identified impacts of ITE in inclusive education are mixed, with multiple factors impacting its effectiveness. For example, Miesera et al. (2021) found that not all ITE programmes improve attitudes towards inclusive education and that participating in inclusive education training does not necessarily make teachers more prepared to implement it. Miesera et al. reported that teachers are not always committed to actively incorporating inclusive practices, despite their positive attitudes and training. Some research suggests that training received during ITE may only marginally prepare teachers and, in some cases, may have a negative impact. Forlin and Chambers (2011) evaluated 67 pre-service teachers' perceptions on their preparedness for inclusive education. They found that completing a 39-hour ITE course involving engaging with people with diverse needs through social experiences to support them to access the community did not result in increasing positive attitudes for participants. In fact, anticipated levels of stress increased following the course, possibly due to direct exposure to the challenges people with diverse needs face. Leung and Mak (2010) also noted challenges for many in-service teachers who may be unable to participate in training because of heavy workloads or other factors.

One reason for the mixed impacts of inclusive education training programmes is likely to be the type of content and whether it is transferable to specific educational contexts. Both Sukbunpant et al. (2013) and Tungaraza (2014) reported negative opinions from teachers who had participated in training programmes. Participants in the study by Sukbunpant et al. said the training they had participated in was too theoretical and not practical enough. Additionally, participants in the study by Tungaraza reported that they learnt very little in their week-long seminar, stating that methodology had not been taught and, therefore, the information they received had little value for their classroom practice. Kivirand et al. (2022) proposed that training content should be more focused on supporting all learners in the inclusive classroom, not just differentiating teaching for LDN. At the same time, Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014) suggested that practical experience in inclusive classrooms may be the best method to prepare teachers. This is supported in part by Leyser et al. (2011), who reported that ITE enhanced self-efficacy in relation to inclusive education.

2.4.2 Teacher Aides (TAs)

TAs have become commonplace in inclusive schools as these schools attempt to meet the needs of LDN (Howard & Ford, 2007). However, the qualifications and experience required to become a TA are raised in the literature. For example, in New Zealand, there is no pre-requisite of study or education to become a TA, only a satisfactory police check, although there are some courses offered by tertiary institutes (McIntyre, 2013; Rutherford, 2012). TAs are employed to help meet the needs of all learners including LDN and are considered by many to play a vital role as classroom-based supports. They provide direct and indirect support to learners under the supervision of teachers, special education teachers and other school management. Their duties vary greatly but can include preparing materials, supervising academic and non-academic activities, conducting assessments, implementing behavioural interventions, personal care, tutoring, adapting materials and providing direct instruction (Howard & Ford, 2007).

Despite TAs' positive contributions to inclusive education, many issues regarding their roles are raised in the literature. According to French and Pickett (1997), education is one of the few professions where a clear distinction is not made between the roles of professionals and those of less qualified assistants such as TAs. This leads to lines of responsibility frequently being blurred, with TAs often being the primary service providers for LDN. MacArthur and Rutherford (2016) argued that assigning TAs to work with LDN, instead of qualified teachers, is an injustice that would not be accepted for other learners.

TAs have reported challenges such as a lack of role clarity, insufficient training, and a lack of collaborative planning time with special education professionals and general teachers (Tarry & Cox, 2014). Giangreco et al. (2001) called for more role clarity and training for TAs after TAs reported their feelings of a lack of respect and acknowledgement for their work. The lack of training reported by TAs is important as they often spend the most time with learners with the highest needs, despite usually being the least qualified (Giangreco, 2013). A lack of training can also lead to issues arising from learners having an over-dependence on TAs, as the TAs can be unaware of the detrimental effects of their constant close proximity and how to balance this effectively (Giangreco, 2013). Over-dependence occurs when LDN become dependent on their TAs because of the excessive support provided and time spent together. This can cause problems when the TA is then removed or absent and the learner's capabilities are impacted. Excessive proximity may also cause other effects such as social separation, interference in relationships

with classmates, stigmatisation and a loss of LDN's personal control (Giangreco, 2013). Giangreco et al. (2005) added decreased levels of teacher involvement and delays in changes needed by schools to become more inclusive, as other concerns related to TAs.

Howard and Ford (2007) reported similar findings to Giangreco et al. (2005), that despite TAs having limited training and supervision, they often spent the most time with learners with the highest needs and understood them best. Howard and Ford also reported some challenges in the relationships between TAs and teachers when implementing inclusive education. In their study of 14 TAs working in Australia, Howard and Ford reported that most TA participants expressed frustrations regarding their relationships with teachers. These frustrations appeared to arise from the different professional statuses, and the differing expectations of learner abilities and how to support them. Some participants expressed frustrations with having a lack of knowledge on supporting learners and receiving little to no support from teachers, which negatively impacted them and the learners they supported. However, some participants stated that the relationships were generally more positive when a sense of camaraderie was present, with all staff valued and working as a team. Howard and Ford recommended further investigation into the links between TAs' job roles and the instructional efficacy of teachers.

The above studies (Giangreco et al., 2005; Howard & Ford, 2007) highlight the need for schools to offer PD to teachers and all staff interacting with LDN. The studies also suggest that relationships between all stakeholders are vital to the effective implementation of inclusive education and need to be considered to ensure that the best support is provided for all learners. This involves, in particular, ensuring effective working relationships between teachers, special educators, TAs, and school management (Giangreco et al., 2001). These relationships can be improved through training, although it is unclear how such training can be provided in a cost-effective way (Morgan et al., 2003).

2.5 Inclusive Education Across International Contexts

Inclusive education involves an extra dimension when being considered in international education contexts. As countries vary in their general education systems, they also differ in inclusive education policies and legislation, what they consider to be diverse needs and how to categorise them. Differences in education systems vary even between countries that may, at first glance, appear very similar. Schwab et al. (2017) compared student teachers' self-efficacy towards inclusive education in Germany and Austria. They reported that initially, the two

countries' policies, decisions and recommendations for inclusive education seemed very similar. However, they claimed that Austria had promoted and implemented inclusive education nationwide more systematically in recent years than Germany. They also concluded that teachers' self-efficacy regarding inclusive education was higher in Austria. Another significant difference between the two countries is that in Austria, parents decide where LDN will be educated. In contrast, parents are involved in the process in Germany, but the school board has the final say. Interestingly, Schwab et al. reported that in Austria, teacher training qualifications are equivalent to a bachelor's degree, while in Germany, teachers need a master's level qualification. Schwab et al. stated that country, length of study programme, study interest, prior experience, contact with people with diverse needs and motivation all correlated with participants' self-efficacy for inclusive education.

According to International Schools Collaborative (2020), inclusive education is one of the biggest challenges international schools face when balancing academic rigour with equity of access to the curriculum for LDN. Raguindin et al. (2020) reported that schools in developing countries face further difficulties when implementing inclusive education, and learners in these countries often have even less access to equitable and quality education. However, many developing countries still attempt to implement inclusive education through legislation and policy changes despite facing the same, or even greater, restrictions on budgets, knowledge and insufficient staff training (Raguindin, 2020).

2.5.1 Personal and Professional Adaptations

When implementing inclusive education in international contexts, teachers face additional challenges to teaching in their home country. These challenges include different school systems, unfamiliar cultural values and a need to adapt personally and professionally to the new environment. As more teachers move abroad to teach, literature is emerging on their experiences and how they adapt to new cultures; however, this literature is still very limited. Bailey (2015) found that teachers' moves abroad tended to signify a sense of idealism and adventure. Sahling and De Carvalho (2021) suggested that once teachers had moved, they were challenged to adapt to new cultural and professional settings. New school settings are likely to include different curricula, colleagues, leadership structures, and levels of resources, along with varying learning and teaching expectations. Sahling and De Carvalho added that differing school settings are compounded by potential differences with the teachers' home country's culture,

including differing socioeconomic conditions and cultural values. Differing cultural values may affect teachers' receptiveness to developing inclusive education and it is important, therefore, to understand the between- and within-country challenges (Miesera et al., 2021). For example, Sukmak and Sangsuk (2018) noted that, although children with diverse needs are now generally accepted as full members of Thai society, they can still be stigmatised because, in the past, children with diverse needs were often considered as having no future and, as a result, many parents kept them at home. However, as progress has been made in raising awareness about diverse needs in Thailand, families are becoming more accepting of them, and more LDN are being given the opportunity to attend school. Cultural views such as this take time to change, however, and teachers new to countries may find different perspectives difficult to comprehend.

Teachers' expectations and past experiences of what school is may be challenged when moving to a new country, and this can lead to tensions. This was reported in an autoethnographic study by Sahling and De Carvalho (2021). Through journaling their experiences of transitioning from teaching in England to teaching in Mexico, Sahling and De Carvalho described changes in teacher identity within a different sociocultural school context. Sahling and De Carvalho identified three reflections through the journal that could be useful for other teachers' PD when moving abroad. These reflections were: 'seeing yourself as a learner', 'seeing yourself as a teacher in a new context' and 'seeing your values through different lenses'. Experiences in different school contexts can consequently affect teachers' identity and understanding of self-efficacy, which are influenced by extrinsic factors such as social contexts, cultural differences, delivery modes and education systems (Raguindin et al., 2020; Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021). Intrinsic factors such as a teacher's race, gender, class, education and experiences may also affect how they perceive and understand the new culture in which they are immersed (Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021).

When faced with learners in diverse cultural contexts, the extent to which teachers adapt their professional practice should be considered (Burke, 2017). Bailey (2015) reported that some expatriate teachers working in Malaysia believed their Western teaching approaches were superior to local ones. This was despite learners viewing the international and local approaches as complementary and reporting benefits of both. The idea of viewing Western approaches as superior was raised by Raguindin et al. (2020), who expressed concerns regarding the Western conception of inclusive education being seen as definitive globally. They highlighted that

teachers' understanding of and practices in different contexts needed to be understood to further develop inclusive education globally. Holmes (2004) asserted that divergent approaches to education should be seen as differences rather than deficits, and that Western biases should be carefully considered.

Many teachers struggle to adapt personally to the new culture they find themselves in, which can be exacerbated when teachers only spend time with fellow expatriates and do not develop their intercultural awareness (Budrow, 2021). This was echoed by Savva (2013), who examined North American teachers' experiences working in international schools abroad. Savva reported that locals sometimes viewed expatriate teachers as long-term tourists who never immerse themselves in the local culture. This is sometimes due to expatriate teachers insulating themselves while working abroad and the fact that international schools offer a parallel community within which teachers can remain. This is important because teachers who struggle to adapt to different cultural situations may miss opportunities to develop their skills (Budrow, 2021).

2.5.2 Marketisation of Schools

A change facing many countries is the marketisation of education and schools. An increasing number of learners attend private and international schools, at home and abroad, as parents look for English-speaking international schooling for their children (Bailey, 2015; Bright, 2022). In countries with low socioeconomic status, the globalisation of education has become commonplace for local elites, with for-profit schools frequently designed for the local market (Bunnell et al., 2016; Burke, 2017). Parents of learners attending these schools are often seen as ‘customers’ and, as such, may influence decisions made about the school (Agustian, 2021).

The increase in international and for-profit schools has contributed to the marketisation of education. It has also positioned education as a private good rather than a public good, consequently affecting traditional understanding of education and its policy (Selvaraj, 2015). This often shocks teachers when they realise, as one Canadian teacher working in Sweden reported, the importance of the school as a business, and how this can affect decision-making in the school (Budrow, 2021). Resources may be diverted to recruitment and marketing, with value for money used to determine educational practices rather than focusing on a commitment to free and universal education that promotes social justice (Matthews & Sidhu, 2005).

The challenges associated with the marketisation of schools impact not only international and private schools but also inclusive schools that face competition for funding. Schools often prioritise assuring parents of high academic standards and that the behaviour of other learners will not affect their child's behaviour and learning (Kearney & Kane, 2006). Vorapanya and Dunlap (2014), who interviewed school leaders on the practices and challenges of inclusive education in Thailand found that some school leaders believed that school ranking systems discouraged schools from implementing inclusive education, as schools were concerned it could damage their reputation and that of the school's leaders.

2.6 Inclusive Education in the Aotearoa New Zealand Context

New Zealand has a long history of implementing inclusive education and many consider it well embedded in policy and practice. However, implementing inclusive education in New Zealand has not been without its issues. Special Education 2000 was an inclusive policy initiative introduced in the late 1990s that aimed to achieve a world-class inclusive education system providing equal quality learning opportunities for all learners (Millar & Morton, 2007). However, Wills (2006) examined the implementation of Special Education 2000 and found that the bureaucratic demands and costs affected some principals' support for it, despite the clarity of the philosophy behind the policy. Wills also found that some parents were put off schools by seeing LDN, which affected enrolments and funding. This places schools in a conflicting situation, promoting inclusive education while maintaining enrolments and funding.

Although New Zealand has a long history of implementing inclusive education, families of LDN have experienced challenges, specifically with teachers' knowledge and skills. McIntyre (2013) interviewed nine families regarding their experiences of inclusive education in New Zealand. All nine families responded negatively regarding teachers' skills to teach LDN in inclusive classrooms. However, these families had moved their children from regular to special schools, so these results do not represent the experiences of all families' of LDN. McIntyre concluded that LDN should be enrolled in regular schools so teachers can learn to adapt better to the needs of all learners. However, this raises questions about the responsibility to develop teachers' capacity to implement inclusive education. It is not the learners' responsibility to help teachers gain knowledge and skills, and could place learners in a potentially unsuitable environment. It is the responsibility of school leadership to ensure that staff already working in

schools receive appropriate PD to ensure they have the necessary skills and that these skills continue to be developed to support all learners effectively.

There is debate about the most effective way to prepare teachers for inclusive education in schools and ITE programmes in New Zealand have presented different approaches. For example, Massey University has trialled requiring all staff, from all courses and papers, to be responsible for encouraging inclusive education practices rather than leaving it to specialist teachers in specified inclusive education courses (O'Neill et al., 2009). This highlights attempts to ensure inclusive policies and actions are incorporated throughout all schools and training programmes, and that all ITE participants have some experience and knowledge of inclusive education. However, it still cannot be assumed that all New Zealand-trained teachers have extensive training and knowledge of inclusive education, although they will likely have some experience of it through their own schooling, ITE, or working in New Zealand schools. Although the implementation of inclusive education in New Zealand faces many of the same barriers as in other countries, it remains a focus within New Zealand's education system, demonstrated in its presence in the guiding principles of the current New Zealand Curriculum, which focuses on recognising and affirming the learning needs of all, regardless of ability (Ministry of Education, 2007).

2.7 Research Gap

Differences in people's interpretation and understanding of inclusive education do exist, with definitions, practices and policies varying between individuals, schools and countries. Despite differing interpretations, teachers are consistently identified as essential to successful inclusive education. However, teachers face challenges and tensions in implementing inclusive education, influenced by numerous factors. These challenges are often compounded and added to when working in international contexts.

As inclusive education means different things to different people, implementing it is not a simple process. Implementation is further complicated by social and cultural contexts that influence peoples' views on education and inclusion. Most research on inclusive education in international contexts focuses on single countries, regions or schools, highlighting the need for research to understand inclusive education practices globally (Lane, 2020). The continued globalisation and marketisation of international education means increasing numbers of teachers face the complex social, cultural and political issues of implementing inclusive education (Lane

& Jones, 2016). Little research exists on how teachers within international contexts view their professional role and how it differs in different school and country contexts. To help prepare teachers for the challenges they may face when moving abroad to teach, and to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of inclusive education globally, it is important to hear the voices of those who have already been through or are currently experiencing a move to international teaching.

New Zealand has long placed value and importance on inclusive education through its inclusion in policies and training (Ministry of Education, 2007). When New Zealand-trained teachers move abroad to work internationally, however, they face new challenges and tensions regarding how inclusive education is interpreted and implemented. These challenges may be further compounded when moving to countries that interpret inclusive education differently or do not value it as highly.

This study heard the voices of six teachers who had moved from teaching in New Zealand to teaching abroad, on their perceptions and experiences of inclusive education. The study aimed to explore the strengths, challenges and tensions those teachers experienced when implementing inclusive education in an international context. To gain a deep understanding of the teachers' perceptions and experiences, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors influence teachers' perceptions and experiences implementing inclusive education in international contexts?
2. What tensions are evident as teachers implement inclusive education in international contexts?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research was to gain an understanding of New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in international contexts. The following chapter describes the processes involved in this study to explore this topic. The chapter outlines the researcher's positioning, the research design, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis, and the ethical considerations for the study.

3.2 Methodology

A qualitative research approach was selected for this study to allow for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Qualitative research prioritises the perspectives and experiences of participants as adding richness and authenticity to the findings. Qualitative research views the participants as people, not objects, and provides an opportunity to gain an authentic understanding of how others perceive their experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Tuli, 2010). Furthermore, qualitative research designs focus on exploring and describing people and their environments to give a holistic view of the research topic (Laws & McLeod, 2004; Orb et al., 2001). When using a qualitative approach, there are some important considerations to be kept in mind. As with any approach, the choice of methodology, data collection and analysis methods needs to be justified to ensure the credibility of the research (Tuli, 2010). These considerations and choices are discussed in this chapter.

3.2.1 Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives

Research methodology is guided by the researcher's perspective on ontology, the nature of reality; epistemology, the theory of knowledge informing the research; and methodology, how knowledge is acquired (Tuli, 2010). A lot of qualitative research adopts an interpretivist-constructivist perspective, which sees the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced through interactions between people and their social systems. The current study is approached through an interpretivist perspective, which aims to understand a specific phenomenon rather than generalise it. Ferguson (1993) described interpretivism as a belief that facts are not objective; instead, they are social constructions of humans. Therefore, "social science research is, unavoidably, the interpretation of other people's interpretations" (Ferguson, 1993, p. 36). As this

study focuses on the participants' perceptions and interpretations of their experiences, an interpretivist perspective is well-suited. Each participant brings their unique background and experiences, and the design is intended to capture insight into their current teaching practice in an international context.

3.3 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research it is vital that the researcher understands their role, acknowledges potential biases and clearly conveys their insights to the reader to ensure clarity around analysis and interpretations. I have been a teacher in an international context for approximately nine years and, as a result, I have first-hand experiences with some of the political, social and cultural challenges that teachers can face in implementing inclusive education in an international context. I am also a supporter and advocate for inclusive education. I understand that not everyone shares the same views that I have regarding inclusive education. Therefore, I limited the expression of my personal views or opinions in my conversations with participants in order to minimise the risk of influencing their responses regarding inclusive education. However, the fact that I was studying inclusive education was known to the participants, likely creating assumptions about my views on the topic. I also carefully reviewed my interview questions to ensure none were seen to be leading questions. It was important to influence participants as little as possible to ensure that the data collected accurately represented their experiences. However, my personal experience also gave me insight and connection with the participants during the interviews, which helped inform my data analysis.

I recognised that I, as a researcher, played an important and influential role in the qualitative research process, and understanding that role is a crucial step in the process. I also recognised that my experiences and worldviews impacted my research design, analysis, and reporting. Therefore, I practised reflexivity throughout the research process to acknowledge how my experiences and beliefs may influence the research. I discussed biases or ethical dilemmas with my research supervisors, who also questioned my choices and ensured I viewed situations from all perspectives. This was important as building a trusting relationship between the researcher and participants leads to deeper insight and adds richness and depth (Tuli, 2010). I acknowledge I brought my own perspectives and this impacted the types of questions asked, how questions were asked and how they were analysed (Ferguson, 1993). However, my perspectives also helped me connect with the participants, and during the analysis, my experiences supported

my further understanding of the participants' experiences. Any influence my perspectives or biases may have had was evaluated to minimise any unfounded researcher influence.

3.4 The Research Design

A case study design was selected for this study because it allowed for in-depth exploration and description of phenomena (Alpi & Evans, 2019; Laws & McLeod, 2004). Case study design is often chosen due to its ability to examine the contextual conditions surrounding a case, given the boundary between case and context may be blurred because the real world does not fall into clear-cut categories (Yin, 2012). The present study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of New Zealand-trained teachers regarding inclusive education in international contexts. The context in which the participants work was an essential part of the study. For these reasons, a case study was the most appropriate method for this research.

Case studies have a bounded case or cases, such as an individual, organisation, behavioural condition, event or other phenomenon (Yin, 2012). In this study, the bounded cases were New Zealand-trained teachers who worked in international contexts. There can be single or multiple cases. Multiple cases are usually more difficult but provide greater confidence in their findings and can help prevent observer bias (Meyer, 2001; Yin, 2012). Yin (2012) further described how multiple cases may be chosen to predict similar or contrasting results. Multiple cases of participants working in different international contexts were used for this study. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and potential case comparisons.

This study is a descriptive and exploratory case study as it sought to provide detailed descriptions of cases focused on a topic that had not yet been widely explored. A descriptive case study aims to provide a detailed account of the given case or cases by interpreting data to present unknown information to the reader (Laws & McLeod, 2004; Yılmaz & Yeganeh, 2021). Descriptive case studies may also present situations rarely encountered or not usually accessed by researchers (Yin, 2012). An exploratory case study aims to gain insight into a phenomenon rather than details of a specific site. It also describes the phenomenon being studied within its context and seeks to define a study's questions in order to determine the viability of the research methods (Laws & McLeod, 2004). The current study did not seek to identify any explanatory relationships but to provide detailed descriptions within the specific contexts of the cases.

Although case studies can include a range of data collection methods, interviews are considered one of the most important data sources (Alpi & Evans, 2019). The interview process takes a long time (Seidman, 2019); however, interviews provide insight into participants' thoughts, feelings and views (Guest et al., 2017). The present study utilised interviews as the data collection method. This allowed participants to describe their experiences and perceptions in detail and without limits.

There are some concerns with case studies to be acknowledged and addressed. These concerns include a lack of trust in the credibility of procedures, the presumption that qualitative data is based on less robust measures and the perceived inability to generalise findings to a broader level (Yin, 2012). These concerns can be partly overcome through systematic and careful research procedures, as well as acknowledging that the primary purpose of case study research is to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon rather than to produce generalisable results. Another issue with case studies is the flexibility and lack of guidelines that may challenge some novice researchers. As this is a master's study, I had two knowledgeable and experienced research supervisors who provided guidance and expertise throughout the study, thus helping me to overcome some of the challenges for a novice researcher.

In order for the participants' experiences to be fully heard and understood, flexible and adaptable research methodology was needed. Therefore, a case study methodology was deemed as the most appropriate. The study is a multiple-case study that was both exploratory and descriptive.

3.5 The Research Sample

For this study, participants were recruited through the purposive sampling strategies of convenience and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research, particularly when the study aims to gain insights into a phenomenon to maximise understanding (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who will provide rich and relevant information on the studied phenomenon (Dema et al., 2022; Punch & Oancea, 2014). Convenience sampling was used in this study, which involved choosing individuals who were conveniently accessible and willing to participate (Kitto et al., 2008). Contacts of both my research supervisors and I were utilised to recruit participants who fit the criteria, as well as by using word of mouth. Snowball sampling was used to strengthen the sampling procedure. This method is widely recognised in qualitative research (Noy, 2008) and

involves current participants inviting others to join the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). As participants were recruited for this study, they were asked to invite other participants who met the criteria. One participant invited another participant from the same school.

Qualitative research often focuses on small sample sizes (Coyne, 1997). In this study, six participants were interviewed to allow for in-depth descriptions of each participant's experiences, while capturing different perspectives. The criteria for participants were that they had completed ITE in New Zealand and had, at the time of the study, taught in an international education context. They also must have had some experience or understanding of implementing inclusive education in their international context, although there were no criteria about the type of educational institution they worked in or how long they had worked in their context. All individuals who met the criteria were invited to join the study. Initially, eight participants responded and agreed to be interviewed. However, two subsequently withdrew due to other commitments. The participants' general information is provided in Table 1.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were selected as the method to gather data. Semi-structured interviews provide more detail and insight into a participant's thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions than other data collection methods (Agustian, 2021; Guest et al., 2017). The current study utilised the Punch and Oancea (2014) checklist to conduct successful interviews. This included preparing for the interview, establishing rapport at the beginning of the interview, using effective communication and listening skills, asking questions and concluding the interview appropriately. After a request from one participant, a simplified overview (Appendix A) of the topics likely to be covered was shared with all the participants before the interview to help them feel more prepared.

Rapport was built at the beginning of the interviews. I introduced myself and allowed the participants to introduce themselves. I also provided a short explanation of the study and its aims and gave the participants an opportunity to ask any initial questions they had. These steps encouraged participants to feel comfortable sharing their experiences with me openly. Before the interviews, participants were asked whether they would like pseudonyms to be used in data analysis and the final report. This was rechecked at the end of the interviews. One participant

Table 1

Table of Participants' Information

Name	Current country	Current role	Years in current context	Other international experience	Years worked in NZ
Amy (she/her)	Indonesia	EAL coach Grades 1-3	2nd year	Teacher in Myanmar and England	10 years
Beth (she/her)	England	Early years phase lead, Nursery and Reception teacher	2nd year	Saudi Arabia (as a nanny)	8 years
Casey (he/him)	Germany	Primary substitute teacher	1st year	High school English teacher for a private company in Germany	1.5 years teaching, 2 years as a TA
Milly (she/her)	United Arab Emirates	Grade 2 teacher	2nd year	N/A	2 years
Eve Smith (she/her)	United Arab Emirates	Grade 1 teacher	1st year	N/A	5 years
Sam (he/him)	Thailand	Y6 teacher, primary maths leader	5th year	2 other schools in Thailand	N/A

changed to requesting a pseudonym after the information they had shared.

Informed by the literature review and the parameters of the project research questions, pre-selected key topics related to the literature review were prepared in advance, along with open-ended questions and potential prompts (Appendix B). Open-ended questioning encouraged participants to share their ideas and opinions, providing rich descriptions of their experiences and perceptions. There was flexibility in the questions and the order they were used during each interview, depending on how the participants responded. To ensure detailed and appropriate information was gained, I confirmed my understanding of the participants' interview responses and, where necessary, I asked for further information through probing questions. Ngozwana

(2018) highlighted the difficulty novice researchers face in determining when and how much to probe, emphasising the importance of practising interview skills prior to conducting the interviews. Accordingly, a pilot interview was conducted with a colleague to practice these skills and to assess how effective the questioning was. Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to converse with, rather than just question, participants. This helped them feel more relaxed and consequently share more information.

For this study, online rather than face-to-face interviews were chosen due to the geographical spread of participants. All interviews were recorded via Zoom, after receiving participants' consent, and took approximately one hour. Detailed field notes were maintained throughout the interview process and included as part of the audit trail to strengthen the study's credibility. This also helped me focus on what the participants were saying and prevent interruptions, as keywords were noted to follow up on later.

3.6.2 Transcribing the Interviews

On completion of the interviews, audio files were transcribed and emailed to each participant for verification. This allowed participants to add to, change or delete anything said. This was part of recommended member checks to improve the credibility and dependability of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). As this step required more of the participants' time, they were informed that it was entirely optional. Participants were also given a date before data analysis was to be completed to advise if they wished changes to be made to the transcripts. Following the member checks, no changes or removals were requested by the participants.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was analysed through thematic analysis following an inductive approach. Thematic analysis is a commonly used method in qualitative research to identify, analyse and interpret the meanings of data (Clark & Braun, 2017). It is particularly suitable for analysing interview data (Quintão et al., 2020), making it an appropriate strategy for this study. Thematic analysis aims to focus not only on answering the research questions, but also on creating meaning and gaining insight into what participants say.

Braun and Clarke (2006) identified six phases to follow during thematic analysis. Phase one requires the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data. This was done by reading the interview transcripts without assigning codes but noting any initial thoughts or insights. Phase

two involves generating the initial codes. Coding is the process of labelling pieces of data with codes composed of individual words or short phrases (Punch & Oancea, 2014). An inductive approach was used, where codes were identified from the study data, not from prior theoretical knowledge (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Initial coding was completed through the comments function on Microsoft Word, highlighting key words and ideas from the interview transcripts. These comments were then exported to Microsoft Excel for further analysis. Initial codes were arranged by participant and colour-coded to highlight similar ideas. This allowed for comparisons within and between the participants and to highlight common or unique words and ideas discussed.

After the initial codes were generated and grouped, themes were identified in line with phase three of Braun and Clarke's framework by collating, collapsing and synthesising the data. This phase was completed using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and the Freeform application to create mind maps for grouping data. Data was moved around until themes became apparent. Initial themes were identified based on the frequency and perceived importance that the participants discussed their experiences and perceptions. Themes that resonated with the literature, or diverged from it, also guided this process. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), to improve the study's trustworthiness, it is important to clearly outline how themes are developed to allow readers to assess methodological choices. Notes were kept throughout the process of thematic analysis, and the choices leading to these are reported in detail in this report. In phase four, the themes were reviewed and related to the research questions. Themes and interpretations were peer-reviewed by my research supervisors as another effective way to ensure credible results before reporting them (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). This was followed by naming and defining the themes in phase five, which was done in consultation with my research supervisors. The final phase in Braun and Clarke's process, phase six, involves writing the report, including quotes and extracts from the interview data, to answer the research questions. Quotes from the six interviews in the current study that corroborated or diverged from the key findings were selected.

During the report writing phase, Grammarly was used to support editing and proofreading. It identified grammatical and typing errors and suggested corrections. Grammarly also provided suggestions related to sentence structure, word choice and overall clarity. In some cases, the identified suggestions were acted upon.

3.8 Research Trustworthiness

In any research project, it is essential to ensure that the study is trustworthy (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This section discusses trustworthiness by considering credibility and confirmability. Transferability is often considered when determining trustworthiness but as this study does not aim to be transferable it is not discussed in detail. However, detailed descriptions of participants and their contexts are provided for readers to determine the applicability of the results to other individuals or contexts.

The credibility of this study was increased through peer debriefing and triangulation. Credibility refers to the degree of confidence that readers have in research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Peer debriefing involves someone familiar with the research or topic reviewing the research process and data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this study, my research supervisors acted as peer debriefers, asking questions about the research process and data. They challenged me to consider certain aspects from a different perspective, or things I may not have considered. Credibility was enhanced via triangulation of corroborating evidence (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation was achieved by interviewing participants from different schools and contexts. Triangulation can also help improve the confirmability of a study.

Confirmability, the degree of neutrality within the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), was improved through audit trails and researcher reflexivity. An audit trail accurately documents research decisions and activities, allowing others to analyse the methodological and analytical processes to confirm the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, a reflexive journal was kept throughout the research process. Regular meetings with supervisors offered an opportunity for reflexive thinking, and minutes of these meetings were kept as part of the audit trail.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an integral part of the research process to ensure that the highest ethical standards are maintained and all participants are protected. Ethical considerations for this study followed the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2017). Before commencing the research, the Massey University Ethics Committee screening questionnaire was completed, and this study was deemed low-risk (ethics notification number- 4000028091, Appendix C).

Through this process, the concepts of respect for persons, avoidance of harm, informed and voluntary consent, respect for privacy and confidentiality, beneficence and social and cultural sensitivity were carefully considered.

Throughout the sampling process, participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and no pressure was applied. Informed and voluntary consent was gained before the interviews via an information and consent form sent to participants before interviews were arranged (see Appendix D and Appendix E). Information was provided for participants to understand the voluntary nature of their involvement, what participation involved and what would be done with their data. Participants' rights were discussed before each interview, and the participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions. Some interviews were transcribed by an external transcriber. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving any data (Appendix F). This step was necessary as the names and locations of participants' work contexts were discussed in some of the interviews.

It is important for researchers to maintain social and cultural sensitivity throughout the research process. Due to the focus on New Zealand-trained teachers, Māori concepts and values were respected as they are integral to New Zealand's identity. For example, participants were given the opportunity to decide if they would like pseudonyms or their real names used in the data and final report. This choice aligns with rangatiratanga, or one's ability to make their own decisions. Participants were also consulted regarding their preferences for pronouns to be used in the final report. Respectful language regarding other countries and cultures was also used. I gained as much knowledge as possible on the countries and cultures involved before commencing the interviews, with a view to ensure sensitivity towards the cultural groups discussed in the study. Discussing diverse needs can be a particularly sensitive topic in some countries. Accordingly, the identity of participants, schools and any individuals discussed was protected.

3.10 Conclusion

This research aimed to understand New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive education in international contexts. Six teachers who met the criteria were interviewed to share their experiences in New Zealand and in a different international context. A qualitative methodology allowed for in-depth understanding, incorporating an interpretive perspective and an exploratory and descriptive case study design. This approach

allowed participants to openly describe their experiences, providing valuable information on the perceptions and experiences of these teachers and their implementation of inclusive education in international contexts.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings of six interviews that explored the perceptions and experiences of teachers implementing inclusive education in international contexts. The analysis identified three key areas that influenced the implementation of inclusive education: structural and systemic factors, interpersonal factors and intrapersonal factors. Structural and systemic factors identified in the study included the influence of culture, the country and the school's policies and funding, the leadership's perspective of inclusive education and the school's prioritisation of inclusive education. Interpersonal factors in the study refer to the interactions, relationships and communication between teachers, learners and families. The interpersonal factors included the influence of learners and their families in the classroom or school and teachers' relationships with learners and families. Intrapersonal factors refer to the personal beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and experiences that shape teachers' implementation of inclusive education. Intrapersonal factors in this study included the participants' prior experiences, attitudes and biases towards inclusive education, professional development (PD) and ongoing learning, teachers' knowledge and the workload involved in implementing inclusive education. The analysis indicated that teachers' personal experiences and perceptions create professional tensions when implementing inclusive education in their current international context.

The chapter reports the thematic data that emerged from the six participant interviews and is divided into six individual narratives, followed by a cross-case analysis. The chapter emphasises participants' voices to ensure their perceptions and experiences are described in their own words.

4.2 Amy

Amy was in her second year working as an English as an additional language (EAL) coach for grades 1-3 at an international school in Indonesia. Her school followed the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP). Prior to her role in Indonesia, Amy had taught in Myanmar for three years, with much of this being online due to COVID-19 and as a result of the military coup in that country. Before this, Amy had worked at a state school in England for four and a half years. Amy completed her teaching qualifications in New Zealand,

including a Bachelor of Education (2003) and an Early Years qualification (2008). She had taught in New Zealand for approximately ten years before moving overseas.

4.2.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Amy defined inclusive education as *"meeting the needs of each child…we want children, regardless of their needs, to be part* [of] *and* [able to] *access the class."* Amy believed that *"time and understanding"* were essential for successful inclusive education; *"taking the time to get to know them…and being understanding of where they're at."* Amy also saw benefits for all students through the development of social skills such as empathy and the opportunity for positive school experiences. She stated, *"I just think it is good for both that student and for all other students."*

4.2.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Amy recognised culture, leadership and the school's ability to prioritise inclusive education as key structural and systemic influences. Amy identified a lack of awareness and understanding of inclusive education due to people's fear of diverse needs, particularly in the Asian countries where she had worked; *"*[in] *Indonesia, as in many Asian countries, it's quite difficult for them to have a child who has some kind of additional needs."* These cultural factors influence the diagnosis process, creating challenges for families and professionals in identifying, diagnosing and accepting diverse needs. Amy described her experiences in Myanmar, where *"it was really difficult … to try and get any kind of specialists or tests done"* because of the perceptions and the lack of understanding of diverse needs.

Amy had varying experiences with leadership during her international teaching. She described her current context as *"quite inclusive"* with a *"quite hands-on...very supportive"* principal, who stepped in to support teachers and students when school processes took too long. Amy compared this to her experiences in Myanmar, where the attitude of leadership led to inclusive education being *"non-existent."*

Amy had experienced schools that had prioritised inclusive education and some that had not. Her current school prioritised inclusive education through constant improvements and reinvestment in the school, including plans for a more specialised inclusion unit. Leadership was proactive in identifying and supporting LDN. However, Amy noted areas for improvement, including speeding up the identification process and additional support for LDN and teachers

during the process, as this *"causes stress for the teachers"* when trying to support LDN before official supports were in place. Amy described a lack of specialisation and support within the school in Myanmar, where *"everything was left up to the homeroom teacher to support them."* These experiences were all vastly different from her experiences in England, where valuable and practical PD was provided, support staff were utilised and specialised equipment was used in classrooms to support learners.

4.2.3 Interpersonal Factors

Parents were the primary interpersonal influence noted by Amy. She reported having minimal contact with parents in her current role, but had observed and spoken with other staff about parents. Amy described parents as generally understanding of their child's needs and *"wanting to help their child."* Amy noted the typical wealth of families whose children attended international schools meant it was not difficult for families to fund additional costs for support such as TAs. Amy had experienced greater challenges with parents in New Zealand and Myanmar. She described experiences in New Zealand where parents had initially refused to have their child assessed and also said that in Myanmar, it was *"pretty impossible to get the parents to even consider it."*

4.2.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Amy described her experiences of inclusive education throughout her life, discussing her attitude toward ongoing learning, personal experiences of diverse needs within her family and her training and related experiences in New Zealand. Amy noted the influence of her professional experiences on her views of inclusive education and that new research and developments in education meant learning needed to be ongoing. Amy emphasised the importance of teachers participating in PD. She also talked about her brother, who was partially deaf and wore hearing aids. When asked if this had influenced her views of inclusive education, Amy said she *"probably didn't understand about his specific needs particularly."*

Amy expressed mixed feelings about her prior training and experiences in New Zealand, although she noted that she has taught internationally for almost 10 years. Amy stated that information about inclusive education had been presented *"in a very general kind of, not particularly useful, way."* Amy perceived there needed to be more information about inclusive education in initial teacher education (ITE). Such information would have better prepared her for

teaching in inclusive classrooms because specific information would have enabled her to identify diverse needs and implement practical tips. Despite this, when moving into international teaching, Amy felt she had substantial experience with procedures regarding inclusive education and had participated in some helpful PD while working in New Zealand.

4.2.5 Tensions

Analysis identified two areas of tension that Amy had experienced when implementing inclusive education in her current international context: enrolment policies and the identification processes. Although Amy highlighted that inclusive education was *"quite a big thing"* at her school, she also noted that *"the school does not take…children with severe needs."* While Amy did not identify a specific policy that stated this, she was aware of this normative practice. Amy explained the school's plans for an inclusion unit to meet a broader range of needs, but was unsure when this would happen.

Amy also described her tensions with the current identification process. She believed earlier intervention was needed in some cases, rather than waiting for the full identification and diagnosis process to be completed. The current process caused stress for teachers responsible for supporting learners while they waited for further support. Although Amy described a supportive culture within the school where other staff and the principal stepped in as needed, she observed that more could be done in the early stages. Amy explained that this was the main area where her school could improve. Despite the tensions and influences discussed above, Amy felt supported in her current context and that it aligned with her beliefs about inclusive education.

4.3 Beth

Beth was in her second year of working in England at a culturally diverse primary school spanning nursery to year 6, which predominantly served families with a low socio-economic status (SES). Beth served as the early years phase lead, while teaching part-time in the nursery (three to four-year-olds) and reception (four to five-year-olds) classes to support other teachers. Before this, Beth had taught in New Zealand for eight years, working while she studied for her diploma in early childhood teaching. Beth had converted her diploma to a bachelor's degree and completed a Master of Education. After working in England for two years, Beth had taken a break from teaching and spent five years working as a nanny in Saudi Arabia before returning to teach in England.

4.3.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Beth defined inclusive education as equitable learning opportunities for all; *"anyone and everyone gets equitable opportunities, no matter their ability, race, whatever."* For Beth, inclusive education was a broad term that not only included LDN, but also learners from different cultures or ethnicities, those with low SES backgrounds, those who had experienced trauma and those looked after by the state. Beth reported that her perspective on inclusive education was rooted in a children's rights lens based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), with the main benefit of inclusive education being that every child's experiences and contributions were valued and respected.

4.3.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Structural and systemic factors had influenced Beth's experiences in implementing inclusive education. These factors included specific policies and their effects on the level of government funding and its allocation, the perceived increase in needs and the corresponding support, school leadership's stance on inclusive education, and the school's ability to prioritise it. Beth observed that *"there has definitely been an increase nationally in the needs of children,"* putting additional pressure on the limited funds available and the systems that identify and support LDN. These increases had led the school to create new spaces, such as nappy changing areas and emotional regulation spaces, that they had not previously needed.

Beth highlighted the attitudes of governing bodies as an overarching influence on inclusive education, noting that when *"people in policy don't have an inclusive mindset, that it can have detrimental effects"* which directly impact policies and funding. Beth described how funding was often determined by officials, who may not have a positive attitude towards inclusive education or insight into where funding was most needed, creating a disconnect between policy and practice. For example, policies regarding LDN required that, in some instances, one-to-one support was necessary, yet the funding provided did not cover this cost. Beth described how these challenges made it difficult for the school to effectively implement inclusive education and support LDN to thrive.

Despite external constraints, Beth had experienced supportive leadership regarding the implementation of inclusive education. She appreciated that leaders had been transparent about their learning journeys regarding inclusive education, presenting an honest and reflective

example for the teachers. The current leadership of her school recognised areas of need in the school and provided PD to meet these needs, which they also participated in.

Supportive leadership enabled the school to focus on meeting the needs of all learners, primarily through support staff within the school. Beth described how, in England, all schools employed special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) who coordinated additional support for LDN. Beth spoke highly of her current school's SENCO and their work, stating, *"my SENCO is brilliant, will give me a load of ideas.*" However, a lack of funding made it difficult for the school to hire additional support staff. Insufficient funding also impacted the number of work hours available and the amount of training available. As a result, TAs were shared across students and classes to meet needs as best as possible.

4.3.3 Interpersonal Factors

Beth noted how relationships with families and their perspectives could impact the effectiveness of support approaches for learners. According to Beth, some families did not want to accept their child's diagnosis, making it difficult for the school to provide effective support to meet the child's needs. Beth expressed concern that the challenges in providing meaningful inclusive education meant it sometimes became tokenistic and *"it doesn't actually have a profound impact on the children.*" These challenges could be overcome by *"being really mindful of my relationships with them* [LDN] *and with their families, so I get to know that child really well so I can meet those specific needs."*

4.3.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Beth emphasised that teachers' attitudes, perspectives and personal biases were key intrapersonal factors influencing their implementation of inclusive education. Beth said that she had *"come across a couple of* [staff] *members that just don't have the right attitude and perspective,"* which impacted their ability to implement inclusive education. Beth attributed these attitudes and perspectives to a *"lack of education and understanding"* and believed that with further training, teachers could become more reflective practitioners with improved attitudes towards inclusive education.

4.3.5 Tensions

Beth described the main tension she had experienced in her international context was being unable to enact her beliefs in inclusive education. Beth said, "w*hile I have these beliefs and this understanding, I can't always enact that in practice,"* which was due to the challenges beyond her control. Beth had experienced significant tensions regarding cultural inclusion. While Beth had had positive experiences of cultural inclusion in New Zealand, in England she found cultural inclusion to be tokenistic; *"my understanding of inclusivity in New Zealand … it is so strong in embracing children's cultures in a meaningful way that's not tokenistic. And I've struggled with that here because it can be quite tokenistic."* Beth said she did her best to positively influence these factors in her school, but viewed them as mostly beyond her control, creating further tension.

4.4 Casey

Casey was in his first year working as a primary substitute teacher at a large multicultural international school in Germany, which followed the IB PYP while meeting local German requirements. Immediately prior to his current role, Casey had worked for a private company as a high school English teacher, visiting different schools in Germany. In New Zealand, Casey had worked as a TA before completing his ITE in 2020 and had worked at a New Zealand primary school for 18 months before moving to Germany. Casey's school in Germany had a much lower proportion of LDN than he had experienced in New Zealand.

4.4.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Casey expressed strong support for inclusive education and affirmed that inclusive education included not only those *"who have different learning needs but also in a cultural sense."* Casey associated the values of tolerance, understanding, patience and curiosity as important factors related to successful inclusive education. He described one of the main benefits of inclusive education as *"students becoming…global citizens."*

4.4.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Casey identified multiple structural and systemic factors that influenced his ability to implement inclusive education, including the impacts of politics and policies, the school's leadership style and the school's ability to prioritise inclusive education. Casey described these

factors as constraints on the effective implementation of inclusive education within his current international context.

Casey noted, *"the political climate today…it's so heated…that will probably have an effect, presumably, on inclusivity."* Casey described his experiences of changing political climates in New Zealand and how this influenced education. Casey made parallels to how the political climate could influence inclusive education in Germany. Despite being an international school, Casey said they were *"at the whims of the German Ministry of Education,*" which influenced school policies, including those for a number of refugees for whom the school provided free schooling.

Casey described the school's leadership approach as *"prescriptive,"* where staff were told what and how to do things. Casey acknowledged the realities of leadership's role, particularly the pressure they were under *"because it's essentially a company before it's a school,"* meaning that parents were *"treated like customers instead of families."*

Casey commended the school's ability to celebrate the learners' different cultures, but he identified challenges to meeting the diverse needs of all learners. Casey noted the school had a proportion of learners coming from *"really traumatic backgrounds"* and that the school had worked hard to ensure *"the students' emotional well-being is really well taken care of."* However, Casey described some challenges regarding how TAs provided social-emotional support which created tensions that are discussed below.

4.4.3 Interpersonal Factors

Casey identified parents and learners as key interpersonal factors. Casey described parents as more opinionated and influential than he was used to in New Zealand; *"every parent thinks they have a master's in education."* Casey perceived that the school enabled parental influence as other staff commented, *"don't go too hard on that kid because their mum is best friends with the CEO."* Casey also disagreed with parents of LDN who *"attempt to put a ceiling on their children's academia"* due to their diagnosis. Casey viewed some parental attitudes as limiting the learners' perceptions of their capabilities. This tension is discussed further below.

4.4.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Casey discussed two key intrapersonal influences, the impact of prior experience and the additional work for teachers implementing inclusive education. Casey's prior experience

working as a TA, studying and working in New Zealand had influenced his perceptions and experiences in his current context. Casey described his experience working as a TA in New Zealand as *"probably the most formative experience I can have in terms of having my mind opened to students like that."* Following this experience, Casey had decided to become a teacher. During his studies, Casey had been impressed with the emphasis on culturally responsive teaching. Although it was New Zealand-specific, he felt this had helped prepare him to work in an international school. Casey stated that he could *"take those strategies and just apply them"* to an international context. Casey also identified the need for teachers to continue to upskill themselves, as this was essential for implementing inclusive education and continuing their personal learning journey. However, he acknowledged that implementing inclusive education already *"requires a little bit more…work than you're used to."*

4.4.5 Tensions

The analysis revealed several tensions in Casey's experiences, including the reality of working in an international school, differing expectations of LDN, collaboration with TAs and the need for cultural adaptations. When Casey first applied for a job at an international school, *"there was a sense of that there will be a sort of aspirational kind of experience,"* but he had found that this was not the case. Casey noted the school's prescriptive leadership style resulted in high workloads and expectations placed on teachers. He described his experiences as *"hey, you're getting this good money...when we say jump, you say 'how high'?"*

Casey experienced tensions regarding the expectations relating to LDN. His beliefs and prior experiences had instilled in him a belief that high expectations should be maintained for all learners. However, Casey noted that diagnoses were used to limit LDN's academic progress through lowered expectations, which was challenging for him. He said he would never *"make them…do something they're not comfortable with,"* but he encouraged them not to limit themselves. Casey held a deep understanding of the constraints that may be placed on LDN as a result of his own experiences of being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The different priorities and attitudes of TAs in Germany created tensions for Casey. As a substitute teacher, he did not work closely with TAs; however, he had observed differences in the role of a TA in his school. Casey reflected on his experiences working with TAs in his current context and compared these to his experiences working as a TA in New Zealand. His experiences

in New Zealand had included seeing TAs prioritising social-emotional well-being, *"and once that is sorted out, then they can learn,"* which aligned with Casey's beliefs. As a result, he found the priority placed on academic learning in Germany difficult. Casey described times when TAs corrected him in front of the class, which he had never experienced in New Zealand; *"there are definitely times where I've been frustrated"* with the TAs.

Adapting to the different cultural contexts presented tensions for Casey as he navigated his way professionally. Despite New Zealand often being seen as a multicultural country, Casey had never been exposed to as vast a range of cultures as he was in his current context. Although he did not see this as a problem necessarily, he described a feeling of *"Alice down the rabbit hole."* He dealt with this by remaining curious and asking questions. Casey had also found the German culture to be much more direct. He had experienced this with leadership, colleagues, parents and TAs who *"will just tell you straight to your face what they think of you."* Although Casey acknowledged some benefits to this directness, he found it confronting in practice. Despite these tensions and challenges, Casey had enjoyed his experience so far, particularly in his role as a substitute teacher, which he felt suited him well.

4.5 Milly

Milly taught grade 2 at an international school in the UAE. Milly was educated in an international context until the age of ten, as her parents taught internationally themselves. Milly had completed her schooling and ITE in New Zealand. Before moving overseas to teach, Milly had taught in New Zealand for two years after completing her ITE there. She had since completed a Master of Education. Milly described her current school as using a hybrid Australian-Arabic curriculum. Most students were from the UAE, and Arabic was their first language, meaning most students were considered EAL learners. The school had many LDNs requiring varying levels of support and accommodations.

4.5.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Milly defined inclusive education as ensuring that all learners, *"regardless of any challenges, boundaries and limitations….* [have] *access to high-quality education that allows them to succeed."* She valued fairness, equality and equity in inclusive education. Milly believed inclusive education benefited all learners socially and academically, and that it set them up for success at school and in the future.

4.5.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Milly discussed the structural and systemic factors that influenced her ability to implement inclusive education in her international context. These factors included cultural attitudes in the UAE, the influence of the school's leadership and the school's ability to prioritise inclusive education.

Milly discussed the influence that local cultural attitudes and societal norms had on the school's ability to implement inclusive education, which, in turn, affected her teaching practice. Milly described how inclusive education was not openly discussed in the UAE, and blame was unfairly placed on learners for society's issues with it. Milly felt that diverse needs were beginning to be accepted, but it would be a *"slow and long process"* to change views. Societal attitudes also impacted the diagnosis process in the UAE, with parents being fearful of the negativity surrounding diverse needs, making them reluctant to have their children assessed; *"the parents and the family don't want to do that for fear of them being labelled different, them being excluded."* Furthermore, when children did receive a diagnosis, some families felt shame and would not openly discuss their child's needs.

Within the school, leadership positively influenced school culture and the school's ability to prioritise inclusive education. Milly stated that the school's leadership firmly believed that *"every child deserves an education, and that's what we offer at our school."* Leadership was passionate about including all learners in mainstream classes and prioritised support within the classroom whenever possible. This belief had permeated the school's culture, making inclusive education a significant factor in the school's identity. The belief had filtered down through the school, and now it was part of the school culture to go above and beyond for LDN. Milly said, *"I think that* [passion for inclusive education] *has filtered down definitely, to me, as a staff member there."* Without this influence from leadership, Milly believed that teachers could not support all learners.

Although leadership highly valued inclusive education and had implemented many support services, Milly reported that the only PD she had received in her current context had been basic and led by the head of inclusion. Milly believed she would benefit from more outsourced PD, especially regarding specific diagnoses and practical strategies to implement in the classroom. However, she understood there may be some difficulties accessing this due to the school's location.

A specialised inclusion unit onsite offered different levels of support, including specialised staff to support teachers and LDN. Support staff included fully-trained applied behaviour analysis therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and TAs. TAs did not have specific training, so the classroom teachers directed them on how to support LDN.

4.5.3 Interpersonal Factors

Milly commented that families can support or hinder the inclusive education process for their children. Milly described working with some families who were fully committed to ensuring their children received the support needed to succeed in their education. However, she also stated that *"parents are the hardest ones to get on board."* Milly described challenges in getting parents to begin the diagnosis process and to pass on prior reports and information regarding their child.

Meeting specific individual needs while balancing the needs of all learners within the class was identified as an interpersonal challenge that impacted teachers' relationships with all learners. Milly noted how inclusive education took time and energy and sometimes took time away from others' learning. Milly described one particular student she had taught who was the first fully blind student at the school. Understanding and meeting the needs of this learner took significant effort from herself, the inclusion unit and other class members. Despite the challenges, she described it as an ultimately rewarding process and as helping her find a balance in the classroom by *"ensuring he's getting the best of me and they are getting the best of me as well."*

4.5.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Direct experience with LDN had positively influenced Milly's attitudes and teaching practices. When asked what had influenced her attitude towards inclusive education, Milly responded that her personal experiences working with specific students had changed her teaching practices and how she managed her classroom; *"I think it's not until you're actually faced with these children that have a range of different needs, that I've become like this."* The more Milly had been exposed to LDN, the more positive her attitude towards inclusive education had become. This had strengthened her views that every learner deserved the opportunity to succeed,

and her role was to "*ensure that I deliver what I have to for these children, and I'll go the extra mile for them."*

4.5.5 Tensions

Despite her positive attitude towards inclusive education, Milly described tensions she had experienced with her knowledge gaps around specific needs and the additional work in upskilling herself and planning lessons, which made her feel she was not as effective in her role as she would have liked. At times, Milly was unsure of her ability to determine what was best for the learners due to a lack of knowledge. Although she had the support of the inclusion unit, they were also learning about specific needs that were not commonly seen. She recounted her experience of upskilling to meet the needs of a blind student she had taught. Milly went to significant effort to support this learner utilising all resources available to her but bearing much of the responsibility herself as the school had never supported a blind student before. Learning to read Braille and poking holes in paper to ensure a student could learn *"drained the life out of me,"* but when he could read a storybook after two terms, "*all of that was absolutely worth it.*"

4.6 Eve

Eve was in her first year of teaching grade 1 in the same school in the UAE as Milly. It was Eve's first international teaching experience after teaching in New Zealand for five years following her ITE.

4.6.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Eve viewed inclusive education from a rights perspective, where everybody had the right to quality education and felt valued. She described inclusive education as creating a *"classroom culture where every child here is valued and appreciated."* Eve acknowledged that while neurodivergence, or other specific diagnoses, often came to mind when considering inclusive education, "*it's just so much more than that*" and included learners from different cultures and with varying language needs. She highlighted that inclusive education helped prepare *"capable learners who…function in society."* On a practical note, Eve said inclusive education was not simply LDN attending school but being in separate rooms. Instead, it was about having all learners together because *"they* [LDN] *should be included in the classroom with everybody else."*

4.6.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Eve had enjoyed learning about the local culture in the UAE, although she noted that the cultural attitude towards education generally meant learners were often absent from school; *"they don't really value education as much as what we do in New Zealand.*" She had also observed some stigma around diverse needs and having learners diagnosed, but hoped that the country was moving past that.

Eve emphasised her school's commitment to inclusive education: *"one of our goals at our school is around inclusion…how we can differentiate for all the children in our classroom."* Despite the apparent focus on inclusive education, Eve perceived the school's leadership to be out of touch with the realities teachers faced. Eve said, *"I think sometimes they forget the struggles of…being in the classroom."* She also perceived school leadership to lack a presence inside the classroom.

Eve discussed the ways in which her current school prioritised inclusive education. These included its specialised inclusion unit, the associated support staff and the available resources. The inclusion unit organised support for LDN, including assigning TAs and leading planning and goal-setting for these learners. She perceived the staff from the inclusion unit to be *"very approachable."* Although Eve identified funding and resources as significant challenges to the effective implementation of inclusive education, she did not experience this problem in her current context. She said, *"lack of funding and lack of resources, that's probably…the most difficult thing…* [but] *I definitely feel, in terms of resourcing, it's a lot more accessible at my school."*

Despite the approachability and usefulness of the inclusion unit, Eve raised concerns about the need to direct the TAs and the amount of PD related to inclusive education that the school provided. She said TAs *"don't have any training working with these students*" and required direction from their teachers. Even with direction from teachers, Eve felt the TAs would *"rather get stuff done and completed, rather than just letting the child just do it themselves."* Eve found this problematic, consequently making her want to do everything herself. Eve reflected that she had not participated in any PD since working at this school. She noted it had only been eight months, so she was not too concerned and did not feel an urgent need to undertake PD. However, Eve expressed an understanding of the value of previous PD she had undertaken, and

believed that more PD for herself and the TAs would further improve their ability to implement inclusive education.

4.6.3 Interpersonal Factors

Parents and learners were the main interpersonal influences discussed by Eve. She shared how important it was to build strong relationships with learners and their families. Eve identified how *"finding out all that background knowledge…it gives you a bigger picture…and what you can do to better support them."* Eve had only experienced appreciative parents but was aware of teachers who had different experiences with parents. She highlighted the culturally different ways parents behaved in the UAE and believed they were *"a lot more opinionated"* than parents in New Zealand. Parents in the UAE were more outspoken regarding their children's placements and lacked some boundaries when communicating with teachers, such as calling them late at night.

Eve believed that understanding all the learners in her class and building strong relationships was essential for her planning. Building relationships with students helped her *"relate their learning to them."* However, many challenges were still faced, especially with learners who disrupted the class; *"when you've got those disruptions…it's difficult to try and manage your classroom and feel you're doing…effective learning."*

4.6.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Eve described multiple intrapersonal factors that influenced her ability to implement inclusive education, including a lack of knowledge and the impacts on teachers' mental health of increased responsibility and workloads related to implementing inclusive education. Eve discussed how important it was to celebrate small wins, especially with learners with whom it may be challenging to build a relationship. Eve described how she felt she did not always have the *"knowledge of what to do"* for specific learners, which made planning difficult. Eve also discussed the increased responsibility and workload that was often expected for inclusive education to be successful. This can take a *"mental toll…on teachers, especially when you don't have the support."* Eve was grateful to feel supported at her current school but knew this was not always the case. Eve described how much she enjoyed being a teacher and working with learners but was realistic about it being a job where she could be replaced; *"I'm passionate about it, and I love working with kids, but…you can always just be replaced at the end of the day."*

Throughout the interview, Eve brought up her experiences studying and teaching in New Zealand, showing the critical influence her prior experience had had. Although Eve noted that she did not remember explicitly learning about inclusive education in her teacher training courses, she had learned a lot while on her practicums; "*that was the stuff that set me up."* She also described the helpful PD she had participated in while teaching in New Zealand, which involved learning about specific needs and included school visits from the course tutors.

4.6.5 Tensions

Though Eve claimed she did not feel any tensions, tensions relating to her current context, as well as to teaching and inclusive education in general, were evident during the analysis. One tension in her current context was the treatment of non-Western staff at the school. She talked about finding out the significant pay gap between staff, despite the amount of money available in the school. Eve said, *"it's very hard when you know there's a lot of money that could be going to…a lot of other people in the school.*"

While Eve believed in inclusive education and the value of all learners being in the same classroom, her international experiences made her question whether this was always the best option. Eve acknowledged the challenges some learners faced in inclusive classrooms and wondered when to question, *"can this child actually function in a classroom with support, or is this…just completely too much for them?"* Eve was unsure about the availability of resource schools, which are specialised schools that cater specifically to LDN, in the UAE, but noted that there had been a few near her school in New Zealand.

4.7 Sam

Sam was a year 6 teacher and primary maths lead at an international school in Thailand. It was his fifth year at the school, having previously taught at two other schools in Thailand and as an English teacher for six months in Japan. Sam had completed his teacher training in 2013 in New Zealand, but had never worked as a teacher in New Zealand. Sam's school followed the British curriculum and he described it as *"international in the true sense,"* with students from many cultures attending the school.

4.7.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Sam defined inclusive education as every learner's right to equitable and high-quality education. He said inclusive education was *"all the students having the right to…the same sort of level of education, or the best level of education that's possible."* Sam identified many benefits of inclusive education for LDN and typically developing learners, particularly the exposure to, and acceptance of, differences that further permeated life outside school; *"the more acceptance in the world and understanding of different people's backgrounds, the better for all of us."*

4.7.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

The structural and systemic factors discussed by Sam included the impact of COVID-19, the school's leadership and their ability to prioritise inclusive education. Sam identified COVID-19 as having had a significant impact on the school as it caused many families to leave the area, and many others could no longer afford the fees of an international school. Enrolment numbers had dropped significantly but bounced back quickly post-COVID-19, leading to full classes and rapid readjustments. In Sam's opinion, as student numbers subsequently increased post-COVID-19, there had been a rise in undiagnosed LDN and EAL learners. The school had managed this shift as its leadership had embedded inclusive education in its values, with the aim of ensuring all learners were supported. Leadership had put a lot of effort into inclusive education, growing its additional education needs (AEN) department, scheduling weekly meetings on learner progress and providing PD on inclusive education, all of which showed the staff they were *"quite serious about it."*

This commitment to inclusive education had allowed the school to prioritise inclusive education. It had been so embedded in the school that Sam said, *"I don't even think of it as inclusive education here because it's just part of what we do."* Sam acknowledged that although inclusive education seemed to happen naturally at his school, much work had gone into it, particularly regarding school policies. Sam described the internal support systems as led by *"a strong AEN department."* The AEN department worked closely with staff to identify and support LDN through pull-out and in-class support. Recently, they had employed new staff in their AEN department to support learners further, including a speech and language therapist. The school prioritised regular PD around inclusive education, although Sam said he would like more PD from external providers as he had found this helpful in the past.

4.7.3 Interpersonal Factors

Challenges involving communication with parents and understanding the needs of learners were the interpersonal influences discussed by Sam. He believed that his school had built *"a level of trust within the parent community"* that the school would provide the best possible education for their children, resulting in largely positive relationships between parents and the school. Despite this, it was still difficult to tell parents that their child may have diverse needs, as *"nobody wants to hear that their child might have a learning difficulty."* Sam also described the importance of understanding all individual needs. He noted that *"it can be challenging to have students in your class that have…additional educational needs,"* but *"one of the most rewarding things as a teacher is seeing children go through their schooling and develop and overcome hurdles."*

4.7.4 Intrapersonal Factors

The two intrapersonal factors that influenced Sam's implementation of inclusive education were his initial lack of knowledge regarding specific diverse needs and his prior experiences of teacher training in New Zealand. Particularly early in his teaching career, Sam felt unprepared and lacked knowledge about diverse needs and how to support specific learners. He described his first experience teaching a learner with selective mutism and how much he had to learn to meet their needs. Sam felt much more prepared when he taught a second learner with selective mutism. He described a high level of *"learning on the job"* to ensure he could teach LDN. Sam felt his teacher training experience had prepared him to teach *"students from a wide range of cultures,"* but there was no particular focus on teaching LDN to prepare him for working in an inclusive classroom. This contributed to his perception that he lacked knowledge at the beginning of his career.

4.7.5 Tensions

Although Sam did not identify any specific tensions, tension was noted as Sam discussed the school's non-selective enrolment policies. Sam said that while the school *"doesn't discriminate against anybody with physical disabilities,"* its physical layout precludes learners with diverse physical needs, meaning the school is not able to meet all mobility needs. At the time of the interview, the school did not have any learners with diverse physical needs, although whether this was related or not was unknown. However, Sam commented, *"certainly, with AEN*

needs, we're not selective." Despite this tension, Sam had maintained positive feelings towards his school's implementation of inclusive education. He stated it *"really aligns perfectly with my own sort of ideas and philosophies,"* and he also believed that his experiences in his current school had *"probably shaped my ideas and philosophies around it as well."*

4.8 Cross-Case Analysis

Individual case analysis highlighted numerous factors and tensions that influenced the implementation of inclusive education in international contexts for the six participants. A cross-case analysis was then performed to identify which factors and tensions were specific to certain participants and their contexts, and what similarities there were across different contexts. Cross-case analysis of the data indicated that some factors were raised by multiple participants, along with some unique perceptions and experiences. These are discussed in the following sections, beginning with the participants' definitions of inclusive education and its perceived benefits. This is followed by structural and systemic factors, interpersonal factors and intrapersonal factors. Lastly, the tension teachers felt relating to resource schools is discussed.

4.8.1 Definition of Inclusive Education

Participants defined inclusive education primarily from a rights-based perspective, emphasising that every student had the right to education. While Beth explicitly stated this by defining inclusive education as *"ensuring children's rights…using UNCROC as a basis for everything,"* other participants focused on all learners receiving *"high quality* [education]*"* (Milly) or *"the best level of education"* (Sam). However, some terms used to define inclusive education indicate other meanings. For example, Milly's use of *"access* [and] *success"* suggests a more academically focused meaning than Eve's use of *"valued* [and] *appreciated"* and Beth's use of *"valued* [and] *respected,"* which are more socially and emotionally focused. Participants also defined inclusive education as a broad term that was not just about diverse educational needs but also included learners' cultural backgrounds, SES status, trauma and more. The most commonly identified values associated with inclusive education identified by participants were fairness, equality, time and understanding.

Although participants identified numerous benefits of inclusive education, the analysis identified three main areas: all learners can benefit from inclusive education; inclusive education supports social development; and inclusive education sets LDN up for success. Amy described

the benefits for all learners from the inclusion of LDN in classrooms as *"very positive for all of the students."* Inclusive education's ability to support social development was evident in participants' statements. Eve said, *"for kids to be exposed to that at a young age, they develop empathy"* and Sam believed that the increased understanding of different cultures and backgrounds was valuable for all. Beth, Milly and Sam also discussed how inclusive education can set LDN up for success. This was highlighted in Beth's statement that *"children walk away knowing that they're a valuable person and … they're able to make a contribution to this world."*

4.8.2 Structural and Systemic Factors

Cross-case analysis identified common structural and systemic factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education. These factors included local sociocultural norms, school funding, perspectives of leadership and the schools' ability to specialise in inclusive education. The influence of structural and systemic factors as strengths and challenges varied among participants.

Participants discussed certain socio-cultural norms as challenges when implementing inclusive education. Participants teaching in Indonesia and the UAE felt there was a lack of cultural acceptance of diverse needs, which often led to parental feelings of shame and fear. Beth mentioned that, while nannying in Saudi Arabia, she had observed how *"the cultural perceptions of children with additional needs has a massive impact on what support they get."* Eve reported that in the UAE, education was not as valued as it was in New Zealand, and this was reflected in the number of absences and the reasons given for these.

Funding and the differences between for-profit and state schools were also raised as a factor influencing the implementation of inclusive education. Beth expressed how significantly funding issues affected her work at a state school in England, although she stated that globally, *"everyone would say ... the lack of funding"* was a major constraint *"except probably for the UAE … in international private schools."* This statement was supported by Eve's comments that in *"the international schools here, there's just so much money that is just floating in the air."* Amy experienced the positive impacts of for-profit international schools because at her school, *"they are constantly improving the school."* In contrast, Casey experienced the impact of private funding of his international school as leading to *"a real tone in the school of not wanting to step*

on the toes of parents and not wanting to rock the boat," reflecting the way parents were treated as customers.

Leadership was reported by participants to have a significant impact on the implementation of inclusive education. Amy, Beth, Milly and Sam described how their schools' leadership supported inclusive education and these participants' implementation of it in their classrooms. They described the respective leadership as *"hands-on"* (Amy), *"supportive, understanding"* (Beth) and *"quite serious about it"* (Sam). However, despite working at the same school as Milly, Eve described the school's senior leadership as having forgotten *"the reality of what it sometimes is in a classroom for a classroom teacher"* and the middle management as lacking presence in the classroom. Casey expressed mixed feelings about the leadership at his school, stating that he did not feel *"directly supported"* but understood leadership was *"already under quite a lot of pressure."* However, he believed that many policies and systems in the school supported the overall implementation of inclusive education.

Participants highlighted several strategies their schools used to prioritise inclusive education. These included setting inclusive education as a school goal (Eve), having specialised internal support systems with specialised staff (Eve, Milly, Sam) and having school policies in place (Sam). These factors made participants feel supported *"if you need anything"* (Milly). TAs were often discussed as part of how schools prioritised inclusive education; however, many challenges regarding TAs were identified. These challenges included issues with recruitment due to limited funding (Beth), the knowledge and training of TAs (Eve) and differing perspectives on the roles of TAs (Casey).

Beth highlighted her concerns about the *"massive increase in SEND* [special education needs and disabilities]*"* that her school had observed and that she had discussed with other teachers. Beth noted how her school had to adapt facilities, manage support personnel carefully and provide training for teachers in supporting LDN. While no other participants shared this observation, Sam described how his school had seen an increase in undiagnosed diverse needs and EAL learners following COVID-19 which posed challenges for the school's AEN department to provide support and resources for all learners. While not explicitly identifying an increase in needs, Amy detailed challenges within her school due to the long process of identifying needs and obtaining support. She believed it was *"not always efficient"* and more action was needed earlier. Beth had a similar concern and detailed the *"70-week waiting list"* to

be assessed in England and how many learners were not receiving adequate support until year 1 or 2, which impacted interventions and created challenges in the early years regarding funding and support for learners who may have diverse needs.

4.8.3 Interpersonal Factors

The analysis identified the role of families and their influence on the implementation of inclusive education. Participants described different experiences of families and their varying attitudes and actions. Eve perceived families as *"very thankful and appreciative"* of the work done by teachers to support LDN. However, she had observed a lack of boundaries in some families in the UAE, who saw no problem contacting their child's teachers late at night.

Amy mostly experienced positive interactions with families and stated, "*most of them are pretty good about…realising there's something different and wanting to help their child."* Furthermore, as a parent himself, Sam believed that *"parents want what's best for their child."* However, Sam also acknowledged that raising the idea of diverse needs could be a difficult conversation to have and *"it takes a while for…parents to get fully on board."* Milly had also experienced challenges getting families on board. She had worked with families who did not want to begin the diagnosis process *"for the fear of them being labelled different, then being excluded,"* as well as families who *"shy away from talking about this and celebrating their child due to the societal norms."* Casey also observed challenges with parents in general in Germany and their more openly expressed opinions.

4.8.4 Intrapersonal Factors

Participants reported a number of intrapersonal factors that influenced their implementation of inclusive education in their international contexts, including past experiences studying and working in New Zealand, opportunities for PD and the impact of inclusive education on teachers' mental health. These factors influenced participants' implementation of inclusive education in different ways.

When asked about their teacher training in New Zealand, participants recalled a lack of focus on inclusive education in their courses, but they did recall a strong emphasis on cultural inclusion. They remembered completing specific assignments on inclusive education, but all expressed concern that it needed to be focused on more. Beth stated it *"is not as embedded as it should be,"* and Sam recalled he did not *"think that was a focus on anything we did particularly*

in the course." Casey also recalled a lack of focus, but said his work as a TA in New Zealand was a *"formative experience"* which had opened his mind to LDN. Despite a lack of focus on inclusive education for diverse needs in ITE courses in New Zealand, participants reported a strong emphasis on cultural inclusion and *"teaching students from a wide range of cultures"* (Sam). Although this was viewed as New Zealand-specific, Casey reported the benefits of being able to *"take those strategies and just apply them"* in different contexts. Beth noted how much she had learned about respecting the cultural backgrounds of learners through her training and time working in New Zealand and how that had given her *"a real benefit in terms of inclusivity within culture."*

All participants were interested in ongoing learning through PD, specifically outsourced PD. They identified being provided varying amounts of PD: from Amy, Casey and Eve, who had experienced no PD in their current schools, to Beth, who had been given regular and extensive PD opportunities. Beth described how she had been provided more PD opportunities in England than she had ever received in New Zealand, including attending PD that trained her to train others, *"ensuring that everybody is getting something."* Amy had also participated in significantly more PD opportunities when working in England than anywhere else she had worked. Casey and Eve reported not receiving any PD in their current contexts, although they were unconcerned as they had only been in their respective schools for less than a year. However, they both expressed the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to learn. Milly and Sam participated in PD in their current contexts but wished to receive more outsourced PD. They identified COVID-19 and where they worked as reasons for this not happening as much as they would like. Beth was the only participant who identified a direct consequence of teachers not receiving enough training. Beth detailed how insufficient training can lead to teachers' personal biases not being addressed. This meant that *"when they go into schools, and whether that's a racial bias or a bias on children's ability … those are directly impacting those children."*

Another intrapersonal factor was the impact implementing inclusive education had on teachers' stress levels. Multiple participants identified the extra work and responsibility that resulted from implementing inclusive education and the subsequent stress it can cause. Milly described how the increased number of parent meetings involved with families of LDN, individualised planning time for LDN and the necessary research and upskilling to meet needs

used up a lot of time. Eve identified a lack of support as a significant factor that challenged teachers, as teachers placed a lot of *"mental stress on* [themselves] *to try and support* [learners]*."* In her current context, Eve had not felt as much stress, but she noted that while working in New Zealand, there were times when she had to take *"mental health days"* due to the stress.

4.8.5 Tensions

Although all participants supported inclusive education and the value of all learners being educated within the same classrooms, there were questions about whether some learners might thrive more in different environments. Beth described her change in perspective after she had previously been *"really against special schools … but after visiting one and seeing how mainstream schools fail these children because there's not adequate funding or adequate resources, I can see why it's much more beneficial, depending on their child's needs, to be attending those settings."* Beth strongly believed that to promote inclusive education, *"policy needs to ensure funding allocates teachers and one-on-ones with children in those schools."* Eve also expressed conflicted views on resource schools. She stated that in inclusive education, every learner should be included in the same classroom. However, she also shared reservations in her comments that in some cases there was *"a blurred line as to can this child actually function in a classroom with support or is this, you know, just completely too much for them."* Furthermore, Casey suggested that learners should be individually considered as *"there are parents and students out there who have really struggled with it, and maybe prefer for the student to go to an environment that is specifically catered to the individual needs of that student."*

4.9 Conclusion

Data analysis revealed that participants' experiences implementing inclusive education were shaped by a variety of structural and systemic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors. The findings highlighted the complex interactions among these factors, showing that some influences are consistent across contexts, while others vary depending on the participant or context. Despite experiencing many tensions in their implementation efforts, all participants maintained positive attitudes and upheld their commitment to inclusive education.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in implementing inclusive education and shaping the learning experiences of learners with diverse needs (LDN). However, multiple factors influence teachers' ability to implement inclusive education, including some factors that are unique to working in international contexts. This study explored six New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in international contexts. The study sought to identify the factors influencing teachers' experiences implementing inclusive education in international contexts. It also sought to identify the tensions evident as teachers implemented inclusive education within these contexts. This chapter discusses the findings of this study and related literature to answer the research questions, followed by a discussion of the implications for practice, suggestions for future research, an overview of the study's strengths and limitations, researcher reflections and a final conclusion.

5.2 RQ1: What Factors Influence Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences Implementing Inclusive Education in International Contexts?

The findings from this study identified various factors that influenced teachers' experiences in implementing inclusive education in different international contexts. These factors were grouped into three key categories: systemic and structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors. Systemic and structural factors included socio-cultural influences, school leadership, initial teacher education (ITE) and the provision of professional development (PD). Interpersonal factors included teachers' relationships with learners and their families. Intrapersonal factors included teachers' personal beliefs and prior experiences, alongside increased workloads and a feeling of lacking knowledge related to inclusive education. These factors were deeply interwoven and interacted dynamically, evolving as the teachers' perceptions and experiences shifted, and they reflected the unique contexts and demands of international education environments. Although these factors had significant impacts on some teachers in this study, the teachers maintained positive attitudes and were committed to upholding their values regarding inclusive education.

5.2.1 Socio-cultural Factors Influence the Experiences of Inclusive Education

Teachers' past and present socio-cultural contexts influence their experiences with inclusive education. The findings demonstrated how previous education and experiences can effectively prepare teachers for working in culturally diverse contexts, particularly through learning about culturally responsive pedagogies in ITE and witnessing cultural inclusion, as occurs in many New Zealand schools. Factors such as race, class, education and lived experiences have been reported in the literature to influence teachers' perceptions and interpretations of the cultures in which they work (Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021). These influences may lead to biases that teachers may or may not be aware of and can impact teachers' perceptions of inclusive education and how it should be implemented. Moberg and Savolainen (2003) highlighted the context-dependent nature of inclusive education, which is particularly important when discussing teachers working in unfamiliar and sometimes more culturally diverse contexts. These new contexts can create challenges such as a lack of understanding of other cultures, a lack of intercultural communication skills, difficulties in the identification process for LDN and the management of expectations in a new context.

Teachers found the persisting stigma surrounding LDN and inclusive education difficult to comprehend when coming from a country where it was more openly discussed. While the teachers demonstrated some understanding of local culture, they did not report intentionally seeking to learn about the local culture where they worked. Gaining a deeper understanding of local culture and possible reasons for the stigma may support teachers in developing the necessary sensitivity around LDN. For instance, in Thailand, Buddhist beliefs have influenced many parents not to address challenges observed in their children as they consider them to be caused by bad karma from a previous life (Saihong, 2010). For teachers from New Zealand, this may be difficult to understand and may create uncertainty about how to approach the topic. Additionally, the stigma surrounding LDN may be more prevalent in certain countries, reflecting the view that inclusive education is a Western concept that needs to be adapted to local contextual and cultural needs to be effective (Tiwari et al., 2015).

Teachers experienced additional challenges related to the identification process of LDN, accessing support and implementing interventions when working in international contexts. The study's findings suggested that a lack of awareness and persisting stigma surrounding LDN in some countries contributed to these challenges. Difficulties in referral and access to support for

LDN may also be encountered due to the variation in definitions and categorisations of LDN across countries (Lane & Jones, 2016). Additionally, interventions and strategies effective in one context may not necessarily work in another due to cultural differences (van Steen & Wilson, 2020), further complicating processes for teachers who are unfamiliar with local systems or accustomed to different systems. Teachers may also be unfamiliar with national legislation that supports inclusive education, thus impacting their broader understanding of the processes and support available within the country in which they work.

Communicating with families and colleagues who use different communication styles can be challenging, highlighting the importance of developing intercultural communication skills to promote understanding, minimise miscommunication and foster effective collaboration between schools and families to support LDN. For example, the German communication style is typically characterised as content-oriented, direct and explicit (Takhtarova, 2020). Interactions with families and colleagues using more direct and explicit communication styles, such as those typical in Germany, may be confronting for teachers accustomed to New Zealand's less direct communication style. However, communication styles vary more between individuals than across cultures (Park et al., 2012), meaning teachers are likely to experience varying communication styles within most contexts.

This study highlighted how teachers' expectations and experiences of what a school should be and how it should operate may be challenged in an international context. Sahling and De Carvalho (2021) emphasised the need for teachers to adapt to varying school structures and the host country's culture, which involves managing expectations. The current study's findings suggested that some teachers experienced difficulties in managing expectations, which continued throughout their time working in their contexts. Being aware that challenges will likely arise and reflecting on how these impact their roles may help teachers manage their expectations and utilise their prior experiences to adapt to their new context. This study's findings reinforce previous research. For example, Deveney (2005), emphasised the importance of remaining committed to understanding local cultural dynamics and continuously adapting culturally responsive teaching to meet learners' needs. While remaining open to new perspectives and adapting to local contexts is important, there may be misalignment if teachers hold personal values regarding inclusive education that differ from their teaching context, as demonstrated in this study. The current study highlighted that finding the balance between being adaptable and

staying true to one's teaching philosophy can be challenging and teachers may need to be supported to navigate points of tension.

5.2.2 School Leadership Shapes the Level to Which Inclusive Education is Prioritised in Each School

Leadership has a significant influence on a school's ability to implement inclusive education and on its culture towards inclusive education. Literature suggests that leadership is widely recognised as one of the key predictors of successful inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002) and that embedding inclusive education in policies and values requires persistent advocacy from school leadership (International Schools Collaborative, 2020). The findings of the current study indicated that three key areas contribute to leadership's influence on inclusive education: school policies and values, the attributes and skills of leaders and leadership's response to the marketisation of schools. When inclusive education was seen to be embedded in a school's policies and values, it shaped the teachers' classroom practices and fostered an overall culture of inclusivity, as well as making teachers feel supported and that the school's inclusive education philosophy aligned with their own.

The study identified key attributes and skills of school leadership that influenced the teachers' implementation of inclusive education and the provision of PD, including being supportive, involved, transparent and reflective. These findings align with Mulholland and O'Connor (2016), who reported that leadership needs to be responsive and flexible. They emphasised that leadership should prioritise planning time and the organisation of resources and training for staff. These statements support the present study's findings. The leadership in all the schools involved were responsible for determining the extent to which PD needs were met; some leaders prioritised PD while others did not, shaping the amount and quality of PD teachers received. As shown in the case study narratives, leadership can significantly influence teachers' implementation of and the overall school culture towards inclusive education.

The marketisation of schools, particularly in international schools, influences leadership decisions, especially when parents are positioned as customers, which may detract from prioritising the best interests of LDN. While the growing marketisation of schools, particularly international schools, has had some positive outcomes, such as the availability of more education options and increasing education standards, it has also created an environment where parents may be treated as 'customers' (Agustian, 2021). Budrow (2021) found that some teachers were

surprised that the 'business' aspects of schools influenced decision-making processes rather than the needs of the learners. According to Leo and Barton (2006), market-led decision-making has become a driving force in private and international schools. The current study suggested that treating parents as customers may give them more influence in school decisions as schools seek to retain their business, which can impact the relationships between families and teachers and may take away from prioritising learners' needs, particularly those of LDN if issues of stigma exist.

The significant influence of school leadership on teachers' implementation of inclusive education is made further challenging by the tendency of leadership in international schools to often change every three to five years (Lane, 2020). Such frequent changes can result in shifts in school culture and practice. A positive school culture is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education as it requires the support of the entire school community. Changes in leadership can potentially weaken or, as was observed in this study, strengthen this culture and influence teachers' implementation of inclusive education.

5.2.3 Teachers Would Like More Training to Feel Confident in Implementing Inclusive Education

The results of this study indicated that initial teacher education (ITE) and ongoing professional development (PD) may not have adequately prepared teachers for inclusive classrooms. Teachers perceived their ITE in New Zealand as too general and not particularly useful for meeting the needs of LDN. However, in 2020, after most participants had completed their ITE, the New Zealand Teacher's Council launched new ITE requirements with a specific focus on meeting the diverse needs of all learners (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2020). The updated requirements recognised that ITE could not provide teachers with all the knowledge required for teaching in inclusive classrooms, so it aimed to provide new teachers with practical and transferable skills to adapt to their context, as well as tools of inquiry and ongoing professional learning. A focus on adaptive and differentiated instruction, alongside effective transferability of pedagogical skills, and the values and principles underpinning culturally responsive teaching, was highlighted in the current study.

The current findings highlight the need for ongoing and relevant PD, affirming that teachers are motivated to continue improving their implementation of inclusive education. Teachers acknowledged the value of effective PD and expressed a need for more PD

opportunities, especially from external providers with specialised knowledge, rather than PD solely from internal school staff. It was also noted that even when only one staff member participated in PD, the knowledge gained could be shared with colleagues. The desire for more PD is consistent with findings from Ackah-Jnr and Fluckiger (2023) and Leung and Mak (2010) that linked teachers' desire for more PD regarding inclusive education with performing their jobs more effectively. Interestingly, despite describing the importance of and need for PD, teachers in this study appeared unconcerned if they received limited amounts of PD. The lack of PD experienced was associated with the time they had been employed at their respective schools. While these findings appear to cast doubt on how much teachers genuinely value PD, these findings may be reflective of international schools. Sahling and De Carvalho (2021) found that international schools limited the provision of PD due to high staff turnover. This may partly explain why the teachers involved in this who worked in international schools reported limited involvement in PD.

The findings of this study identified specific areas where teachers desired additional PD, particularly in identifying diverse needs and developing strategies to meet specific needs. Attwood (2017) reported a similar finding that beginning teachers requested training in specific strategies for teaching LDN. The present study also identified the need for training to be hands-on and practical. Sukbunpant et al. (2013) echoed this, stating that teachers found overly theoretical training unhelpful in supporting inclusive education. However, the literature presents conflicting opinions on the effectiveness of PD regarding specific knowledge for improving the implementation of inclusive education (Miesera et al., 2021) as well as on which aspects of implementation should be focused on (Heng et al., 2019). Agbenyega and Klibthong (2015) argued that promoting open-mindedness to different perspectives is crucial, while Engelbrecht et al. (2013) suggested that improving teachers' self-efficacy may be more impactful than simply improving their attitudes towards inclusive education. This balance was demonstrated in the current study, where teachers remained open-minded while still maintaining their personal values regarding inclusive education despite the challenges they faced, and as a result, were able to continue implementing inclusive education to the best of their ability.

5.2.4 Relationships Between Teachers and Families of Learners with Diverse Needs are Complex

This study revealed that addressing concerns with families about children's learning and development can be difficult. For example, there can be challenges during the initial identification process, despite families being eager to support their children and wanting the best outcomes for them. These challenges can arise as families struggle to accept their child's situation (Dagli & Öznacar, 2015), sometimes leading to the refusal of assessments. Even after receiving a diagnosis, findings showed that some families did not accept it, a challenge also discussed by Sukbunpant et al. (2013). The current study found that sensitivity towards these potential challenges was needed, particularly when teachers were in less familiar cultural contexts, even when families accepted their child's diverse needs. Findings indicated that teachers continued to try to develop open and honest relationships with families to build trust and collaboration between schools and families despite the challenges faced.

Building strong relationships between teachers and families requires acknowledging and respecting different communication styles, and remaining open to different cultural perspectives when interacting with families. Teachers highlighted the challenges they encountered when communicating with families from culturally different backgrounds and with communication styles, languages and socio-cultural norms that differed from those of the teacher. In some cases, families were perceived to be opinionated but this perception was problematic as parents need to advocate for their children. These challenges have been found to increase pressure on teachers, leading some to feel that working with certain parents is more challenging than working with learners (Tiwari et al., 2015). Challenging relationships may result in a lack of cooperation between schools and families, leading to further negative outcomes for the implementation of inclusive education (Yılmaz & Yeganeh, 2021). Discussing sensitive topics, such as diverse needs, requires teachers and schools to understand local cultures and adapt their approach to communication and family involvement appropriately.

While teachers valued the input of families into the education of LDN, some found it difficult when families had more, or less, input than they expected. Teachers in this study often expected families to be interested and supportive of their child's education, but found it challenging when they perceived parents as too involved or not supportive enough. When teachers' expectations and families' behaviour did not align, it caused challenges for teachers and

was seen to lead to poorer relationships between school and home, impacting the cooperation needed to support LDN effectively. Kantavong (2018) found that family involvement contributes significantly to the success of inclusive education, highlighting the importance of fostering strong relationships with families to better understand and meet the needs of LDN. A lack of cooperation between families and schools has been reported as impacting teachers' ability to implement inclusive education (Yılmaz & Yeganeh, 2021). However, the teachers in the current study still valued building positive relationships with LDN's families regardless of the challenges faced.

5.2.5 Teachers Identified Increased Responsibility and Workload Associated with Inclusive Education

The findings of this study suggested that teachers experienced increased responsibilities and workloads when implementing inclusive education. Factors contributing to this increase included parent meetings, planning time, upskilling to meet specific needs and additional responsibilities involved in the identification and diagnosis process. Furthermore, the study suggested that the additional time and energy required from teachers may be exacerbated by the internal pressure teachers place on themselves to implement inclusive education. These findings are consistent with other research that found that reduced time with learners, frequent teacher meetings and increasing administrative duties relating to inclusive education can lead to stress and feelings of helplessness among teachers (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015).

Additional responsibility and workload related to inclusive education impacts teachers in different ways, especially when they perceive a lack of support. Some are ready to take on the lead as facilitators of inclusive education inside the classroom (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2015), while others struggle with the additional responsibility. Mitigating the stressors teachers encounter is essential, considering their significant role in the success of inclusive education. Successful implementation of inclusive education depends on adequate support (Tiwari et al., 2015). However, the current study found that despite variable support, increased responsibility and high workloads, teachers remained positive towards inclusive education. They expressed a desire to do their best but acknowledged the difficulties they faced, which may be compounded when working in an international context due to the additional structural and systemic differences. This led to some teachers reminding themselves that teaching is a job and that they are replaceable, thus questioning how far they are willing to push themselves to meet high

workloads. Increased responsibility and workload can be particularly challenging when teachers feel they are not receiving adequate support. Encouraging collaboration between all stakeholders is also vital as another key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). Fostering collaboration and providing sufficient support for teachers could help reduce stressors, thereby enabling more effective implementation of inclusive education. Teachers in the current study reported that when they felt supported, they demonstrated high levels of commitment to meeting the needs of LDN.

5.3 RQ2: What Tensions are Evident as Teachers Implement Inclusive Education in International Contexts?

The current study identified tensions associated with the teachers' unique international work contexts, while other tensions arose from their individual experiences, beliefs and values. These tensions illustrate how teachers' experiences, beliefs and values may be challenged when working in an international context. The study also highlighted how teachers can uphold their beliefs and values regarding inclusive education and adapt their prior knowledge and experiences to continue implementing inclusive education to the best of their ability despite the tensions they experience.

5.3.1 Meeting the Needs of All Learners Can Create Professional Tensions for Teacher

In the current study, teachers experienced tensions as they tried to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Teachers did not feel as though they were adequately meeting the needs of all learners as they worked to address the specific needs of LDN while ensuring that other learners' needs were still being met. This tension was further impacted by a perceived increase in the number and complexity of learning needs. This perceived increase placed additional pressure on the teachers and the already overstretched funding and support systems in some of the countries. The lack of adequate resources and support is often cited in the literature as a barrier to successful inclusive education, with similar findings reported in the UAE and Thailand (Jackson, 2023; Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). These systemic issues contributed to feelings of helplessness, especially when teachers were unable to enact their beliefs about inclusive education.

The findings highlighted the disconnect between policy and practice relating to inclusive education. This disconnect caused tension for teachers when it limited their ability to enact their beliefs in implementing inclusive education and their efficacy in supporting all learners in their

classrooms. Concerns were raised about policies designed by legislators who lack an understanding of the realities within schools or hold negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) noted that while interest in inclusive education is growing, there remains confusion over how to translate policy into practice effectively. One explanation for this gap is that many policymakers are unlikely to have first-hand experience of inclusive classrooms. The disconnect between policy and practice could be addressed, at least in part, by policymakers seeking and considering the views of teachers when determining inclusive education policies.

While teachers in this study demonstrated positive attitudes towards inclusive education and a desire to implement it effectively, some perspectives in this study challenged the principle of inclusive education, that all classrooms can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners (Ali et al., 2006). The challenges and tensions experienced caused teachers to reconsider whether all learners' needs are met in inclusive classrooms or whether resource schools might be more beneficial for some. While resource schools provide specialised support, they also separate LDN from their typically developing peers. Therefore, these schools may be considered by some not to align with the principles of inclusive education. These findings were consistent with the belief held by some that learners learn best in specialised environments alongside learners with similar needs (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2015). This echoed findings in the literature, where some teachers supported inclusive education in principle but found it challenging to implement in practice (Moberg & Savolainen, 2003). It was unclear in the current study whether participants held conflicting beliefs about inclusive education, or whether the tensions they felt about the effectiveness of inclusive education in their context led them to reflect on other options available for learners.

5.3.2 Teachers' Personal Perspectives and Experiences Can Create Tensions in Their Expectations of Schools and Interpersonal Relationships

This study revealed that tensions arose from teachers' personal perspectives and past experiences, which influenced their expectations of schools. The teachers reported strong foundations in cultural inclusion and culturally responsive teaching from their ITE and teaching experience in New Zealand classrooms; however, these expectations were challenged when transitioning to international contexts. Some teachers commended their schools' ability to be culturally responsive, while others observed tokenistic attempts at culturally responsive teaching.

These tensions may be rooted in New Zealand's relatively long history of inclusive education (McMenamin, 2017), which likely shaped these teachers' expectations, having experienced this system throughout their schooling, practicums during ITE, and as teachers in classrooms. Research has shown that prior experiences with inclusive education significantly influence teachers' attitudes and experiences (Miesera et al., 2021). While some of the teachers attempted to share their knowledge to positively influence colleagues, the findings suggest that further PD in culturally responsive teaching is needed to deepen understanding and encourage more authentic practices in international contexts.

The impact of personal experiences on teachers' expectations of learners, families and TAs also contributed to tensions experienced by the teachers in the current study. These tensions appeared to have affected their interactions with these stakeholders, supporting findings from other studies that link personal experience to expectations of inclusive education (Clark-Howard, 2019; Miesera et al., 2021; Woodcock, 2013). A key issue that emerged from these findings was how teachers' prior experiences shaped their approach to relationships with learners, families and TAs in international contexts. In the current study, some teachers viewed their teaching methods as more effective than local practices, without reflecting on the socio-cultural differences in their international context. This suggested a disconnect between local and international teaching practices. In their study of international teachers working in Malaysia, Bailey (2015) reported similar attitudes despite learners identifying the benefits of Western and local teaching methods. This highlights that tension may arise from teachers lacking awareness of how their previous experiences influence their current interactions and expectations in new contexts. This is a factor teachers can influence by developing a deeper understanding of local practices to improve these relationships, particularly with families, thereby ensuring they are seen as truly equal partners in the education of their children (McWayne et al., 2022).

Contrasting perspectives on inclusive education among teachers themselves further created tension because they can lead to different views on how inclusive education should be implemented. These differences may stem from varying understandings of inclusive education and expectations for its implementation, which can vary between teachers, schools and countries (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). This was evident in the disconnect between teachers' definitions of inclusive education, the experiences and challenges they described, and how they

perceived inclusive education should be implemented. This disconnect highlighted a broader tension between the ideals of inclusive education and its real-world application.

These findings emphasised the important role of teachers as reflective practitioners and taking the time to understand their biases. Some teachers in the study may not have fully recognised the extent to which their biases, shaped by past experiences, influenced their perceptions and practices in international contexts. This highlights the need for ongoing reflection on how teachers' prior experiences shape their expectations of learners and their roles in international contexts. Mittler (2000) stated that it is more effective for teachers to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs and values, and their relationship with their practice, than to implement specific teaching strategies. By engaging in this reflective process, teachers can better understand their biases and work towards more effective inclusive education practices.

5.4 Implications and Recommendations

This study's implications and recommendations are multifaceted and highlight intrapersonal, interpersonal, systemic and structural factors that influence inclusive education in international contexts. These implications and recommendations can be used to guide teachers and school leaders towards more effective implementation of inclusive education and to support the development of quality educational practices for LDN. While many factors may be out of the control of teachers, requiring systemic changes, this study identified intrapersonal and interpersonal factors within teachers' control that they can focus on. Ensuring that teachers and learners receive the support they need may reduce the tensions surrounding inclusive education, leading to more effective implementation.

5.4.1 Implications of Intrapersonal Factors for Teachers

This research has highlighted the need for teachers to participate in ongoing training and development. Thus, the implications and recommendations focus on ongoing PD and self-development for teachers that provide them with the knowledge and adaptive skills necessary for working in diverse contexts. To support their ongoing development, teachers could:

- Reflect on their own personal biases and past experiences to deepen their understanding of the ways these impact their relationships and perceptions of how other cultures support LDN.

- Develop an understanding of the local culture where they work through their relationships with learners, families, colleagues and the local community.
- Advocate for their learners and themselves when additional support or training is needed.
- Seek PD opportunities and actively participate in ongoing self-directed learning.

5.4.2 Implications of Interpersonal Factors for Teachers

Interpersonal factors discussed in this study were significantly influenced by socio-cultural and intrapersonal factors; therefore, changes in those factors could impact interpersonal factors. However, the following recommendations are made specifically to support teachers' relationships with LDN and their families. To support these relationships, teachers could:

- Develop adaptable intercultural communication skills to support collaboration between teachers, families and LDN.
- Utilise colleagues who are knowledgeable about the local culture when approaching sensitive subjects with families.

5.4.3 Implications of Structural and Systemic Factors for School Leaders

This research has broad implications for schools. The impacts of how systemic changes affect the structural organisation of schools should be considered by school leadership. By addressing these areas, the findings of this study can positively influence inclusive education practices in schools, particularly those with teachers from abroad. To do this, school leaders could:

- Advocate for adequate resources and support that align with individual schools' visions of inclusive education.
- Reduce the stigma surrounding LDN by promoting awareness and providing training to staff and school communities, especially in countries where inclusive education is not widely accepted.
- Promote a culture of inclusiveness in schools and communities, and prioritise the associated values.

Teachers should not be discouraged by the challenges they face from focusing on meeting the needs of all learners in their classrooms and prioritising their needs. While support may sometimes be lacking, knowing when and who to ask for support is important for teachers.

Continuing to build strong relationships with families to enhance collaboration between home and school, should be another important focus for teachers.

5.5 Strengths and Limitations

This research's findings provide valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of New Zealand-trained teachers implementing inclusive education in international contexts. In recognising this, it is important to recognise the particular strengths and limitations of the study when interpreting its results.

A strength of the study was the use of semi-structured interviews, which allowed for in-depth exploration of study participants' experiences and provided opportunities for clarification when needed. This method helped gather rich qualitative data. While a questionnaire may have provided more responses and a larger sample size, interviews were chosen for their ability to provide more detailed insights. However, using interviews has also meant the data was entirely self-reported. No direct observations were made regarding participants' actual teaching practices or how those practices had been influenced by their experiences. Another strength of the study was my experience as a New Zealand-trained teacher working in an international context, as this informed my ability to engage with, analyse and make sense of the data. This experience, along with the qualitative research approach, allowed the study to provide an in-depth understanding of New Zealand-trained teachers' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in international contexts and address a gap in the literature about inclusive education.

One key limitation of the study is that the findings may not be generalised to all New Zealand-trained teachers working in international contexts. The current study included a focus on a small group of teachers and their unique experiences. The use of convenience sampling was effective in recruiting participants within the scope of the study, but it may have restricted the diversity of the participants. It may also be more likely that participants with more positive attitudes towards inclusive education were inclined to participate. Furthermore, participants were informed that I was completing a Master of Education in Inclusive Education, which may have led them to presume I advocated for inclusive education. This awareness could have influenced their responses, possibly making them more supportive of inclusive education than they might have been in other settings.

While noting these limitations, it is hoped that this research will provide valuable information for other New Zealand-trained teachers considering a move to teach in international contexts and offer insights into inclusive education practices in diverse international contexts.

5.6 Future Research

The findings from this study highlighted several areas where further research could provide additional insights into the implementation of inclusive education, specifically in international contexts. The themes identified in the study could be further researched through a larger sample size by using a method such as questionnaires to see if they are applicable in a wider variety of contexts. With the increase in teachers moving to teach in other countries (Burke, 2017; Tasdemir & Gümüsok, 2022), further research is also needed to understand the challenges teachers face and identify ways these challenges can be mitigated.

To help teachers continue to develop their skills, future research is needed to understand how PD can better support teachers in implementing inclusive education. Types of PD that would support teachers' ability to provide effective inclusive education for all learners, particularly in international schools where staff turnover is high, could also be researched.

Future research could also examine the challenges and tensions teachers experience when working in international contexts, especially concerning their interactions with families, TAs and learners. Understanding how teachers' prior experiences and biases influence these tensions would help develop strategies to navigate cultural differences effectively. Additionally, studies could explore teachers' perspectives on the suitability of resource schools versus inclusive classrooms and investigate how school leadership and policymakers can address the apparent gap between inclusive education policy and its practical implementation in schools. These issues are significant for future research to better understand how leadership can positively influence the implementation of inclusive education.

5.7 Researcher Reflections

As a teacher who was raised and studied in New Zealand, I approached this study with some understanding of the country's foundations in inclusive education. However, the findings revealed that while New Zealand's policies and teacher training provide a solid foundation, teachers require ongoing support to ensure that inclusive education is implemented effectively. Challenges faced increase when teachers move to work in international contexts due to

additional factors such as socio-cultural influences. However, throughout the interview process, I was encouraged by the participants' positive attitudes towards inclusive education and the efforts they made to implement it effectively. Although there were many challenges faced by the participants in this study that resonated with me in my own teaching context, none of the participants indicated any thoughts on changing their positive attitudes towards inclusive education, except in the comments made regarding resource schools. However, these comments were made with a desire to ensure LDN receive the best support possible and in light of concerns about meeting all needs in an inclusive classroom. These attitudes have given me hope for the future of inclusive education and I believe that with ongoing research and the training of passionate, committed teachers, the implementation of inclusive education will continue to improve and better meet the needs of all learners around the world.

5.8 Final Conclusion

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on inclusive education by examining the experiences of New Zealand-trained teachers working in international contexts. It highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing the factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education. Additionally, it emphasises the need for greater awareness and the action necessary to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared and supported to implement inclusive education effectively. Teachers' experiences, framed by the various challenges they face when transitioning between countries, provide valuable insights into how inclusive education can be better understood and supported globally.

This study showed that systemic and structural factors shape teachers' experiences, including inclusive education policies, socio-cultural attitudes towards LDN and the pressures of marketisation in schools. Teachers often encountered significant challenges due to inadequate funding, limited PD and a disconnect between inclusive education policies and classroom practices. Such challenges highlight the need for stronger systemic support to ensure that inclusive education is not just a theoretical ideal but a practical reality in schools worldwide.

This study highlighted the challenges of effective intercultural communication in the interpersonal relationships the teachers in the study experienced with families and learners. These challenges stemmed from varying communication styles, perspectives and understandings of inclusive education. Understanding different communication styles between teachers, families, TAs and schools is important to fostering a collaborative approach to supporting LDN.

Finally, the study showed that teachers' experiences are influenced by intrapersonal factors such as their prior experiences, personal perspectives and perceived knowledge. For some teachers, these experiences and perspectives created tensions when working in contexts that did not align with their beliefs or did not meet their expectations. This suggests the importance of teachers reflecting upon their own experiences and perspectives, and resulting biases, when working in international contexts.

In conclusion, this research demonstrated that teachers play a vital role in shaping inclusive education. Their reflective, adaptive and collaborative skills are essential in addressing the challenges they face in ensuring that inclusive education is successful in diverse contexts. By fostering a deeper understanding of the factors influencing teachers' perceptions and experiences, and offering the necessary support, inclusive education can be implemented more effectively globally, allowing all learners to thrive in environments where they are valued, respected and supported. This is the essence of truly inclusive education.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Simplified Interview Guide

Please note that this research is qualitative and the interview format is semi-structured. This means that not all topics may be covered and some may be covered more in-depth. This will depend on the experiences and perceptions you share during the interview.

Research topic: New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive education in international contexts

Interview question topics:

- Information about your current school and role
- Diversity within your learner population
- Experiences of New Zealand teacher education
- What inclusive education means to you and your personal experiences with it in NZ
- Benefits and challenges of inclusive education
- Approach to inclusion in your school and influences on this (systemic, cultural, political etc.)
- Experiences of inclusion in your current role
- Experiences supporting students with English as an additional language in your role
- Alignment (and possible tensions) of your personal beliefs and values and inclusion at your school
- Inclusion as a priority of leadership at your school
- Professional development opportunities

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. To get us underway today, can you tell me where you currently teach, and a little about your school and teaching role?
    a. How long have you been teaching there?
    b. What is the age group of the children you teach?
    c. How many students are in your school?
    d. What is the main language of instruction at your school?
    e. Have you had experience in any other international settings?

2. In your role, can you tell me about the diversity of the students that you teach?
    a. This may include learners with additional needs, language delays and diverse cultural backgrounds.
    b. Is this pretty typical of other classes at your school?

3. This study is focusing on the experience of NZ-trained teachers in international settings. Could you tell me about your initial teacher education (teacher training) in NZ?
    a. How long ago did you complete your training?
    b. Was inclusive education part of your teacher training programme?
    c. Did you go on to teach in NZ after your training?
    d. Prior to, during or after your training, have you had any personal relationships with people with diverse needs (friends or family members)?
    e. Have you completed any postgraduate education since your original teacher training?

4. In this study I am looking at the experiences of inclusive education in international settings. To start, could you tell me about what the term inclusive education means to you?
    a. Did you have experience with inclusive classrooms (if/when) you were teaching or while you were in school in NZ?
    b. What are some of the values that are most important to you in relation to inclusion?

5. Ok, so just continuing with your views of inclusive education, can you tell me about your personal beliefs about inclusion in education settings?
    a. What do you see as the benefits of inclusive education?
    b. Do you see any challenges to inclusive education?

6. Thinking now about your current teaching context, what would be the approach to/beliefs about inclusive education in your school?
    a. How do you see these beliefs being influenced by the context of your setting?
    b. Are there political or cultural factors that influence the approach to inclusive education?
    c. Are there policy or legislative guidelines that inform the approach to inclusive education in this context, that you're aware of?

7. Can you tell me about your experiences of inclusive education in your current role?
    a. Are there any structural or systemic factors that have an impact on how you are able to implement an inclusive approach in your current role? In a positive or negative way?
    b. Can you tell me about any specific teaching practices or values that you use in your current classroom to support inclusive education?
    c. Do you feel you have support for your approach to inclusive education in your current context?
    d. Are there any barriers that you have experienced in supporting inclusive education in your current setting, can you describe these for me? Any barriers from leadership or management in your role?

    e. Do you work alongside any TAs or support staff in relation to including diverse learners in your setting? Can you tell me about how these different roles might function in your classroom? Or what have you observed their roles are in your school?

8. Thank you so much for all the information that you have shared so far. I am also interested in finding out more about the experiences of students who use English as an additional language in your setting. Could you please describe whether this is a challenge you face in your current role and how these learners are supported?
    a. Would students receive extra support for language learning? How does that work?
    b. How might you distinguish between language learning and language needs?

9. Have your experiences here aligned with your own philosophy/beliefs/values in relation to inclusive teaching practice?
    a. How do these experiences align with your teacher training and experiences in New Zealand? Are there any tensions that you have experienced? Explain tensions
    b. Have you experienced any challenges in maintaining your personal teaching philosophy while teaching in international contexts or do you feel they are supported?
    c. Have you felt the need to change or adapt your teaching philosophy to your current context? In what ways?

10. Could you describe your experiences in regard to the support or views of management/leadership in your context?
    a. Have you seen these impact the inclusion of learners with diverse needs?
    b. How do they support teachers to meet the needs of all learners?

11. Have you engaged in any professional development and learning about inclusive education while employed in your current school?
    a. Can you tell me about the training? Did you find it valuable? Do you think you would benefit from more/different training?
    b. What about in your previous international contexts?

12. Do you plan to continue your international teaching career?

13. Thank you so much for your time, that's all the questions I have for you. Is there anything you feel you would like to add?

14. Thank you so much for your time, it was lovely to meet you and if you do have any questions or concerns after the interview, feel free to contact me.

Appendix C: Ethics Application Approval

Saturday, November 2, 2024 at 20:58:34 Indochina Time

Subject: [HE007] - Human Ethics Notification - 4000028091
Date: Tuesday, 24 October BE 2566 01:59:36 Indochina Time
From: humanethics@massey.ac.nz
To: Elizabeth.Beattie.5@uni.massey.ac.nz, A.Denston@massey.ac.nz, K.M.Aspden@massey.ac.nz
CC: humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Kia ora,

Link to application
HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000028091
Project Title: Perceptions of New Zealand trained teachers implementing inclusive education in an international context

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as low risk.

Your project has been recorded in our database for inclusion in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify the Human Ethics Team if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Research Ethics Office, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note:

If a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "Yes" to the publication question in order to complete

a full application for review by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter:

1. Please login to the RIMS system (https://rme.massey.ac.nz).
2. In the Ethics menu, select Ethics Applications.
3. Using the Advanced option, select Ethics Applications (Area), Application ID (Search On), enter the ethics notification number in the Value area and select Find on the toolbar.
4. With the application the Results Tab, tick the empty box on the far left of the application and select Reports from the toolbar.
5. Select the "Human Ethics - Low Risk Notification Letter" link, this will open the report viewer.
6. Select the application code from the Report Parameters dropdown and submit. You can then select an export option from the top toolbar (Print, Save).

Yours sincerely

Professor Tracy Riley
Acting Chair, Research Ethics Chairs' Committee and Acting Director, Research Ethics

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive education in an international context

INFORMATION SHEET

Who am I?
My name is Elizabeth Beattie. I am currently undertaking a research project as part of my Master of Education (Inclusive Education) at Massey University's Institute of Education. The aim of this research is to help guide and develop my professional practice as an educator and contribute to the literature base of New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive education in international contexts.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to be part of my research project.

What is this research about?
New Zealand has placed value and importance on inclusive education by embedding it into education policies and pre- and in-service teacher training. This can pose a challenge when teachers shift to teaching internationally in countries that interpret inclusive education differently or do not have a history of embedding it in policy and practice. This study aims to examine the experiences and perceptions of teachers who trained in New Zealand but now work in international contexts and the enablers, barriers and tensions teachers experience when implementing inclusive education in international contexts.

Why am I being asked to take part?
You have been invited to participate as you have been identified as a New Zealand-trained teacher working in an international context. Your participation is completely voluntary and deciding not to participate or withdrawing from the study will not negatively affect your relationship with myself, my supervisors or Massey University.

What benefits will the research bring?
This research will contribute to the knowledge base regarding understanding the experiences and perceptions of New Zealand-trained teachers implementing inclusive education in international contexts. As a participant in this research, you will receive a summary of the research findings.

What will I be asked to do?
- Participate in one online interview with me. The interview will be no longer than 90 minutes and will be conducted via Zoom at your convenience in February or March 2024. This interview will be recorded, although you have the right to request recording to cease.
- You will be sent a copy of your interview transcript to review and edit, although this is optional.

What will happen to the data?
The data is confidential and will be safely stored on my password-protected computer. Participants will have the option to request pseudonyms, which means no names or other identifying details of individuals will be used in the report if selected. Quotations from your interviews may be used in the

thesis without any identifying information if a pseudonym is used. My research supervisors will have access to the data and examiners selected by Massey University will mark my report.

What rights do I have?
You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. It is not expected that you will experience any harm or discomfort through participating in this research. It is intended that the interviews will be an open, honest and professional discussion about your experiences and perceptions. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Withdraw from the study up until data is analysed April 30th, 2024.
- Ask any questions about the study at any time prior to or during participation.
- Be given a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for breaks if questions are found to be hard.
- Decline to answer any questions.
- Ask for an interview not to be recorded at any time.

If you have any concerns about the research, you can contact myself or my research supervisors using the details below.

Researcher	**Research Supervisor**
Elizabeth Beattie Email: [redacted]@massey.ac.nz Phone: [redacted]	Amanda Denston Email: a.denston@massey.ac.nz Phone: [redacted] Karyn Aspden Email: K.M.Aspden@massey.ac.nz

If you agree to take part in my research project, please complete the attached consent form and scan or photograph and return it to me via email at [redacted]@massey.ac.nz

Ngā mihi nui,

Elizabeth Beattie
Student ID: [redacted]

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Research Ethics Office, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

New Zealand-trained teachers' experiences and perceptions of inclusive education in an international context

CONSENT FORM

Please tick each statement you agree with.

- ☐ I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ I understand what is required of me if I agree to participate in the research.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- ☐ I understand I may withdraw from the research at any time without consequences.
- ☐ I understand that my withdrawal includes the withdrawal of information I have provided, until April 30th, 2024.
- ☐ I understand that any of my information or opinions provided will be kept confidential.
- ☐ I understand that what I say may be used as quotations in the final report.
- ☐ I understand that any published outputs or reported results will not identify the participants, without prior consent.
- ☐ I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in password-protected electronic form.
- ☐ I understand that my interview will be recorded. I understand how these recordings will be stored and used.
- ☐ I understand that I can contact the research supervisors, Dr. Amanda Denston (a.denston@massey.ac.nz) and Dr. Karyn Aspden (k.m.aspden@massey.ac.nz) if I have any questions.
- ☐ I would like a summary of the results of the project.
- ☐ I understand that I have chosen to be identified as part of this research. I understand the risks associated with this.
  OR
- ☐ I understand that I have not chosen to be identified as part of this research. I understand that I have chosen to use _____ as my pseudonym.
- ☐ By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Please return this form to my email at [redacted]@massey.ac.nz

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Full Name – printed .....

Email (for summary) .....

Appendix F: Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND
Institute of Education - Te Kura o Te Mātauranga
Massey University Manawatū
Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North 4442
New Zealand

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This confidentiality agreement is critical to ensure ethical compliance and protect the confidentiality of the research data. It safeguards the privacy and information of all parties involved, upholds responsible research conduct, and maintains trust and integrity of the research process.

I ..... (Full Name - printed) agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep all the information provided to me confidential.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: ..... **Date:** .....

Researcher Contact: Elizabeth Beattie
Email: [redacted]@massey.ac.nz
Phone: [redacted]