Enhancing Teachers' Resilience in Special Needs Education

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Abstract

Teachers working in special needs education face numerous challenges that demand resilience at emotional, cognitive, and physical levels. Resilience is essential in managing classroom complexities, navigating policy changes, and ensuring the well-being of both students and educators. This study aims to investigate factors influencing teachers' resilience in special needs education and identify effective strategies for fostering and maintaining resilience. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data from special needs educators. Through statistical analysis and thematic evaluation, this research identifies key determinants of teacher resilience, including support systems, workload management, professional development, and coping mechanisms.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the personal, institutional, and policy-related factors that shape resilience among teachers. The results will inform policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders on effective interventions and strategies to support teachers in special needs education. Given the increasing prevalence of burnout and attrition in the teaching profession, fostering resilience is vital for sustaining a high-quality, inclusive education system.

Keywords: Teacher resilience, special needs education, burnout, coping mechanisms, inclusive education.

Introduction

The field of special needs education presents a unique set of challenges that require educators to exhibit a high degree of resilience. Teachers working with students who have physical, emotional, cognitive, or developmental disabilities must adapt their teaching methodologies to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. This requires individualized learning strategies, additional emotional labor, and specialized pedagogical approaches. Unlike general education teachers, special needs educators often encounter higher emotional and psychological demands, as they must address not only academic instruction but also behavioral management, emotional support, and social inclusion for their students (Mansfield et al., 2011).

In many educational settings, special needs teachers work with limited resources, making their jobs even more challenging. Insufficient funding, lack of access to appropriate teaching materials, inadequate classroom accommodations, and large student-to-teacher ratios create additional burdens (Chibwe & Mulenga, 2021). These stressors can lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and high turnover rates, ultimately impacting the quality of education for students with disabilities. Furthermore, societal perceptions and institutional challenges, such as discrimination, policy inefficiencies, and lack of institutional support, exacerbate these difficulties (Sharma, 2015).

Given these realities, resilience plays a crucial role in helping special needs educators navigate their professional challenges, maintain job satisfaction, and sustain their commitment to inclusive education. Resilience is not just an individual trait but also a product of systemic support, professional development, and coping mechanisms that enable teachers to thrive despite adversity (Raman, 2014; Daud et al., 2015; Raman et al., 2015; Rathakrishnan et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2019; Raman, 2019). This study explores the factors that influence resilience among special needs educators and investigates effective strategies for fostering resilience, ensuring that teachers remain motivated, engaged, and capable of providing high-quality education for students with special needs.

Background

Education is a fundamental human right, and inclusive education plays a pivotal role in ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to learning opportunities (United Nations, 2016). The principles of inclusive education advocate for the full participation of students with disabilities in mainstream educational settings, ensuring that they receive the same opportunities for learning and personal development as their peers (Sharma, 2014). However, the effectiveness of inclusive education depends significantly on the preparedness, resilience, and well-being of the educators responsible for implementing it.

Special needs teachers face a myriad of challenges that impact their professional resilience. First, there is a significant lack of resources, including specialized teaching materials, assistive technologies, and classroom modifications that facilitate learning for students with disabilities (Uromi & Mazagwa, 2014). Many special education teachers work in underfunded schools, where they must improvise or seek external funding to meet the needs of their students. This resource gap increases stress levels, making it harder for teachers to feel confident and effective in their roles.

Another major stressor is limited professional training. While many teachers undergo basic teacher training programs, special needs education requires specialized knowledge in disability-inclusive teaching strategies, behavioral management, and differentiated instruction (Snyder, 2019). In many countries, teacher training programs do not sufficiently prepare educators for the realities of special needs classrooms, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and underprepared. Without continuous professional development opportunities, teachers may struggle to adapt to the evolving demands of inclusive education, leading to frustration and burnout.

Emotional strain is another significant factor affecting teacher resilience. Teaching students with disabilities often involves additional emotional labor, as teachers must support students' social and emotional development, manage challenging behaviors, and address the unique learning needs of each student. This emotional investment can lead to compassion fatigue, where teachers feel emotionally drained from consistently providing support without adequate psychological or institutional backing (Mansfield et al., 2011). Additionally, special needs educators may experience vicarious trauma, especially when working with students who have experienced abuse, neglect, or severe psychological disorders (Sareen, 2014).

Social stigma surrounding disabilities further complicates the challenges faced by special needs educators. In some communities, misconceptions and prejudices about disabilities persist, making it difficult for teachers to gain parental and societal support for inclusive education (Sharma, 2015). Some parents may resist the idea of inclusive education, believing that their children should be placed in specialized institutions rather than mainstream schools. Similarly, teachers may face discrimination within their own professional circles, where their work is undervalued compared to that of general education teachers. These social dynamics contribute to feelings of isolation and professional dissatisfaction among special needs educators.

Despite these challenges, resilience plays a crucial role in sustaining teacher effectiveness and motivation. Research suggests that resilient teachers are more likely to remain in the profession, adapt to changing educational demands, and positively influence student outcomes (Creswell, 2014). Factors such as strong support networks, access to mentorship programs, professional learning communities, and institutional backing have been found to significantly enhance teacher resilience (Chibwe & Mulenga, 2021). Schools and policymakers must, therefore, invest in structured resilience-building programs that equip special needs educators with the tools they need to thrive.

Given the increasing emphasis on inclusive education policies worldwide, it is imperative to address the factors that impact teacher resilience. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the key determinants of teacher resilience in special needs education and identifying strategies that can foster long-term job satisfaction, well-being, and professional sustainability. By understanding the challenges and support systems that shape resilience, this research will provide valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher training programs seeking to improve the retention and effectiveness of special needs educators.

Concept of Resilience in Teaching

Resilience in teaching refers to an educator's ability to navigate challenges, adapt to changing environments, and maintain professional efficacy despite adversity (Gu & Day, 2019). Special needs teachers face significant emotional and cognitive demands, making resilience a crucial attribute for sustaining long-term effectiveness in inclusive education. Resilience is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic process that develops through personal experiences, coping strategies, and external support systems (Doney, 2019).

Teachers face numerous challenges in their profession, including demanding workloads, changing educational policies, and the emotional weight of student needs. Recent research

highlights that resilient teachers exhibit strong self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills, enabling them to manage stress and navigate workplace challenges effectively (Luthar, Kumar, & Zillmer, 2020). The resilience framework in education recognizes multiple dimensions that contribute to a teacher's ability to thrive in their profession: emotional, social, professional, and motivational resilience (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2019). Each of these dimensions plays a crucial role in sustaining teachers' well-being and effectiveness in the classroom.

Emotional resilience refers to a teacher's capacity to manage stress, cope with emotional demands, and maintain psychological well-being in challenging situations. Teaching is an emotionally intensive profession, requiring educators to support students academically and emotionally while managing their personal stressors. Resilient teachers develop strategies such as mindfulness, self-care routines, and seeking peer support to regulate their emotions and avoid burnout. Research suggests that emotional resilience is closely linked to self-efficacy—teachers who believe in their ability to make a difference are better equipped to handle adversity and remain committed to their roles. Schools can foster emotional resilience by providing professional development on stress management and creating supportive environments that acknowledge teachers' emotional needs.

Building strong relationships with colleagues, students, and families is a critical component of social resilience. Teaching is a collaborative profession that thrives on positive interpersonal interactions. Socially resilient teachers develop strong communication and conflict-resolution skills, enabling them to work effectively with diverse individuals in their school communities. Supportive professional relationships provide a buffer against stress, allowing teachers to share challenges, seek guidance, and gain emotional encouragement. Additionally, positive relationships with students and their families create a sense of connection and purpose, reinforcing a teacher's motivation and job satisfaction. Schools that promote a culture of collaboration and peer mentorship enhance social resilience, fostering a sense of belonging among educators.

Teachers must constantly adapt to evolving educational policies, changing curriculum standards, and increasing workloads. Professional resilience involves the ability to embrace change, remain flexible, and continue professional growth despite challenges. Teachers with high professional resilience actively seek opportunities for skill development, view challenges as learning experiences, and remain committed to their career despite obstacles. Institutional support, such as access to professional development programs, mentorship opportunities, and reasonable workload expectations, plays a vital role in strengthening teachers' professional resilience. Schools that prioritize continuous learning and adaptability help educators navigate policy shifts with confidence and competence.

Teaching requires sustained motivation, especially in the face of challenges such as student behavioral issues, resource constraints, and bureaucratic pressures. Motivational resilience refers to a teacher's ability to maintain enthusiasm, passion, and a sense of purpose in their work. Teachers who are intrinsically motivated and have a strong sense of professional identity are more likely to persist in their careers, even when faced with adversity. Factors that enhance

motivational resilience include setting personal teaching goals, engaging in reflective practices, and receiving positive feedback from students and colleagues. Schools that recognize and celebrate teachers' contributions can strengthen motivational resilience, ensuring educators remain inspired and dedicated to their profession.

By understanding and fostering emotional, social, professional, and motivational resilience, educators can develop the skills needed to navigate the challenges of teaching while maintaining their well-being and effectiveness. Schools and policymakers must prioritize resilience-building strategies to create a supportive environment that empowers teachers to thrive in their roles.

Resilience is especially critical in special needs education, where teachers must frequently modify instruction, address behavioral challenges, and provide emotional support (Johnson et al., 2021). The theoretical frameworks for understanding teacher resilience are based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory remains a foundational framework for understanding resilience in teaching. The model explains how various environmental factors shape an individual's ability to adapt to stress and challenges. Recent studies (Lee & Kemple, 2020) have applied this model to teacher resilience, highlighting the importance of school leadership, peer support, and community involvement in sustaining resilience among special needs educators.

The model consists of interconnected layers influencing teachers' resilience. The microsystem includes direct interactions with students, parents, and school leadership, shaping teachers' daily experiences, motivation, and emotional well-being. Supportive relationships in this system enhance resilience, while conflicts can increase stress. The mesosystem involves interactions between these microsystem elements, such as teacher-parent collaboration and teamwork among educators. Strong mesosystem connections create a cohesive support network, improving communication, shared responsibility, and job satisfaction. The exosystem includes indirect influences like educational policies, funding, and community resources. Though teachers don't control these factors, they significantly affect workload, access to professional development, and job security. The macrosystem encompasses societal and cultural perceptions of education and disabilities. Public attitudes, policies, and values shape how teachers are supported and recognized, influencing their professional identity, morale, and long-term resilience in the field.

Applying this model to special needs education suggests that teacher resilience is shaped by both personal coping mechanisms and external support structures (Slemp, Jach, Chia, Loton, & Vella-Brodrick, 2019).

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) is one of the most widely used measures of resilience. Recent adaptations of the scale (Wagnild, 2021) have been applied to assess resilience in teachers, revealing that key protective factors include self-efficacy, social support, and positive coping mechanisms. In a study of special education teachers, Huang et al. (2022) found that teachers with higher resilience scores reported lower levels of burnout and greater job satisfaction.

Burnout is a major challenge in special needs education, as teachers frequently encounter stress, emotional exhaustion, and compassion fatigue (Howard & Johnson, 2021). A study by Liu & Onwuegbuzie (2020) found that emotional exhaustion is the leading predictor of teacher attrition, particularly in inclusive education settings. Teachers face significant challenges in managing students with complex needs, including behavioral, cognitive, and emotional disabilities, requiring specialized strategies, patience, and additional resources. Heavy workloads and administrative tasks add to their stress, leaving less time for lesson planning and student engagement. Additionally, a lack of emotional support from colleagues and school leadership can lead to isolation and burnout, making it essential for schools to foster a supportive and collaborative work environment.Resilient teachers adopt proactive coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness training, self-reflection, and stress management programs (Bakker & de Vries, 2019).

Research has shown that school leadership plays a crucial role in fostering teacher resilience**.** Supportive principals, clear communication, and access to professional development programs contribute significantly to teachers' ability to cope with stress (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2022). Mentorship programs provide new teachers with guidance by pairing them with experienced educators, fostering professional growth and confidence. Collaborative teaching environments promote teamwork and knowledge-sharing, enhancing instructional quality and support. Reduced workload strategies, such as allocating resources and balancing responsibilities, help prevent burnout, ensuring teachers remain effective and motivated.

A key factor influencing resilience is the availability of teaching resources (Freeman, 2021). Studies indicate that teachers with access to adequate instructional materials, assistive technology, and classroom support staff experience lower stress levels and greater job satisfaction (Smith & Lee, 2023).

Table 1
Impact of Resource Availability on Teacher Resilience

Resource Type	Effect on Resilience
Assistive Technology	Improves instructional effectiveness
Classroom Aides	Reduces teacher workload
Professional Training	Increases confidence and self-efficacy
Emotional Support Programs	Enhances teacher well-being

Policy interventions should focus on improving access to resources to enhance teacher resilience.

Recent studies highlight the importance of professional learning communities (PLCs) in strengthening resilience (Meijer, Geijsel, Kuijpers, Boei, & Vrieling, 2022). Peer networks, online teacher forums, and collaborative teaching models provide teachers with a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. Teachers who actively participate in PLCs report higher resilience scores and lower burnout rates (Hobbs & Davis, 2023).

Mindfulness-based interventions have been widely recognized as effective resilience-building strategies (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, & Rasheed, 2021). Mindfulness training enhances emotional regulation, reduces stress, and improves overall teacher well-being.

Ongoing professional development is critical for maintaining teacher resilience. Research suggests that training programs focusing on differentiated instruction, behavior management, and trauma-informed teaching significantly enhance teacher confidence and reduce burnout (Jansen, 2022).

Governments and educational institutions play a crucial role in enhancing teacher resilience by implementing supportive policies. Increased funding for special needs education ensures adequate resources, specialized training, and classroom support, helping teachers manage students with diverse needs effectively. Flexible workload distribution and mental health support programs can reduce stress by balancing administrative tasks, providing counseling services, and promoting self-care initiatives. Additionally, stronger legislative frameworks for inclusive education ensure that schools have clear guidelines, sufficient funding, and necessary training to create an equitable learning environment. These policies collectively foster a supportive educational system where teachers feel valued, empowered, and resilient.
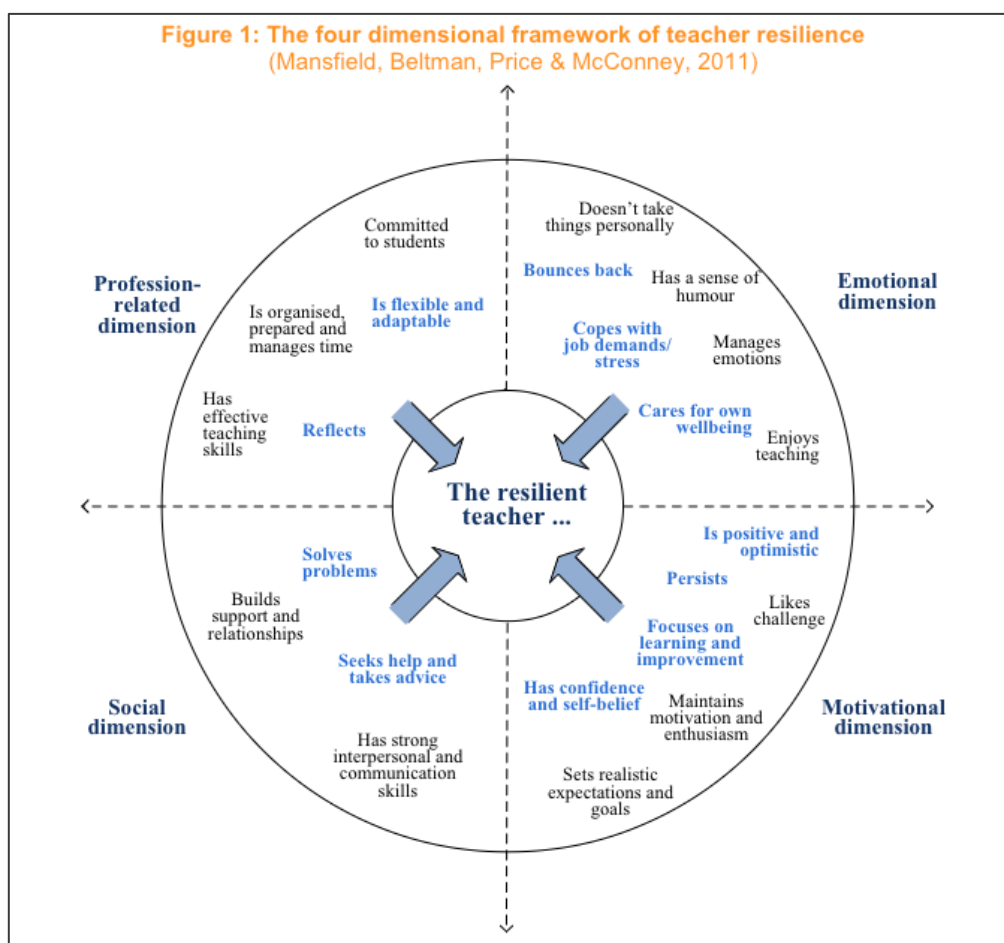

Figure 1: Key Components of Teacher Resilience in Special Needs Education

The literature suggests that teacher resilience is a complex, multidimensional construct influenced by personal, professional, and institutional factors. Resilience frameworks such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale provide valuable insights into how teachers adapt to stress and maintain effectiveness in special needs education.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of social support networks, mindfulness training, leadership engagement, and resource availability in fostering resilience. This review underscores the need for systematic interventions to support special needs educators, ensuring higher retention rates, job satisfaction, and better student outcomes.

This research employs a mixed-methods research design to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher resilience in special needs education. The combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews allows for both generalizable findings and an in-depth exploration of individual experiences. A convergent parallel mixed-methods approach, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2023), is utilized. This design ensures that both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed separately before being integrated during the interpretation stage. By adopting this approach, the study aims to capture the complex, multidimensional nature of resilience in special needs education.

This study is poised to uncover the critical factors that significantly enhance resilience among special needs educators, providing valuable insights for improving their professional well-being and effectiveness. It seeks to identify the key determinants that contribute to teachers' ability to cope with the challenges associated with special needs education. Additionally, the study aims to explore the strategies that teachers employ to develop and maintain resilience in their professional roles. By examining these coping mechanisms, the research intends to provide a deeper understanding of how educators navigate the emotional, physical, and cognitive demands of working with students with disabilities. Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the role of institutional and policy interventions in fostering teacher resilience. This includes analyzing how school leadership, government policies, and institutional support structures contribute to strengthening resilience among special needs educators.

To guide the quantitative analysis, the study proposes three hypotheses based on existing literature. The first hypothesis (H1) suggests that higher levels of social support, particularly from colleagues, school leadership, and family, are positively correlated with teacher resilience. This implies that educators who receive strong emotional, professional, and institutional support are more likely to exhibit higher resilience in their teaching careers. The second hypothesis (H2) proposes that teachers with greater access to professional development opportunities report significantly higher resilience scores. This hypothesis is based on the premise that continuous learning and skill enhancement equip teachers with better coping strategies and confidence, thereby improving their ability to manage stress and adapt to challenges. The third hypothesis (H3) posits that increased workload and limited access to resources negatively impact teacher resilience. This suggests that excessive job demands, coupled with inadequate teaching materials and institutional support, contribute to higher levels

of burnout and emotional exhaustion, ultimately diminishing resilience among special needs educators.

The study follows a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach, which integrates quantitative and qualitative methodologies to enhance the robustness of the findings. The quantitative component involves a structured survey distributed to special needs educators, assessing factors such as workload, social support, professional development opportunities, and resilience levels. The qualitative component consists of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with selected educators, aiming to explore their lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of institutional support. The rationale for this design is that quantitative methods provide statistical evidence of patterns and relationships, while qualitative methods offer rich insights into teachers' personal experiences and emotions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2022).

The study focuses on special needs educators working in inclusive education settings across primary and secondary schools. The target population includes teachers from both urban and rural areas, ensuring a diverse representation of experiences and challenges. Since resilience is influenced by teaching environment, institutional support, and years of experience, the sample includes educators from various experience levels, school settings, and professional backgrounds.

A stratified random sampling technique is used to ensure a balanced representation of different categories. The sample is divided based on school type (primary and secondary), school location (urban and rural), and teaching experience (early-career, mid-career, and senior educators). A minimum sample size of 300 teachers is selected for the quantitative survey, following the guidelines of Krejcie and Morgan (2021) for an adequately powered study. Additionally, 20 in-depth interviews are conducted to provide qualitative insights into the resilience experiences of special needs educators. The sample distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Sample Distribution of Participants

Category	Number of Participants
Primary School Teachers	150
Secondary School Teachers	150
Rural Schools	100
Urban Schools	200
Total Sample	300

Data Collection

Quantitative data are obtained through a formalised online survey administered via email and institutional networks.) Our survey consists of Likert-scale questions (1-5) aimed at measuring factors affecting teacher resilience, such as workload, social support, access to professional development, and mental health coping strategies. Research Validity: The Connor-Davidson

International Journal of Instruction, Technology, and Social Sciences
Vol. 4, 115-129, 2025
ISSN: 2716-6546
www.ijitsc.net

Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) has been widely validated in educational research and has been adapted for the purposes of measuring teacher resilience (Wagnild, 2021).

In addition to quantitative data, semi-structured interviews with 20 special needs educators are conducted to collect qualitative data to better understand the experiences, coping mechanisms, and resilience strategies of special needs educators in Bangaladesh. There are questions on stressors, emotional health, institutional help, and staying resilient: all these aspects of mental well-being in a task-oriented voice. Moreover, we also organize 2 focus groups (5-7 teachers each) to further understand collective perspectives towards resilience-building policies and institutional support. Qualitative data collection aims to obtain rich narrative accounts and contextual information that are not easily quantifiable.

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques are used to analyze quantitative data on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The researcher provide descriptive statistics that describe the demographic characteristics, workload levels, and resilience scores among teachers. The hypothesis testing focuses on the analysis of correlations that examine relationships between resilience, workload, professional development, and increased social support as key theoretical variables. Moreover, multiple regression analysis identifies the most potent predictors of teacher resilience, showing which factors significantly affect it.

The qualitative data from interviews and focus groups is thematically analyzed according to Braun and Clarke's (2022) framework. The text is transcribed, coded, and organized into main themes related to institutional support, personal coping strategies, and job satisfaction. Systematic analysis helps to identify common patterns and contextual elements across resilience experiences which may lead towards a deeper understanding of resilience processes.

Ethical approval for this research follows the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki (2018) and institutional research ethics protocols. The study is voluntary, and all participants were presented with an informed consent form detailing the study objectives, measures taken for confidentiality, and information about their right to withdraw at any time. Data was de-identified before analysis to preserve de-identification and anonymity for all personal data and pseudonyms are used for all interview transcripts. Ethics approval Ethics approval is obtained, prior to data collection commencing, from the relevant institutional review board (IRB).

There are several engagement practices that improve the reliability and validity of the study. To increase validity and reliability, they pilot test the survey instrument (with special needs educators) and make adjustments three times in total before finalizing; ultimately they receive 30 usable surveys. Internal consistency was evaluated with Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum reliability coefficient of 0.7. Furthermore, thereis method triangulation since both quantitative and qualitative data are employed; thus, there are cross-validation of findings.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section presents the results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, examining the factors influencing resilience among special needs educators. The findings are structured based on the research questions and hypotheses, integrating statistical analysis and thematic insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher resilience.

The quantitative survey was conducted among 300 special needs educators, representing both primary and secondary school teachers from urban and rural settings. Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	36.7%
	Female	190	63.3%
Teaching Level	Primary	150	50%
	Secondary	150	50%
Experience	1-5 years	90	30%
	6-10 years	120	40%
	11+ years	90	30%
Location	Urban	200	66.7%
	Rural	100	33.3%

The data reveals that 63.3% of respondents were female, with a nearly equal distribution between primary and secondary school teachers. Most participants had 6-10 years of experience (40%), suggesting that mid-career educators formed the largest group. Additionally, two-thirds (66.7%) of the respondents worked in urban schools, highlighting a disparity in rural school representation.

To test the first hypothesis (H1: Higher levels of social support from colleagues, school leadership, and family are positively correlated with teacher resilience), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between social support scores and teacher resilience levels. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Correlation Between Social Support and Teacher Resilience

Variable	Teacher Resilience Score (r-value)	Significance (p-value)
Colleague Support	0.62	0.001 ($p < 0.05$)
Leadership Support	0.58	0.003 ($p < 0.05$)
Family Support	0.47	0.007 ($p < 0.05$)

The analysis demonstrates a statistically significant positive correlation between teacher resilience and social support from colleagues ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$), school leadership ($r = 0.58$,

International Journal of Instruction, Technology, and Social Sciences
Vol. 4, 115-129, 2025
ISSN: 2716-6546
www.ijitsc.net

$p < 0.05$), and family ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.05$). These results support H1, confirming that strong social support networks enhance resilience among special needs educators.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the combined effect of professional development, workload, and resource availability on teacher resilience. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Teacher Resilience

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Professional Development	0.56	4.21	0.002 (p < 0.05)
Workload	-0.48	-3.97	0.001 (p < 0.05)
Resource Availability	0.38	3.12	0.004 (p < 0.05)

The findings indicate that professional development opportunities ($β = 0.56$, $p < 0.05$) significantly enhance resilience, supporting H2. Conversely, increased workload ($β = -0.48$, $p < 0.05$) negatively affects resilience, supporting H3. Resource availability ($β = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$) also has a significant positive effect on teacher resilience.

The qualitative component of the study involved 20 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. Thematic analysis identified three major themes related to teacher resilience in special needs education. Many teachers emphasized the role of school leadership in promoting resilience. Participants from schools with strong administrative support reported higher levels of job satisfaction and emotional well-being. One participant shared:

"The leadership in my school ensures that we have regular debriefing sessions and access to psychological counseling. This makes a huge difference in how we handle stress."

However, teachers in under-resourced schools expressed frustration over a lack of leadership support, stating that poor communication and policy gaps exacerbate their challenges.

Teachers employed various coping mechanisms to manage stress. Common strategies included peer support, mindfulness practices, and professional development engagement. A teacher from an urban school stated:

"Attending resilience training workshops has helped me develop better coping mechanisms. I now use mindfulness techniques to handle daily classroom challenges."

Several teachers also emphasized the importance of mentorship programs, particularly for early-career educators.

Theme 3: Workload and Burnout Challenges

A recurring theme was the impact of excessive workload on teacher resilience. Educators described long working hours, administrative burdens, and lack of classroom support as significant stressors. A participant from a rural school noted:

"We have large class sizes with diverse special needs students, yet minimal support staff. The workload is overwhelming, and many teachers consider leaving the profession."

These findings reinforce the quantitative results, highlighting the urgent need for workload management policies and institutional interventions.The results confirm that teacher resilience in special needs education is influenced by social support, professional development opportunities, workload levels, and institutional resources. The quantitative data supports all three hypotheses, showing that higher social support and professional development enhance resilience, while increased workload negatively impacts resilience. The qualitative data provides contextual insights, illustrating how teachers navigate their challenges through peer networks, leadership support, and coping mechanisms.

The findings suggest that policy interventions should focus on improving teacher support structures, reducing workload, and increasing access to professional training programs. Schools that implement these strategies are likely to have higher teacher retention rates and improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

This study has explored the factors influencing resilience among special needs educators, highlighting the role of social support, professional development, workload, and institutional resources in shaping teacher well-being. The findings confirm that higher levels of support from colleagues, school leadership, and family contribute positively to teacher resilience, whereas increased workload and lack of resources negatively impact resilience and job satisfaction. Additionally, access to professional development opportunities significantly enhances teacher resilience, equipping educators with the skills and confidence needed to navigate challenges in special needs education.

The research also emphasizes the importance of institutional and policy interventions in sustaining teacher resilience. International comparisons demonstrate that countries with structured teacher support systems, professional learning communities (PLCs), workload management policies, and mindfulness-based well-being programs experience lower burnout rates and higher teacher retention. Lessons from Finland, Canada, Australia, and Singapore suggest that governments should invest in teacher support frameworks, improve professional development access, and implement workload reduction strategies to strengthen resilience in special needs education.

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