

## Article

# The Right to Inclusive Quality Education: Primary School Teachers' Perceptions Based on the EPREPADI-1 Scale

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**Abstract:** The following study aimed to describe the perception of primary education teachers regarding pupils who are discriminated against on the grounds of low functional performance. In this way, the EPREPADI-1 scale (primary education teachers' perception of their training and professional practice in relation to pupils with disabilities) was applied with a purposive and non-probabilistic sampling aimed at teachers in the Region of Murcia, obtaining a sample with a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 5% (410 participants). Being quantitative descriptive research, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out to determine the existence of seven key factors, of which three were considered, due to their high significance for the objectives of this study, to determine their correlation by means of the Pearson test, as well as the Chi-square test and Cramer's V test to determine the correlation between the factors and the ordinal variables of the scale. These tests allowed us to analyse the existing relationships between the specific training received (initial and continuous), and the effects that this training had on the performance of their professional practice. At the same time, we investigated the perception teachers have of their use of the language of negation, and to what extent the semantics used can lead to situations of exclusion.



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## 1. Introduction

In the last decade, it is very striking that many countries have incorporated new epistemological bases into their educational policies with respect to the inclusive nature of the education that schools should provide for all students, regardless of their functional performance [1,2]. In this sense, the definition of such powerful terms as inclusive education or quality education is subject to the disparate interpretations that different countries have developed with the educational model they practice. Specifically, and by virtue of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, hereafter CRPD [3], all signatory states of this treaty have to implement an inclusive education system at all levels and throughout life. This means students must receive their education in a regular education centre in a way that will not result in discrimination and exclusion, and also applies when their learning is carried out through a dual education model (in differentiated education centres) or in special classrooms (within regular education centres) [4]. Furthermore, with a view to the full fulfilment of children's rights, the CRPD affirms that it is absolutely essential to safeguard the rights of all persons, without discriminatory effects based on any functional diversity they may have. This is why the understanding of disability lies in the understanding that all human beings are diverse in our functioning and, therefore, the presence of diversity in the classroom is absolutely necessary and unavoidable, as there is no greater learning experience for students than to be surrounded by the reality of social contexts that they will encounter throughout their lives, and not only by a group which, although a majority, does not represent 100% of the population [5].

Furthermore, it is important to point out that this situation forces a direct discrimination against all students who do not meet the standards promoted by the educational

centres, thus, creating a dual education (as is the case in Spain) that does nothing more than participate in a system not fully compliant with the international regulations (CDPD) that it has previously ratified. This dual system does little on behalf of those who are discriminated against, nor does it, at least apparently, propose national education legislation to ensure that the education offered to all citizens is inclusive and of a high quality [4,5].

Under this scenario, the situation historically inherited from previous legislatures is not resolved. Although it is known that teachers do not have sufficient initial training to provide quality responses to all their students in the same classroom without perpetuating exclusion strategies, whereby some students have to leave their classrooms (in the best of cases) or be assigned to a special education centre (for those cases considered the most severe), nothing has been done, nor appears to be in the pipeline, to reverse this serious situation in the design of university curricula.

Moreover, this educational regulation teaches children with a lower functional performance from a very young age that in addition to being different (as if it could be otherwise) and needing different teaching (as if it had to be homogeneous), whenever their performances do not conform to what is established as the social norm, they will also be removed from the usual social contexts [6,7]. In this way, the national legal body on education is proposing an understanding of citizenship as a formal status (without full participation for those with low functional performance), when, from international standards, what is really provided for is the obligation of states to guarantee the real exercise of their rights, making them, in accordance with their performance, full participants in the different social spaces [8,9].

Specifically, Spain is one of those countries that ratified the UN Convention in 2008, which means that it has the highest-ranking regulation in terms of its full compliance with the rest of the regulations that make up the national corpus juris. In this sense, despite the fact that educational legislation is positioned as inclusive, the latest statistics presented by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in relation to pupils with specific educational support needs (2018–2019), reveal some enlightening data on the situations of exclusion experienced by these pupils. The figures show that in primary education, there are a total of 343,995 pupils with specific educational support needs, while in secondary education this number is considerably reduced, to a total of 214,070. There are several interpretations of this situation. The first is that the needs of pupils disappear at the end of primary school and no longer require support; and the second, certainly closer to reality (as attested to [4,10]), is the transfer of these young people to special education centres because, quite simply, primary schools have shown them (along with their families, and peers) that they will not be able to learn everything that the ordinary system offers them, because they have a difficulty (or several). To compensate for this educational blow, they are assured that, although these ordinary centres (and their teachers) can do no more, there are other super centres (with super teachers) where they will be able to continue to develop, despite the inconvenience of moving to a different place (sometimes far away from where they live), where the educational resources, curiously enough, are no different from those of ordinary centres, but the learning in special educational centres does adjust to the real functional needs of the pupils. What is happening in special schools is that teachers not only personalise the curriculum for their students, as is the case in regular schools, but also transform education by giving prominence to the particularities of each student, directing their teaching towards those more practical tasks that will increase the children's desire to learn, as well as allowing their capacities to expand by focusing on what they really need, which is why they will be useful to them [11]. Of course, it is important to highlight that this already took centre stage in the Organic Law on Education (LOE, 2006) with the incorporation of learning by competences, through which teachers were told of the need for everything that is taught to be part of the real experiences of children, giving value to what they need to develop in their usual contexts (outside schools), and optimising the quality of life of all pupils. In this way, if the activities proposed in ordinary educational centres take into account the performance of all students and, furthermore, if assessment

was directed exclusively towards what they can learn (the maximum development of the capacities they do have), this would be a full application of competency-based learning, while also considering the educational attention to diversity that is demanded in the new school scenarios, where the ratio of students with specific educational support needs is increasing [3,4,11]. On the basis of these approaches, it is worth questioning reflections such as the following: what do teachers think about the methodologies and strategies they carry out in terms of inclusive education? What language do teachers use for students with lower functional performance? What do they think about the use of current regulations in terms of educational attention to diversity? Is their training in line with what students demand, and with what is demanded by the regulations? Undoubtedly, these are questions of enormous scope and important consequences.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1. Objectives

The general objective of this research was to find out how primary school teachers perceive the training they received on the UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and its subsequent legal transposition into the educational setting, by applying the EPREPADI-1 scale [12]. In order to develop the fulfilment of this general objective, the following specific objectives have also been defined:

- To apply the EPREPADI-1 scale by examining its construct validity using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity, analysing whether the characteristics of the selected sample are satisfactory for carrying out the factor analysis.
- To identify among teachers the correlation between the rights recognised for pupils, the professional practice of teachers, and the semantics used with respect to the disability construct.
- To approach the knowledge that primary education teachers have about the rights recognised for pupils with low functional performance.
- To determine the degree of relationship between the training received by teachers and the possible creation of situations of social exclusion for pupils with lower functional performance.

### 2.2. Design and Sample

The design of this study was configured according to a descriptive process based on a quantitative methodology, with the priority objective of synthesising and ordering the data extracted from the questionnaire known as the Scale of Primary Education Teachers’ Perception of their Training and Professional Practice in relation to Pupils with Disabilities (EPREPADI-1). It should be noted that this scale has been validated previously, both by expert judges’ methodology and by pilot group application [12], with highly satisfactory psychometric indices as results, which duly confirmed its reliability for mass application and generalization. With regard to the population, the research was carried out in the Region of Murcia (Spain), conducting a sample study in accordance with the indications given in the specialised literature [11,13]. Taking into account that the total population size is 10,248 teachers (data from the Regional Statistics Centre of Murcia, CREM), the STATS 2.0 statistical programme was used to calculate the representative sample, determining the optimum number of respondents at 370 participants for a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 5%. It was confirmed that the sample used for the study was representative, as it questioned a higher number of teachers than indicated (a total of 410 participating teachers). The formula used by the STATS 2.0 statistical programme to find the representative sample was as follows:

$$n = \frac{n^{\circ}}{1 + \frac{n^{\circ}}{N}} \text{ where : } n^{\circ} = p \times (1 - p) \times \left( \frac{Z (1 - \frac{\alpha}{2})}{d} \right)^2$$

Another relevant issue is that the collection of the questionnaires came from a total of 45 educational centres, from all the districts of the Region of Murcia, whose teachers have been trained in the different specialities of primary education offered by the University of Murcia (physical education, music, English, French, hearing and language, specific educational support needs, intercultural education and learning difficulties, and educational resources for school and leisure time). Specifically, 343 respondents came from public educational centres, 66 came from subsidised educational centres and 1 participant came from a private educational centre. Furthermore, in terms of gender, the group had a majority female presence (74.6% ♀; 23.9% ♂); in relation to the age of the participants, it should be noted that they were between 23 and 64 years old, with a higher participation in the 27–32 years age bracket (with 22.4% of the total participation) and 39–43 years old (with 20% of the total).

### 2.3. Instrument

As far as the instrument is concerned, the EPREPADI-1 scale was designed to find out to what extent the so-called languages of denial [12] produced negative effects on pupils who are discriminated against at school because of their low functional performance. This scale also aims to detail the perception that primary education teachers in the Region of Murcia have of pupils with lower functional performance, through the analysis of the possible correlations between their training (initial and continuous) received in terms of regulations on the recognition of the rights of people with disabilities, and the implications for their subsequent professional practice. Specifically, the scale is structured around four major thematic blocks defined as perception of disability, knowledge of the rights recognised for students with disabilities, personal opinion on professional teaching practice, and personal opinion on the semantics used with respect to the disability construct. In addition, it should be noted that the variables considered for the analysis as a whole have been raised with respect to international, national, and especially, Murcia Region's educational regulations. In this sense, the instrument provided to teachers contained a total of sixty-four items, which included qualitative questions (where teachers state their personal opinion on what a person with a disability is for them and what they understand by inclusive education), followed by a battery of Likert-type questions (referring to the content of the blocks mentioned above) with multiple response options (1 = totally incorrect; 2 = partially incorrect; 3 = not sure; 4 = partially correct, and 5 = totally correct). In this sense, it is a scale for which results for both the expert judgement ( $\alpha = 0.940$ ), and the pilot group ( $\alpha = 0.863$ ), confirm highly satisfactory psychometric indices for its application [12,14,15]. In any case, it is also very important to mention that, following the specialised literature on the efficiency and mass application of questionnaires, the instrument was provided, in digital and printed format, to the principals of the different schools so that they could send it to the teaching staff, with an estimated response time of approximately 25 min. Finally, it should also be noted that the instrument obtained all the necessary permissions for its applicability from the Research Ethics Committee (CEI) of the University of Murcia.

### 2.4. Procedure

Based on the participation of 410 teachers in the completion of the EPREPADI-1 scale, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out, which made it possible to determine a set of common dimensions between the different variables that made up the questionnaire. Thus, on the basis of the analysis carried out, different questions were grouped together to identify the latent variables in the scale. This facilitated understanding the structure of the questionnaire and, in addition, as it is a scale made up of a large number of questions (64 items), it allowed the reducing of data to a more manageable number of variables. Broadly speaking, since the content validation was fully accepted through the scores given by the group of experts, the new contributions received after the mass application of the scale helped determine how some items are related to others. In accordance with these considerations, from the exploratory factor analysis a total of 7 factors were obtained

(defined in Table 1), which allowed us to explain the correlation or covariance between the variables. Thus, it is possible to know the statistical significance existing between the variables and, of course, independence is granted, which is perfectly explained through the grouping of the variables into factors.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the subscales.

Scale	N	Media	D. Típ.
F1: Primary school teachers' perceptions of their training on educational legislation	410	8433	653,599
F2: Primary school teachers' perception of the use of the language of denial in schools	410	8936	582,964
F3: Primary school teachers' perceptions of educational regulations and their transposition into the academic setting	410	4911	309,190
F4: Teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of the content of art. 24 of the CRPD	410	123,095	1468,303
F5: Primary school teachers' perception of their professional practice with students with low functional performance	410	6592	384,215
F6: Teachers' perceptions of the principles of quality and inclusion in education	410	2638	219,534
F7: Primary school teachers' perceptions of the recognition of the rights of low functioning students	410	3650	239,688
Valid n°	410		

It is important to note that the data presented in the table above (Table 1) come from the factor analysis carried out on the basis of the database, according to the responses collected after the mass application of the scale, which was used as a template for the data analysis programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to carry out this analysis, a set of initial conditions were indicated, such as the calculation of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (identified as KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity, obtaining, for both cases, results considered excellent [11,16]. On the other hand, and precisely to improve the significance of the results, the factors obtained after the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) underwent a slight modification, since although, initially, the results yield a total of 8 factors that explained the grouping between the variables, it is recommended that an eighth factor be eliminated, as it explained a low variance and only contained two variables (items 41 and 46). Thus, once the variables contained in the minor factor were eliminated, the rest of the major factors were maintained, as they provided a substantive explanation for the items that make up the scale [17]. Likewise, after reviewing the table of communalities, it is observed that there were three variables (items 26, 31, and 35) that did not reach an optimal level in the saturations (above 0.60), a fact that justifies their elimination [17]. Taking into account the objectives of this research, for the analysis of the resulting factors, the starting point was concentrated on the study of the three factors set out below in the rotated components matrix (Table 2):

In order to measure the relational magnitude between the different variables, the Pearson linear correlation coefficient test was carried out; this test allowed us to know the relationship between different quantitative variables, and it is precisely for this reason that it is advisable for the analysis of Likert-type interval scales [11,18]. In the same way, the cross-table test was carried out, which made it possible to discriminate the frequency between the different answers given by the participants (Table 3).



**Table 2.** Rotated component matrix for factors F1, F2, and F7.

<p><b>FACTOR F1</b> Perception of primary school teachers in relation to their training on educational legislation</p>	<p>V20. I have little knowledge of national educational legislation concerning learners with disabilities.  V21. I have a good knowledge of the specific articles of national educational legislation concerning students with disabilities.  V22. I have a clear knowledge of the structure and content of the diversity plan approved at my school.  V25. According to the LOMCE, only a quality, inclusive, integrative, and demanding education system guarantees equal opportunities and makes it possible for each student to develop their potential to the fullest.  V29. According to the Order of 4 June 2010 (which regulates the plan of attention to diversity in the Region of Murcia), specific measures (open classrooms, compensation programmes, etc.) will only be implemented when all ordinary measures (grouping among equals, flexible grouping, etc.) have been exhausted.  V30. According to the diversity plan, all the measures reflected within it (ordinary and specific) must, in addition to being known, be carried out through co-responsibility, collaboration, and cooperation between the different professionals at the school.  V38. There are no specific regulations that include the obligation of schools to facilitate the learning of sign language, Braille, or alternative writing.  According to the CRPD, students with disabilities have the right to a quality education in a regular education centre (never in special education centres).  In my opinion, I believe that standardised assessment tests are not only fair, but also necessary in order to know the level of achievement of students in each subject.  V47. In my teaching programmes, I always incorporate organisational and methodological strategies from those included in the diversity plan approved at my school.  V48. I recognise that, of the following three measures, I cannot say which are ordinary (and which are not): task-based learning; teaching contract; multilevel teaching.  V53. With regard to awareness-raising (art. 8 of the CRPD), I consider that the administration is developing an entirely adequate policy (compulsory training, professional incentives, course offerings, monitoring of compliance with regulations, etc.).  V55. I am convinced that if our initial training (that received in the degree course) were of higher quality, our students with disabilities would be in a better position to obtain better academic results.</p>
<p><b>FACTOR F2</b> Primary school teachers' perceptions of the use of the language of denial in schools</p>	<p>V54. I perceive that the educational expectations that teachers project towards their students without disabilities (that they graduate, that they go to university, that they have an autonomous and independent life, etc.) are not the same as those they project for those with disabilities.  V57. Even if teachers had more time to develop the class, the presence of students with disabilities would still be seen as a difficulty (in teaching).  V59. I recognise that when I am at school (in front of colleagues, with students or families), the language I use is more inclusive than when I am outside the school.  V60. In general, I think that the semantics used by my colleagues at school need to be more inclusive.  V61. I think that the use of more inclusive language is a determining variable in achieving true inclusion of students with disabilities.  V62. I have never heard a colleague at my school refer to students with disabilities in a patronising or condescending way.  V63. When I talk to a student with a disability, I never use the word disability to avoid making him/her feel bad.  V64. I usually talk to my students about different issues related to disability (rights, appropriate language, abilities, discrimination, respect, etc.).</p>
<p><b>FACTOR F7</b> Primary school teachers' perceptions of the recognition of the rights of students with low functional ability</p>	<p>In my opinion, thanks to the progress that has been made in recent years in the field of inclusive education, we can affirm that, nowadays, our education is of high quality for students with disabilities.  V46. I believe that the CRPD is right in stating that disability is only considered to exist when physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments (prolonged over time) interact with any type of barrier (organisational, communicative, methodological, accessibility, etc.), thereby preventing the person from fully participating in society.  V56. I can affirm that the PAD of my educational institution is modified according to the periodicity established in the regulations, and in accordance with the characteristics and needs of all students.</p>

In addition, for the proper development of this process, the fact that all the socio-demographic variables of the scale had a nominal cut-off (sex, age, studies completed, possession of a disability certificate, etc.) was considered. For the analysis of these variables, together with the items that make up each of the factors, a Chi-square test was run, the purpose of which was to evaluate the independence of the variables subjected to analysis [12,18]. It should also be noted that the H0 representation indicates independence for both variables; in other words, if the *p*-value result was greater than 1, it demonstrated absolute independence for the variables analysed. On the other hand, for those variables that obtained a *p*-value of less than 0.1 (H1 or existence of association), Cramer's V test was performed, consisting of a correction test applicable to Chi-square analysis, and which shows the highest degree of association between variables whenever it is close to 1 (and the lowest degree of association when the result is 0) [12,18,19].

**Table 3.** Cross table for factors F1, F2, and F7.

			F2							Total		
			V.54	V.57	V.59	V.60	V.61	V.62	V.63		V.64	
F7	V.41	F1	V.20	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
			V.21	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2
			V.22	2	0	0	0	3	2	5	4	6
			V.25	4	0	0	0	4	4	6	7	9
			V.29	3	2	0	1	4	3	5	5	8
			V.30	4	2	0	1	5	5	8	7	11
			V.38	3	3	1	2	3	3	4	2	6
			V.39	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
			V.42	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	4
			V.47	2	1	1	1	5	4	6	6	8
			V.48	2	1	0	0	1	1	3	1	3
			V.53	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	2
			V.55	0	2	1	2	2	3	1	1	3
			Total			5	3	1	2	7	6	9
F3	V. 46	F1	V.20	4	4	3	1	3	3	6	4	10
			V.21	3	0	1	3	9	2	5	7	10
			V.22	8	4	1	6	19	6	14	17	29
			V.25	11	8	7	8	40	17	28	30	51
			V.29	19	7	7	13	49	21	35	32	68
			V.30	21	9	9	14	53	21	40	39	79
			V.38	7	3	3	6	15	7	13	12	21
			V.39	2	2	3	3	10	2	10	4	14
			V.42	1	1	1	2	4	1	6	3	7
			V.47	10	7	5	6	36	16	28	36	54
			V.48	2	2	1	2	4	5	6	4	11
			V.53	3	1	0	0	2	2	3	1	5
			V.55	16	10	9	10	33	18	32	28	55
			Total			24	13	10	15	57	26	47
F3	V.56	F1	V.20	1	1	2	1	6	5	7	10	15
			V.21	3	2	2	3	12	6	12	16	23
			V.22	12	7	5	7	46	23	43	43	78
			V.25	19	12	11	5	71	38	61	66	106
			V.29	20	12	11	9	62	31	59	59	100
			V.30	23	16	12	11	85	44	83	85	143
			V.38	7	8	4	7	25	14	26	32	29
			V.39	2	4	5	4	14	6	8	6	18
			V.42	1	1	2	2	2	1	4	2	4
			V.47	14	11	11	5	63	37	65	74	110
			V.48	3	3	1	2	6	3	10	9	14
			V.53	5	2	0	1	3	0	4	4	6
			V.55	9	10	11	9	56	29	49	53	82
			Total			25	20	16	12	97	54	97

### 3. Results

As we already know, exploratory factor analysis is one of the techniques used to determine which of the latent variables of a scale are capable of explaining the items of which it is composed. The calculation of the mean Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (KMO) was carried out by various authors [17,20,21], and even Kaiser himself admitted 0.05 as the acceptance value; however, other authors set the value at 0.07 (Castello and Osborne, 2005), a fact that corroborates that the closer the result is to 1, the higher the relationship between the variables. In this sense, for the case of the sample investigated, the result is 0.948, which gives an excellent reliability for the application of the PFA. Likewise, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was considered, obtaining a result of  $p = 0.000$ , which shows

statistical significance, so the null hypothesis of matrix similarity [22] is rejected. Under these premises, the resulting data confirm and allow the continuity of the exploratory factor analysis. Likewise, as seen in Table 4, the Varimax rotation technique was taken into account during the factor analysis, precisely because its application helps reduce the number of variables, as it does not consider those that obtain a value of less than 1 and, therefore, groups into factors those variables that have an ideal explained variability. Specifically, the number of factors extracted for this research, as shown in Table 4, is seven, which explain 73.53% of the total variance.

**Table 4.** Matrix of the total variance explained for the seven resulting factors.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues Sums of Squared Extraction of Loads			Initial Eigenvalues Sums of Squared Extraction of Loads		
	Total	% of Variance	% Cumulative	Total	% of Variance	% Cumulative
1	17,691	44,228	44,228	17,691	44,228	44,228
2	3173	7931	52,160	3173	7931	52,160
3	2837	7092	59,251	2837	7092	59,251
4	1657	4142	63,393	1657	4142	63,393
5	1607	4017	67,410	1607	4017	67,410
6	1284	3209	7619	1284	3209	7619
7	1164	2910	73,530	1164	2910	73,530

Specifically, the table (Table 4) shows the results that explain the variance for each of the suggested factors. The first factor (named as primary school teachers' perception of their training on educational legislation) is composed of thirteen items, and explains 44.22% of the total variance; the second factor (named as primary school teachers' perception of the use of a language of denial in schools), is composed of eight items that explain 7.93% of the total variance; the third factor (primary school teachers' perception of educational regulations and their transposition in the academic setting) is made up of four items explaining 7.09% of the total variance; for the fourth factor (teachers' perception of their knowledge of the content of art. 24 of the CRPD) four items are considered and explain 4.14% of the total variance; the fifth factor (primary school teachers' perception of their professional practice with low functioning pupils) explains 4.01% of the total variance and is composed of five items; the sixth factor (teachers' perception of the principles of quality and inclusion in education) explains 3.20% of the total variance and is made up of three items; finally, the seventh factor (primary school teachers' perception of the recognition of the rights of low functioning students) is made up of three items, and explains 2.91% of the total variance. In this line, and through the factor analysis, it is confirmed that the organisation of the EPREPADI-1 scale is suitable for finding out the perception of teachers in the Region of Murcia regarding their training and professional practice in relation to pupils with low functional performance.

Likewise, in order to analyse the relationship between the different factors, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated (configured for the database as if it were a single variable); in this way, it is possible to appreciate the linear relationship between the variables under analysis (as shown in Table 5).

As can be seen, Table 5 shows the correlations between those factors that have a statistically significant value, and which, in the case of our research, show exclusively positive values. In particular, a high correlation is shown between factor F1 and factors F2, F3, F5, F6, and F7; likewise, the moderate and significantly positive correlation between factor F2 and factors F3, F5, F6, and F7 is noteworthy. Similarly, this moderate correlation continues between factor F3 and factors F5, F6, and F7, as well as between factor F5 and factors F6 and F7, or between factor F6 and factor F7. Following the application of the initial analyses (AFE, KMO, Varimax rotation, and Pearson's coefficient), the results obtained from the study carried out for each of the factors (F1, F2, F3), and which fulfil the objectives of this research, are presented.



**Table 5.** Pearson's correlation between the seven factors resulting from the AFE.

Factors		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
F1	Cor. de Pearson	1	0.705	0.615	0.049	0.627	0.653	0.611
	Sig. (bilateral)		0	0	0.321	0	0	0
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F2	Cor. de Pearson	0.705	1	0.429	0.022	0.504	0.445	0.577
	Sig. (bilateral)	0		0	0.663	0	0	0
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F3	Cor. de Pearson	0.615	0.429	1	0.023	0.474	0.419	0.443
	Sig. (bilateral)	0	0		0.64	0	0	0
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F4	Cor. de Pearson	0.049	0.022	0.023	1	0.065	0.084	0.024
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.321	0.663	0.64		0.19	0.091	0.629
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F5	Cor. de Pearson	0.627	0.504	0.474	0.065	1	0.42	0.432
	Sig. (bilateral)	0	0	0	0.19		0	0
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F6	Cor. de Pearson	0.653	0.445	0.419	0.084	0.42	1	0.405
	Sig. (bilateral)	0	0	0	0.091	0		0
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410
F7	Cor. de Pearson	0.611	0.577	0.443	0.024	0.432	0.405	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0	0	0	0.629	0	0	
	N	410	410	410	410	410	410	410

### 3.1. Factor 1: Perception of Primary School Teachers in Relation to Their Training in Educational Legislation

This first factor, which aims to define the perception that teachers in the Region of Murcia hold regarding their training received in relation to educational regulations, is explained by thirteen items that have a high correlation in the variance matrix. Specifically, it is made up of two blocks of questions. The first includes eight items that deal with the knowledge teachers have about the rights recognised for students with low functional performance; these are questions specifically dedicated to the knowledge that teachers have about the regional, national, and international regulations, as well as their recognition of some specific items linked to students with lower functional performance. With these items we find out if their knowledge is broad, clear, or if they are even aware of actions delimited for the adequate development of their teaching (such as the use of ordinary or specific measures proposed in the plan of attention to diversity of the educational centres, or the obligation that the centres in which they work provide sign language, Braille, or alternative writing). The second section is made up of a further five items that seek to ascertain teachers' personal opinions about their professional practice. These are a set of questions referring to specific actions that teachers carry out during their daily teaching practice, and they indicate their opinion on the carrying out (or not) of homogeneous assessments, the incorporation in their teaching methodologies of strategies included in the plan for attention to diversity, as well as their perception of the initial training they have received, and their opinion regarding the proper functioning of the educational administration in terms of compulsory training, professional incentives, and the supply of courses. It should be noted that all the items of this factor were elaborated according to the legal overview, i.e., all the questions deal with specific aspects of educational regulations, especially regarding those articles referring to the recognition of the rights of students discriminated against in the classroom due to low functional performance.

In this sense, once the contingency test was carried out for each of the variables of the first factor, it is observed that gender has no influence on the answers given by the teachers, since the significance level is much higher than 1 for all cases. On the other hand, age has a significant influence on variable 22, where 164 teachers (40% of the total sample) indicate that they agree with the diversity plan approved at their school (47 of them aged between 27 and 32). Likewise, age is also dependent, with a significant influence of 0.006 for variable

48, where 141 teachers (34% of the total sample) indicate that they know the difference between all the ordinary and specific measures indicated in the legislation. Likewise, for variable 55 a  $p$ -value = 0.019 is obtained, which explains that age has an influence on this variable, where the first five age groups (between 23 and 45 years old) express that better initial training would lead to better academic results for students with disabilities.

As can be seen (Table 6), in the case of the degree, it is confirmed that there is a significant dependence with variables 20, 21, 29, 30, and 48 obtaining a result for the Cramer's V test of less than 1. Of all the variables, it is noteworthy that for item 3, 75% of the teachers agree that attention to diversity should be carried out through co-responsibility, collaboration, and cooperation. In the case of item 2, more than 50% of the total sample claim to have little knowledge, at a general level, of educational regulations related to educational attention to diversity. In item 21, 64.6% of the sample claim to have specific knowledge about specific articles related to educational attention to diversity. In addition, for item 29, 96% of teachers with specific educational support needs answered affirmatively that specific measures are carried out only after all ordinary measures are exhausted; however, 24% of teachers whose speciality is hearing and language are either unsure or disagree with this statement. On the other hand, a positive asymptotic significance is discriminated, and therefore, indicates dependence between variable 38 and the fact that teachers have (or do not have) a disability certificate. Specifically, 81% of teachers who do not have a disability certificate say that they are not sure or completely agree with the statement that there is no regulation making it compulsory for schools to provide Braille, sign language, or alternative writing; however, 67% of teachers who do have a disability certificate say that they disagree with the same statement.

**Table 6.** Cramer's V for factor F1.

	V20	V21	V22	V29	V30	V38
Sex	0.486	0.468	0.570	0.356	0.858	0.408
Age	0.185	0.445	<b>0.003</b> **	0.382	0.869	0.330
Qualification	<b>0.001</b> **	<b>0.007</b> *	0.162	<b>0.071</b> *	<b>0.000</b> ***	0.165
Disability certificate	0.240	0.640	0.850	0.125	0.965	<b>0.079</b> *
Classmate	0.297	0.085	0.657	0.345	0.348	0.171
Relatives	0.372	0.236	0.389	0.401	0.668	0.469
Work colleague	0.405	0.524	0.217	<b>0.019</b> *	<b>0.040</b> *	0.861
Has a friend	0.183	0.281	0.406	0.279	0.411	0.168

Cramer's V: \*  $p < 0.1$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Similarly, a positive dependence is also observed between variable 53 (Table 7) and the fact of having shared a class with a classmate with a disability, where 39% of the teachers who, when they were students, did not share a class with students with a disability and say that they are not sure that the administration is developing its policies correctly; however, 54% of those who have shared a class with students with a disability say that they disagree with this statement.

**Table 7.** Cramer's V for factor F7.

Perception of Primary School Teachers in Relation to Their Training on Educational Legislation					
	V42	V47	V48	V53	V55
Sex	0.868	0.868	0.798	0.149	0.356
Age	0.481	0.769	<b>0.006</b> *	0.548	<b>0.019</b> *
Qualification	0.805	0.580	<b>0.001</b> **	0.139	0.414
Disability certificate	0.335	0.607	0.732	0.197	<b>0.034</b> *
Classmate	<b>0.016</b> *	0.218	0.262	<b>0.052</b> *	<b>0.032</b> *
Relatives	0.944	0.151	0.589	0.068	0.342
Work colleague	0.757	<b>0.000</b> ***	0.674	0.451	0.875
Has a friend	<b>0.055</b> *	0.166	0.157	0.968	<b>0.028</b> *

V de Cramer: \*  $p < 0.1$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

In the case of the nominal variable that emphasises having or not having family members with disabilities, no item with positive dependence stands out. In the case of item 47, a positive asymptotic significance is observed between having disabled co-workers. Specifically, 23% of those who do have colleagues with disabilities say they disagree with the fact of incorporating methodological strategies included in the plan of attention to diversity in their classes, compared to 82% of teachers who do not have colleagues with disabilities and who indicate that they totally agree with the statement of incorporating methodological strategies from the plan of attention to diversity. Likewise, a positive dependence is observed between the variable that mentions having friends with disabilities and item 42, showing that the percentage of teachers who have a friend with a disability and think that homogeneous assessment tests are unnecessary is significantly lower (31%) than the percentage of teachers who do not have friends with disabilities and also think so (41%).

### 3.2. Factor 2: Primary School Teachers' Perception of the Use of Language of Denial in Schools

The second factor, which describes the perception of teachers with respect to the use of the language of negation, is made up of eight items that aim to explain the expectations that teachers project towards their students with less functional performance, how they feel about the presence of these students in their classes, whether or not they use inclusive semantics, as well as the way in which they expose the presence of functional diversity to all their students in their usual spaces of coexistence. In this sense, the results (shown in Table 8) show an absence of positive significance between the variables of gender, having a friend with a disability, having a disability certificate, and the rest of the items that make up this second factor. In the case of age, a positive significance is confirmed with item 59, with which 58% of younger teachers (23 to 26 years old) agree that they use more inclusive language at work than outside of work; however, the group of older teachers (over 64 years old) disagrees with the statement that they use more inclusive language at work than in their daily lives. With regard to the variable that mentions the qualification of each teacher, a significant  $p$ -value is observed with item 6, insofar as it reflects a difference between teachers whose speciality is hearing and language, those with specific educational support needs, and the rest of teachers with other specialities. The first two type of teacher agree (more than 60%) that the semantics used by their colleagues at school should be more inclusive, while the rest of the teachers (56% of those who do not have this speciality) disagree with this proposition.

**Table 8.** Cramer's V for factor F2.

	V57	V59	V60	V61	V62	V63	V64
Sex	0.314	0.583	0.388	0.695	0.165	0.113	0.104
Age	0.115	<b>0.029 *</b>	<b>0.033 *</b>	0.354	<b>0.044 *</b>	<b>0.039 *</b>	0.321
Qualification	0.839	0.867	<b>0.091 *</b>	0.547	<b>0.053 *</b>	<b>0.044 *</b>	0.765
Disability certificate	0.705	0.618	0.489	0.586	0.272	0.379	<b>0.018 *</b>
Classmate	0.661	0.208	0.926	<b>0.002 **</b>	0.865	0.216	0.850
Relatives	<b>0.076 *</b>	<b>0.048 *</b>	0.171	0.988	0.228	0.265	0.808
Work colleague	<b>0.044 *</b>	0.441	0.463	0.110	0.623	0.601	<b>0.078 *</b>
Has a friend	0.801	0.357	0.404	0.352	0.441	0.570	0.139

Cramer's V: \*  $p < 0.1$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

For the variable referring to whether during their time as students they have shared classes with classmates with low functional performance, positive discrimination is observed, where the vast majority of teachers who have shared classes with classmates with disabilities (81.5%) seem to agree that the use of a more inclusive language is a determining factor in achieving inclusion in schools. Likewise, for the variable that refers to whether they have any colleagues with low functional performance, a positive dependence is observed with item 57, since 30% of teachers who have colleagues with low functional performance

state that even if they had more time to teach their sessions, the presence of students with lower performance would always make their classes more difficult, while 15% of teachers who do not have colleagues with disabilities disagree with the same statement (cfr. Table 8).

### 3.3. Factor 7: Primary School Teachers' Perception of the Recognition of the Rights of Low Functioning Students

This seventh factor (F7), which aims to ascertain the perception that teachers in the Region of Murcia have of the rights of pupils discriminated against in the classroom because of their low functional performance, is made up of three items that deal with educational quality linked to advances in regional, national, and international regulations; some details about the disability construct and the definition provided by the CRPD; and, finally, the verification of the modifications that each centre's plan of attention to diversity contemplates in accordance with the needs and characteristics of their pupils. In this way (as shown in Table 9), for the gender variable, a Chi-square result shows positive significance with item 41, where 46% of teachers indicate that they agree with the fact that regulatory advances have led to quality education for students with lower functional performance, compared to 41% of teachers who strongly disagree with this statement.

**Table 9.** Cramer's V for factor F7.

Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of the Recognition of the Rights of Students with Low Functional Ability			
	V41	V46	V56
Sex	0.774	0.382	0.974
Age	<b>0.072 *</b>	0.313	0.400
Qualification	0.470	0.263	<b>0.092 *</b>
Disability certificate	<b>0.000 ***</b>	<b>0.000 ***</b>	<b>0.000 ***</b>
Classmate	0.215	0.631	0.779
Relatives	0.715	0.524	0.536
Work colleague	0.992	0.984	0.611
Has a friend	0.922	0.913	0.149

Cramer's V: \*  $p < 0.1$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

Likewise, the variable referring to the degree they studied offers a positive dependence with item 56, with a result that 185 teachers (45% of the total) indicate that they totally agree with the statement that the educational care plan in their centres is modified periodically, compared to 27% who say they are not sure that it is carried out; in addition, it is highlighted that the proportion of teachers who agree with this statement is higher for the mentions of hearing and language, English, and specific educational support needs. Finally, it is worth noting that there is no positive dependence for the nominal variables that allude to having shared a classroom with a classmate with low functional performance, as well as those that mention having a family member or friend with a disability.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

In view of the results detailed in the previous section, it is affirmed that, despite the fact that teachers in the Region of Murcia have little knowledge of the national regulations that respond to the educational needs of students with disabilities, they nevertheless claim to have knowledge of specific articles on this same subject. This contradictory fact is overcome when the vast majority of teachers indicated that they have extensive knowledge about the plan of attention to diversity developed in their educational centre, but they recognise that they have neither studied nor know about the existence of an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; furthermore, they are not sure that this convention (CRPD) is a guiding framework and reference for national educational legislation. This fact is indicative of the need for teacher training in the Region of Murcia regarding the national and international laws that support the country's education system [23–27]. In addition,

various authors [28,29] point out the need to transform the stereotyped view of the teachers themselves, so that more inclusive educational practices are carried out, through which all students feel represented in the classroom, as it is completely impossible for a child to evolve and develop their abilities if their own teachers are not able to appreciate that possibility. Likewise, it is observed that there is a lack of understanding about the different nomenclatures regarding students with low functional performance, both for teachers and by the administration itself, as they continue to focus on possible barriers to children's learning, and not on teaching methods and teaching barriers that teachers have [30,31]. Also, while it is remarkable that the vast majority of teachers claim to know it is compulsory to implement all the ordinary measures before implementing the specific measures, it is worth asking: is this consideration being carried out? If this were the case, no child would be left out of the mainstream education system, because the implementation of all mainstream measures means that they would be able to participate successfully in the development of planned activities. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this fact is that the educational centres do not establish (within their plans for attention to diversity, (PAD)) the possibility for their teachers to develop the twenty-five existing ordinary measures [4,32]. This confirms that, although teachers claim to know the ordinary measures, the truth is that what they really know are those that their schools offer, within the catalogue set out in their PAD, and the results confirm their difficulty in differentiating some ordinary measures from specific ones. This creates situations of exclusion for students, since their teachers do not know that they have to carry out at least twenty-five ordinary measures before carrying out the specific ones, since the specific ones involve the implementation of reports and diagnoses that, without a doubt, would mark the entire educational journey of the students [33]. Thus, it can be affirmed that although, for the most part, they think they are incorporating organisational and methodological strategies that favour inclusion processes, they are of no use if the teachers do not have a clear and broad knowledge of what the regulations offer them, as then they are limiting themselves to providing their pupils with only a small portion of what they can, assuming that everything they need to know about attention to diversity is included in their school's PAD. This would also limit the reality that the PAD is a living document that can, and should, be subject to new additions and restructurings throughout each academic year, since if teachers do not deepen this training, it is not be extensible to improvements in their teaching plans and projects.

In turn, these considerations are fully associated with the responses given by teachers in relation to their agreement that if their initial training (that received in the degree course) was of a higher quality, low functioning students would be better off and even achieve better results, as well as with the response from a large majority that they strongly disagree (or are not sure) with the idea that the administration is developing a fully adequate policy with awareness (as defined in art. 8 of the CRPD) regarding inclusive and quality education [34,35]. Similarly, it is also observed that a high percentage of teachers think that the expectations they have for low functioning pupils are not the same as those for the rest of their pupils; they also think that even if they had more time to work with these pupils, their presence would continue to be an added difficulty to their work. These statements confirm the fact that resources are not the only reason why these students are discriminated against in schools, but that teachers' perceptions of these students explain, to a large extent, their high (or low) performance in the classroom. In the same way, the lack of training in this awareness is a determining factor in the creation of exclusionary situations in schools. Likewise, the use of inclusive semantics is another aspect to consider in the construction of discriminatory situations, which is fully related to the perception and training that teachers have of students with low functional performance [4,32]. In this sense, despite the fact that a high percentage of teachers point out the relevance of using inclusive language to achieve true inclusion, they continue to refer these students in a paternalistic or condescending way, as well as claiming not to use the term disability with their students in order to avoid making them feel bad. In all likelihood, the answer is not to shy away from these constructs and then continue to use them in the family or academic



environment (with work colleagues), but rather reject them in order to fully comply with quality education standards [36], so that the values of respect, uniqueness, and equity are instilled in children. It is a question, then, of bridging the gap with a language of denial that is only contributing to beliefs that have been present since the model of dispensation and the medical-rehabilitation model [6,11], in which it was unthinkable that disabled children [SIC] could have the life of their choice.

On the other hand, the conclusive data of the third factor analysed explain that the progress made in recent years, in terms of inclusive education, has not been decisive enough for teachers in the Region of Murcia to consider that progress has contributed to quality education. Moreover, teachers interpret barriers (organisational, methodological, communicative, or accessibility) as the reason that prevents people from fully participating in society. From these data, it is deduced that teachers consider that, in addition to the need for more initial and ongoing training, current advances (regulatory, organisational, or accessibility) are not sufficient to offer adequate training to all pupils. Therefore, the difficulty does not lie with the student (although they express this in some of the items that make up the EPREPADI-1 scale), but that those responsible for this discrimination are the higher education institutions, the administration and, as executors of legislation, the teachers themselves. Therefore, one of the main focuses of attention must be the modification of the strategies followed by teachers, because looking at a chronological overview, we see that although everything around us has advanced (economy, politics, culture, etc.), in schools, an old-fashioned education is maintained, with the same approaches as 50 years ago, designed for a completely different society than now. To give an example, wanting to transmit what is already written in a book does not guarantee the possibility of students creating new learning, simply because this would reduce the teaching-learning process to the action of memorising knowledge, but without the particularity of incorporation through the reconfiguration and contrasting of studies in practice. In conclusion, as long as activities, methodologies, educational intervention strategies, and teaching attitudes are not completely transformed, it is not sensible (nor in accordance with the law) to speak of inclusive education, quality education, or education for all, since the prevailing teaching model in our country continues to exclude those students who have a low functional performance in ordinary classrooms [37–40]. It should be pointed out that this lower student performance is motivated by the different discriminatory situations that arise from the education system itself, highlighting the lack of updates of the legal body in terms of attention to diversity, the scarce existing research on the perceptions of teachers in relation to knowledge of education policies, the transposition they make of them in their teaching activities, and the minimal reforms undertaken in the academic curricula of higher education institutions, whose subject proposals still make no mention of a cross-cutting study of educational attention to diversity in all degree programmes.

In relation to the limitations of the study, it should be noted that the contributions presented offer an overview of the current situation for people in schools with low functional performance experience, and that despite the fact that it is debated from a critical reflection, it is not granted that concrete proposals for improvement, through which teachers or the administration develop practices of an inclusive nature, will reduce discrimination. Among its limitations, this work refers to regional regulations, granting an overview restricted to the Region of Murcia. Likewise, the constant transformation of the regulations is also a barrier for the study to offer long-term answers, as it is a field of study that is constantly changing.

Precisely for this reason, it is important to highlight that through this research, visibility was given to both the difficulty that teachers have in properly understanding educational legislation and putting into practice everything that is required by law, as well as a worrying lack of (specialized) training in relation to educational regulations, sometimes causing situations of discrimination (at school) for students with low functional performance. This recognition will lead to the creation of educational models in which all students actively participate, as well as the acceptance by the entire educational community that teaching practices need a transformation aimed at teachers developing a teaching exercise

that increase children’s autonomy, and improves their quality of life. In addition, it is evident that inclusive education should not continue to be conceived as a part within schools, but that all education must be understood from the global perspective of inclusion, which means educating all students under the principle of quality. From this study, it will be possible to outline a new educational scenario in which teachers can represent the individuality of each student, and significantly reduce the overwhelming rates of exclusion in Spanish schools. Likewise, new lines of research are aimed at knowing the perception that both students with low functional performance, and the rest of the students, maintain regarding their transit through school, and this creation of situations of differentiation for those with low functional performance. Likewise, the results of this research could be widely complemented with the contributions that the teachers themselves make regarding the possible improvements they carry out to reduce (or eliminate) discrimination against said students.

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