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FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES
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Teachers' attitudes and their effects on SEN students.

Trabajo de investigación para optar al Grado Académico de

LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN

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Santiago de Chile, 2021.

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is still a recurrent issue in Chilean mainstream schools. Hence, this investigation identified the teachers' attitudes towards students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and analyzed the impact of such attitudes on SEN students. Teachers were also asked about their experiences while working with SEN students, which were considered challenging experiences. Some of the elements that influenced teachers' attitudes were their initial training, expectations, and knowledge concerning inclusive and integrative education. According to the research findings, it was possible to identify that the most relevant elements that influence teachers' attitudes were their lack of inclusive practices and methodologies during their initial training process, which affected the inclusion process of SEN students and whether it could lead to indirect violence or not.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Special Educational Needs, attitudes.

RESUMEN

La educación inclusiva es un problema recurrente en las escuelas convencionales en Chile. Por consiguiente, en esta investigación se pudo identificar las actitudes de los profesores hacia estudiantes con Necesidades Educativas Especiales (NEE), y se analizó el impacto de dichas actitudes en estudiantes con NEE. Además, se les consultó a los profesores acerca de sus experiencias trabajando con estudiantes con NEE, las cuales fueron mencionadas como experiencias desafiantes. Algunos de los elementos más relevantes que influenciaron las actitudes de los profesores fueron; su formación inicial, expectativas, y conocimiento respecto a la educación inclusiva e integrativa. De acuerdo con los hallazgos encontrados, fue posible reconocer que los elementos más relevantes que afectan en la actitud de los profesores fueron su falta de prácticas y metodologías inclusivas durante su proceso de formación inicial, el cual afectó el proceso de aprendizaje inclusivo de los estudiantes con NEE, pudiendo ocasionar violencia indirecta.

Palabras claves: Educación inclusiva, Necesidades Educativas Especiales, actitudes.

1.INTRODUCTION.

Background of the study.

Inclusive education has been relevant in the Chilean context through the decades of its educational history and for the sake of this research, it is important to say that reforms and laws have been put under the concern of the authorities. In fact, the government considered it relevant in 1852 by creating the first school for deaf people in Santiago (A.Oviedo, 2015). Since then, laws and reforms have been adopted to accomplish improvements in the educational system. As in the case of the law 'Ley General de Educación' (Law N°20.370, 2009) promulgated the idea of integration, diversity, multiculturalism at schools. This legal framework provided the initiative to schools to implement new resources to incorporate students from different ethnic groups, special educational needs, disabled people, among others.

Moreover, 'Ley de Inclusión Escolar' (Law N°20.845, 2015) promulgated the regulation of inclusive education, integrating minimum requirements for schools to guarantee equity and quality in education. Besides, it established new regulations for the National Educational Curriculum to adapt the approaches, strategies, and methodologies of schools towards inclusive education. Based on these improvements, it has been expected that students with special educational needs feel included in schools and especially inside classrooms, where it has also been expected that they receive a quality education that provides them with the opportunity to develop themselves academically as their classmates.

When it comes to inclusive education, we must consider students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who are going to be the focus during this research. Likewise, according to MINEDUC, there are 2.027 schools for special education and 5.662 schools with PIE programs (Programa de Integración Escolar). Also, the number of students' enrolments at schools has increased considerably, there are 183.373 SEN students who represent 5,12% of the national registration in the country (2018).

Hereby, as a result of the increase of students with SEN at the school system, it could be said that the integration of these students has also increased, but it is relevant to pay attention to the measures that the government implemented on the teachers' preparation to fulfill the needs that these students present.

In 2011, Tenorio also found out that students who are preparing to become teachers are aware that they must include all of their students in the classroom making no difference between students with SEN and their classmates. However, they do not seem to have the knowledge, skills, and methodologies enough to teach students with Special Educational Needs. For these reasons, Gökdere states the consequence of the poor preparation, the basic initial training, the lack of resources and support from the institutions to teachers, end up determining teachers' attitudes toward students with SEN (2012).

Having said that, teachers' attitudes regarding SEN students are the main concern of this research. It is a fact that there are plenty of measurements and improvements to promote inclusion in the Chilean educational system, but they do not seem to fit successfully in the actual context of the country because these improvements are focused on the general scope of the institution regulations, but not inside the classroom where inclusive education takes prominence.

Research Problem:

To discuss inclusive education in Chilean classrooms, it is relevant to analyze the role of teachers in the inclusion of students with special educational needs and how this role could develop an indirect and violent impact on them. To conduct this research the following questions should be answered:

1.2.1. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in classrooms?

1.2.2 What is the impact of teachers' attitudes on the learning process of students with special educational needs in classrooms?

1.4. General Objectives:

1. To identify the teacher's attitudes towards the students with special educational needs in classrooms.
2. To analyze the impact of teachers' attitudes on the learning process of students with special educational needs in classrooms.

Specific objectives:

- 1) To recognize teachers' attitudes towards students with special educational needs.
- 2) To analyze the correlation between students' preferences with teachers' attitudes.
- 3) To identify the level of knowledge teachers know about inclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Special Educational Needs

According to MINEDUC, Special Education is a modality of the educational system that develops its activities across the different educational levels, both in regular education institutions and in special education institutions, providing a set of services, human and technical resources, specialized knowledge, and aid with the purpose to ensure current regulations in learning process for boys, girls, youth, and adults who have greater support needs (SEN). In this way, they can actively participate and progress in the National Curriculum under equal conditions and opportunities (n.d).

A student with special educational needs refers to those students who present any degree and type of learning difficulty, on a continuum that goes from the most minor and transitory to the most serious and permanent (Warnock, 1978). There are

two types of SEN students, permanent and transitory, and it depends on their background, characteristics, and the period of school history that took place.

Permanent special educational needs are those barriers to learning and participation that certain students experience throughout their schooling because of a disability diagnosed by a competent professional who is generally a neurologist or a speech therapist.. They demand the provision of extraordinary support and resources to ensure school learning (MINEDUC, 2010). The concept of permanent special educational needs integrates a broad category of disabilities such as Deaf-blindness, Hearing Impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, and a furthermore of others.

Transitory educational needs are those that are not permanent. Students require extraordinary help and support to make progress in the curriculum over a certain period of schooling, as a result of a professionally diagnosed disorder or disability, (MINEDUC, 2010). On the other hand, transitory educational needs include disabilities that are transient or more manageable in the life of the student such as emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), etc.

Inclusive Education and Integrative Education

According to the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* written in 1960 dictated by UNESCO. inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from education. Since that period, UNESCO has been promoting inclusive educational systems that remove the barriers which limit the participation and achievement of learners; it has tried to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education is a clear illustration of improvements in worldwide inclusive education. This statement was written in 1994 by UNESCO and The Ministry of Education and Science

of Spain. It proposes Education for All; it recognizes the emergency and necessity of imparting education for all the SEN students in mainstream schools around the world. Every child and young person in the world has the right to education. It is not only the work of the educational system, and educational community to provide education for everyone. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children (UNESCO, and Cultural Organization. Ministry of Education and Science of Spain, 1994).

Based on Salamanca's Statement, Chile has modified its educational system to include SEN students in mainstream schools. Inclusive education in Chile could be defined according to MINEDUC in 2017, as the role of the Ministry of education to ensure quality inclusive education for the integral and permanent development of the students from different ethnic groups, special educational needs, disabled people, among others, through the implementation of policies and regulations from primary education to higher education.

In Chile, unfortunately, every child with SEN must pass through three bureaucratic barriers to receive inclusive education. a) The school must include the PIE program b) The student has to be evaluated by a professional to receive the benefits of the PIE program c) The PIE program that exists in the school has to be adequate to the necessities of the student (Rosas et al., 2019). If the schools and the students do not accomplish these requirements then, the students will not receive inclusive education.

These three aforementioned bureaucratic barriers make inclusive education in Chile far from the definition of inclusive education provided by the Human Rights Council in 2013. Inclusion is a process of recognizing the following: (a) the obligation to remove barriers that restrict or prohibit participation, and (b) the need to change the culture, policies, and practices of mainstream schools to meet the needs of all students (including SEN students). Inclusive education means changing the school system and ensuring interpersonal interaction based on core values so that everyone has full

learning potential. It also means effective participation, personalized guidance, and an inclusive teaching method.

As a result, inclusive education in Chile can be presented in similar terms as the definition of integrative education. When a student with a disability is placed in a mainstream school, integration occurs, if he or she can adjust to the school's standardized requirements. The integrative approach only focuses on enhancing students' ability to comply with established standards (Human Rights Council, 2013). Although in Chile the PIE program exists in almost all the schools, students with SEN must adjust themselves to fit the requirements of the system. Therefore, this process could end by segregating SEN students from mainstream schools.

Exclusion and Segregation in education.

In general terms, segregation in education refers to the distribution of homogeneous inequity in certain groups in the educational system, which favors the inequity development of students (Valenzuela et al., 2010.) Additionally, "segregation towards a SEN student occurs when such a student is sent to a school designed to respond to a particular impairment, usually in a special-education school system." (Human Rights Council, 2013, p. 3) In Chile, segregation in education can be measured and defined by socioeconomic scales. The importance of socioeconomic levels in Chile is that they can reflect the relationship between segregation in education and other structural problems, such as vulnerability and inequity. (Valenzuela et al., 2013.)

On the other hand, if a student is forced to leave the school due to a disability without providing other educational opportunities with the same conditions as other students, segregation will occur. Through this method, it is possible to prevent disabled students or persons with special educational needs from joining the education system according to age, development, or diagnosis, and finally, placing them in social welfare or medical environments without access to education. (Human Rights Council, 2013).

Accordingly, Cremin and Guilherme mention that there are two types of indirect violence: structural violence and cultural violence, and the one that takes place in this research is structural violence because they state that an example of this type of violence is the "social and educational exclusion of students who do not conform to the normative standards of dominant social groups" (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, p.1127). Therefore, students with SEN are exposed to indirect violence since they are prone to be excluded from mainstream schools, for the reason that they do not fit the social and academic standards.

In addition, SEN students who fulfill the requirements and are included in mainstream schools, are still being segregated inside the classroom. Schwab et al (2013) showed that Children with SEN felt significantly less integrative than students without SEN. Besides, it was found that teachers perceived that SEN students were more excluded and less popular than the ones without SEN. This perception of SEN students towards integration can be caused by different factors such as teachers' initial training, teachers' expectations, and teachers' attitudes.

Teachers' initial training.

Teachers' initial training has been a recurrent issue in both high education institutions and schools regarding the training that teachers have in college. Moreover, education is failing in practical terms because of the carelessness from the institutions and the insufficient teaching training, which leads to the inability to respond to new demands and to face SEN students' situations. (Villani et al., 2009, as cited in Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2012).

Furthermore, there is no consistency between the theory and the practice on the subject itself, since pre-service students consider those experiences as separate; therefore, it is necessary that these students can develop attitudes that contribute to their training process (Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2012). Thus, it is important that future

teachers can develop a process that integrates both the practice and all the knowledge required to face various situations in the classroom.

However, there are some programs by the government supporting the importance of initial teacher training such as 'Programa de Fomento a la Calidad de la Formación Inicial Docente', which aims to improve the learning outcomes of students in the Chilean context. This program deals with definitions and orientations for the initial training by describing what teachers must know on the subject and its teaching.

Besides, the program includes activities that support the curriculum of college programs to improve the teaching competencies of teachers and the quality of the Chilean educational context (MINEDUC, 2012). That being said, it can also be mentioned that the Chilean government and the theory have tried regarding the importance of initial teacher training. However, the main issue seems to be related to the attitudes and expectations that teachers have concerning the topic.

Teachers' expectations and attitudes towards students with SEN.

With the concern of this research, it is important to know the definition according to different authors about the two concepts that will be discussed. The first one is the attitude on its own, and as it was stated by Thurstone "An attitude denotes the total of man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and other any specific topic" (1928, p. 531). This means that everything that is superficially perceived by everyone is called attitude and the reason that this is related to teachers is that they tend to judge their students before knowing what they are capable of or if the SEN students are a problem that they should avoid.

The aforementioned is reassured by the statement that these attitudes are influenced by several factors such as the degree of children's difficulties, the nature of children's disabilities, the teachers' experience with children with special educational needs, the trust in their own capabilities to implement inclusive activities (the teachers'

preparedness for integrative classrooms) or the expectations towards the children no matter what are the differences between them, the curricula and so on (Unianu, 2012).

On the other hand, there is another reality regarding the second concept, which is teachers' expectations towards SEN students and inclusion inside the classroom, because teachers who work with a variety of students from different ethnicities, tend to be more comprehensive with the idea of inclusion than the ones who have never taught those students. These results have consequences for some teachers who revealed the importance that professional background and experience have on the development of positive attitudes towards inclusion (Unianu, 2012).

As mentioned above, teachers with more experience in working with children from different ethnical areas are more tolerant and more open regarding cultural issues" (Unianu, 2012, p 904). For this reason, the authors mentioned before agreed that teachers' experience and training during their novice period is the trigger for their prejudiced attitudes towards SEN students' inclusion; however, if they feel prepared, with the will and with the necessary tools to teach them, they will make them feel included inside the classroom.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research design:

The purpose of this research was to know the attitudes that teachers had towards SEN students, and how those attitudes affected the learning process of the students inside the classroom. For this, the approach that was selected to carry out this research was qualitative, which is a sort of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data to extract meaning from these facts in order to obtain better understanding of social life by studying certain groups or regions.". (Ashley Crossman, 2020).

We selected this method since we wanted to analyze different opinions, perspectives, and attitudes of both teachers and SEN students. Qualitative research enables researchers to study the meaning that people attribute to their behavior, actions, and interactions with others (Crossman, 2021). Moreover, as we wanted to achieve more developed answers, we concluded that it was much easier to obtain them from the participants with a qualitative method as they could express their experiences, and opinions in a deeper manner.

Besides, the extent used in this research is exploratory, because it was important to have a better understanding of the teacher's attitudes based on their own experiences, expectations, and thoughts, and how SEN students might be potentially suffering violent treatments by practices that sometimes are unknown by teachers in the classroom. Therefore, the exploratory approach contributes to the existing theory by identifying the main issues in the inclusion of SEN students in the Chilean education system.

Furthermore, the phenomenological method that was used aimed to understand, analyze and interpret the meaning of experiences of the participants and in this case, how teachers and students felt about inclusive education.

Participants and background

This research involved four teachers; on one side, two male teachers were interviewed and they were referred as **Teacher 1**, forty-seven years old that teaches History, and **Teacher 4**, fifty-two years old that teaches Arts. On the other side, two female teachers, who were referred to as **Teacher 2**, twenty-nine years old that teaches Gastronomy, and **Teacher 3**, thirty-two years old that teaches English, who had either little or plenty of experience in teaching students with special educational needs. In addition, we selected teachers who are currently teaching different subjects with the purpose of having a general idea of the context of inclusion regarding SEN students in Chilean education.

Furthermore, there were four students interviewed; they were from 7th to 10th grade. Two male SEN students and they were referred as **Student 1** with Asperger and **Student 2** with Autism Spectrum Disorder both are sixteen years old from 10th grade, and two female SEN students, who were referred to as **Student 3** with Specific Learning Difficulty, fifteen years old from 9th grade, and **Student 4** with mild Intellectual Disability, eleven years old from 7th grade. The purpose of having chosen students from higher grades was to obtain more developed and structured answers as they have more awareness of their educational reality than younger SEN students.

Instruments and interventions

It is relevant to mention beforehand that all the instruments used were previously evaluated and validated by two professors from the School of Education of Universidad Mayor. Besides, the instruments and interventions were made and therefore applied in Spanish since the participants were Spanish native speakers, so they could share and express their ideas with ease. Besides, for the development of this research, there were used three types of instruments: In-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, and Life story interviews.

Regarding the first instrument, a semi-structured interview was employed through Google Forms. The main purpose of using this type of instrument was to gather information about the teachers' opinions regarding their own formative process to become teachers and their point of view regarding SEN students' education. The answers that the teachers could provide were short in order to obtain specific and controlled information, as it was fundamental to find whether there was a pattern or not between their answers that could allow us to verify if what they stated could be something shared among teachers.

The second instrument, the in-depth interview was used to gather data from the students. It was carried out through Google forms since it was essential to ask questions to the students about their experiences studying in mainstream schools, also

the relationship between the subjects that they like the most with the attitudes of the teachers in charge of those subjects. Moreover, the purpose of this interview was to make the students write what they thought without pressure, so they could express their minds, feelings, and experiences in detail.

The third instrument was applied using the platform zoom to both teachers and students. However, the instrument was adapted in two forms, one for students and one for teachers. On the one hand, regarding the interview for teachers, they had to answer 5 questions where they told anecdotes and experiences when working with SEN students in order to reflect on their own pedagogical practices. On the other hand, the students were given a similar interview in which they had to tell anecdotes related to how they felt towards certain decisions made by teachers in the classroom.

Likewise, as we employed these interviews through a video conference, the interview with the students was in charge of a speech therapist since she was the one with experience working with SEN students, specifically, with the students selected for this investigation, so the students could feel more comfortable expressing themselves with someone they knew and who is also a professional in that area, so she could mediate the conversation with the students or ask the questions herself as she knew the students' needs and their ways of understanding.

Ethical considerations

According to the institution requirements regarding the consent letters for the use of people as samples for research purposes; a request letter was sent to the coordinator of the school to ask for permission to conduct the research. Besides, the participant teachers and the parents of the students selected had to sign an informed consent in which they provided the authorization to collect the data.

Moreover, it was crucial to mention to them that their names or any private information would not appear in the final version of the research, and all the data collected was going to be used only for educational research purposes. In addition, the

video conferences were recorded with the consent of the teachers as well as the parents of the students. Furthermore, the videos were only seen by the members, and they were not seen nor shared with other people aside from the research group

Analysis plan

The information obtained from the instruments and interviews had the purpose of gathering information regarding teachers' attitudes towards students with SEN, and the impact of these attitudes towards these students. Once the data was collected through the three instruments, we were able to identify the basis of the problem. Therefore, the data collected was interpreted from an emotional and professional point of view to focus on the emotions that SEN students might feel due to teachers' attitudes in the classroom, and how these attitudes affect the learning process of students.

Also, it was possible to find out how teachers reacted to different situations regarding inclusive education and their own experiences teaching SEN students. Consequently, the results gathered from the instruments were analyzed using the color-coding method, in which the information was separated into different categories according to the similarities in the responses from the students as well as from the teachers, who were part of the sample of the research.

3. RESULTS.

Semi-Structured interview for teachers.

The main objective of this interview was to gather information about the teachers' opinions regarding their formative process to become teachers, their point of view of SEN students' education, and their knowledge about some concepts related to inclusion and integration. In order to organize and analyze the data, it was necessary to categorize the questions according to 3 subtopics, which were divided into 3 different

tables (1,2, and 3); knowledge; experience, and opinion. Also, the most significant or prominent answers to each question were selected and shown in the tables.

Table 1

Knowledge

Relevant questions	The most frequent themes
2. What do you understand by integration and inclusion? Briefly explain.	Reception and incorporation process.
4. Regarding the previous question, what were the modifications implemented to teach students with special educational needs?	Curricular adjustments
12. Do you know Universal Design for Learning (UDL)? If so, how do you apply it in your classes?	Knows the UDL framework.

Note. These are questions from the instrument about teachers' knowledge regarding the process of inclusion and the most frequent themes in their answers.

As table 1 shows, in questions 2, 4, and 12, teachers were asked to answer different questions to have a global understanding of how much they knew about the Chilean educational system. The results showed that most of the teachers knew concepts about inclusive education and they understood it as a process of reception and incorporation of SEN students, however, it seems that they comprehend those concepts as synonyms; they could barely make the distinction between integration and inclusion, as none of them explained the difference accurately. Besides, only some of them were able to describe the basis of the UDL framework.

Nevertheless, three out of four participants considered that it could not be effectively implemented in some schools because the educational program of each school did not consider the UDL principles. However, the participants mentioned that they included basic curricular adjustments such as giving clear instructions and avoiding complex assessments.

Table 2

Experience

Relevant questions	The most frequent themes
3. If you have had the opportunity to teach students with special educational needs, could you describe your experience?	lack of techniques, knowledge, tools, etc. Difficulties.
5. Describe the emotions that surround you when you have to teach a student with special educational needs. (e.g., I feel that it is a challenge, and it distresses me that I do not understand, it motivates me to seek new methodologies, etc.)	Challenge.

Note. These are questions from the instrument about teachers' experiences with SEN students and the most frequent themes in their answers.

In table N° 2 we grouped the questions related to the experience of teachers working with SEN students. For this, the answers that the teachers wrote in this interview demonstrated that most of them agreed that their experience had been difficult and complex as they highlighted the need for technique and information that is a consequence of their initial training development.

Even though teachers describe their experiences as something hard, they also mentioned them as gratifying experiences. In addition, it is important to mention that in question five they were expected to describe the emotions that teaching SEN students make them feel, but none of them expressed at least one.

However, they emphasized the lack of knowledge and training that they had at the moment of teaching SEN students. Likewise, teachers described attitudes that they present according to this topic and none of them were positive or negative but as a challenge, because they feel that providing proper education to SEN students is a great responsibility.

Table 3

Opinion

Relevant questions	The most frequent themes
9. Do you agree with the following statement?: "Students with special educational needs delay the learning process of other students." Justify your answer.	Disagree with the statement Role of the teacher to fulfill learning in all students
10. Do you think that the educational system includes or excludes students with special educational needs? Explain your answer.	Reason for exclusion → lack of school resources Moderately exclusive

Note. These are questions from the instrument about teachers' opinions regarding SEN students and the most frequent theme in their answers.

Regarding the teachers' opinions, they expressed that SEN students did not affect the learning process of other students; indeed, they considered that teachers themselves were in charge of ensuring that all the students achieved the learning outcomes equally. "Los que deben estar a cargo de que eso no suceda es el docente, no los estudiantes" (Teacher 2) In this quotation, the teacher expressed clearly what it was explained above.

Furthermore, they believed that exclusion is still a recurrent issue in mainstream education. For teachers, one of the main reasons why the inclusive classroom is a challenge are the lack of initial training, the availability of resources and specialists in schools such as infrastructure, standardized tests, and inclusive practices.

In-depth interview for students.

As it was mentioned previously, the main objective of this interview was to know the students' opinion regarding their experiences in mainstream schools, how they developed themselves inside the classroom, and whether there were some attitudes of their teachers or classmates that could intervene in their motivation or performance in classes now or in the past.

According to the results, it was observed that all the students enjoyed going to school because of different reasons such as the environment, having fun with classmates, and studying as they considered themselves active students in terms of in-class participation. Regarding the subjects in school, they wrote about their favorite ones and why they liked them, and it was revealed that most of the students found one particular subject appealing because of some positive and friendly attitudes from teachers when explaining contents or instructions for an activity.

On the contrary, the subjects that the students disliked were not related to teachers' attitudes. Student 4 mentioned "inglés porque es muy complicado entender la escritura y sí me gusta mi profesora de inglés". This is one example where they

expressed that they struggle in these subjects because of the difficulty rather than the attitudes of teachers.

However, in the following questions related to exclusion and negative attitudes from teachers towards them; two out of four students mentioned that they had perceived some negative attitudes inside the classroom. One of them (student 4) mentioned one specifically where she said that since she was not a fast learner, a 4th-grade teacher summoned her mother and told her that she would be nothing in life but a hairdresser, and she had always been a hard-working girl and it made her feel angry because she did not even know that teacher and said those things about her. Another student (student 2) said that he felt alone in a group activity because he did not have anyone to work with, which could have been caused by one methodology chosen by the teacher that did not consider students who did not have a group.

Finally, the participants were asked to reflect on the aspects to be improved by their teachers and their answers mainly had to do with the way of teaching, like providing the students with more support and better examples in order to make them understand the contents in a better way.

Life Story interviews for students (Part one)

Through this instrument, students were asked to describe and answer questions regarding how they felt towards different situations in the classroom related to their teachers' attitudes or their ways of being with them and their classmates. In this interview students were asked four questions in order to gather the needed information mentioned above.

On the one hand, there were two opposite questions that had as the main objective to know the positive and negative situations that teachers have made them go through during a class. For this, the first question was about them telling a positive experience, that is to say, something good that the teacher did that made them feel comfortable, validated, heard, and understood, or that the teacher explained the

contents clearly. It was concluded that the students' answers in these questions were mainly positive experiences inside the classroom and they were oriented towards the socioemotional aspect as they all agreed that an action that a teacher can do in order to make them feel good in classes is to listen to them and comprehend their needs.

On the other hand, the fourth question was related to the negative actions that a teacher has made at the moment of explaining an activity. It can be concluded that the totality of the teachers carried out actions that were disliked by the students, such as getting them out of the classroom, not explaining the activities according to the needs of the students, designing easier material for SEN students when they indicated that they did not need those types of modifications as it made them feel that they were not capable or equal to their classmates.

Therefore, it seemed to the students interviewed that teachers gave them benefits only because of their learning differences. "Es que siento que me tratan como si no fuera capaz de hacer cosa por mi cuenta." (Student 2) For this reason, it can be assumed that teachers tend to create curricular adjustments to include SEN students, but they do not focus the attention on whether the students really need such adjustments or not, so they end up making them feel excluded rather than included in relation to their classmates.

Life Story interviews for teachers (Part two)

The purpose of this instrument was to make teachers reflect on their own pedagogical practices and gather information on their anecdotes and experiences working with SEN students. In order to have a better understanding, we asked 5 questions in total. four were related to their experiences and one was a reflection.

Some of the questions regarding their experience were the following: "Once the reflection of the previous question has been made, do you incorporate modifications in your methodology when working with students with SEN?" and "Mention an experience in which you think you could have done something better or different when teaching a

student with SEN". These two questions along with the others were quite similar to the ones used in the semi-structured interview. The purpose was to compare these two instruments and their answers since the participants could not explain themselves properly in the first interview as they did in the Life Story interview by Zoom.

In this interview, the teacher referred to their first experience working with SEN students as a challenge; they expressed this as a shocking, distressing, difficult, and demanding experience. Furthermore, they explained that they were not prepared to teach SEN students since they emphasized that they did not receive any knowledge nor strategies in their initial training. "En la pedagogía te enseñan lo más básico, cuando yo estaba estudiando a lo más te pasan un poco de psicología, pero no te pasan nada como tu tratar a un niño con autismo, déficit atencional, más allá de esa preparación no hay" (Teacher 2).

For this reason, the lack of knowledge directly affects the learning process and development of the students as teachers are not well prepared to apply the right modifications that they need according to their specific educational needs. For this, teachers need to concur with specialists, such as PIE but they affirm that the help they receive is basic as the PIE program modifications are focused mainly on the principal subjects as language, mathematics, science, and the other subjects are left aside.

Consequently, the modifications implemented by the teachers are as basic as the ones that the PIE program deliver to them because they implied that if they do not have the support of the school and their qualification to teach SEN students since college is insufficient, there is no more effort than they could do in order to facilitate their learning processes. Hereby, the modifications described by the teachers that they implement in their classes are focused on two areas; socioemotional and methodological as one of the teachers says "Actividades un poco más simple, no tan abstractas, más concretas" (Teacher 3)

Finally, teachers reflected on what they could have done better when teaching SEN students, and three out of the four teachers mentioned that they would have liked to be more involved with their students' interests, opinions, and ways of learning as

teacher 4 said “¿Entonces qué cosa pude haber hecho mejor?” haber confiado más en el estudiante”.

As a conclusion, the data analyzed leads to a state that the teacher’s attitudes do have an implicit and explicit impact on the learning process of SEN students. The major implications of these findings will be developed in the discussion section.

5. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this investigation was to find out about the teachers’ attitudes towards SEN students and if they had an impact on their learning process and educational lifestyle. Moreover, there are several investigations and background knowledge that can be found about this topic, but they mostly tackle the process of inclusion rather than the attitudes of teachers towards this process and SEN students.

Accordingly, it is necessary to keep searching for new points of view and updated information that can provide a new perspective of SEN students’ educational development, as well as the origins of the teachers’ attitudes towards them. Thus, the study focuses the attention on the research of inclusive and integrative education, exclusion and inclusion, teachers’ expectations and attitudes towards SEN students, and teachers’ initial training.

Inclusive Education and Integrative Education

As it was mentioned before, one of the most important themes of the research corresponds to the differentiation between inclusive education and integrative education. Therefore, it is important to point out that the current educational system is integrative rather than inclusive since the students who are integrated into the mainstream schools have access to education as well as any other student; besides, the education that they receive and how the content is being given to them

demonstrates that they are being integrated and not included in the classroom (Human Rights Council, 2013).

Furthermore, in Chile, the inclusion of SEN students is still an issue because of different barriers that prevent students from being effectively included. These bureaucratic barriers that SEN students must pass through a) The school must include the PIE program b) The student has to be evaluated by a professional to receive the benefits of the PIE program c) The PIE program that exists in the school has to be adequate to the necessities of the student (Rosas et al., 2019). This does not assure an inclusive school as according to the results there is a strong preference from the PIE program to subjects such as Mathematics, Language, and science, while others subjects such as English and Arts and History are left aside since they do not have the same support from PIE as the main ones do, which makes teachers feel isolated and to search for other ways of learning how to teach SEN students according to the different needs they might present, as a result of the lack of resources provided by the school.

Besides, it is also crucial to discuss teachers' perceptions and how they understand integrative and inclusive education. According to the Human Rights Council (2013), despite having similarities, those two concepts are different in terms of participation, teaching method, among others. However, as results showed, there is a tendency within the participants to understand integration and inclusion as synonyms owing to the fact that they did not make any distinction between them.

Finally, it seems relevant to mention that there have been some modifications and implementations of new decrees to ensure the inclusion of SEN students and promote diversity in education. As an example, decree 83 aims to eliminate the barriers that exist and make the national curriculum more flexible at the moment of teaching SEN students. However, it only considers pre-school and primary education and not secondary education. For this reason, the process of inclusive education in Chile has recently started and there should be more adjustments and implementations.

Exclusion and Segregation in education.

Exclusion and segregation in education are other issues that were relevant during this study as the results of the instruments showed that students go through two types of violence inside the classroom. Indirect and direct violence by teachers and students, which can be demonstrated in different ways and different contexts where SEN students are not always aware of those situations that might affect their learning outcomes and coexistence with their peers. However, the examples of violence were mostly described by students, but teachers instead mentioned that they have never seen nor experienced any type of violence inside the classroom by them or by another teacher towards SEN students.

The instruments provided examples of the two types of violence that were mentioned before. Firstly, Student 4 narrated an example of direct violence by a teacher who made explicit and derogatory comments about them and how their future will be nothing but a job that is not relevant in our society and people who are lazy study those types of professions as they are considered easy and underpaid.

On the contrary, as it was stated by Schwab et al, it was found that teachers perceived that SEN students were more excluded and less popular than the ones without SEN (2013). Thus, student 2 commented that when doing group activities, other students tended to leave them aside making them feel like outsiders in the classroom and this can be considered as an action that is directly related to the teacher management of the class and of the activities because if there is one student who is left aside in group activities, the teacher must organize their classes. As Teacher 1 said it is the teachers' duty to include all the students inside the classroom without exceptions. The cases mentioned above are clear examples of structural indirect violence (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, p.1127) for the reason that SEN students do not meet the social standards of the neurotypical student population.

As seen in the results, it could be concluded that teachers find the process of inclusive and integrative education as a challenge because they tend to center their attention on the educational necessities of the students rather than how the students could benefit the class. Indeed, the teachers demonstrated that they make modifications only when there is a student with SEN, which due to the definition of inclusive education of MINEDUC (2017), teachers should consider any type of diversity inside their classroom that includes SEN students, ethnic groups, multiple intelligences, and others in order to make adjustments according to the diversity of the class rather than one particular individual. This could eradicate situations of exclusion and segregation inside the classroom because it will allow all the students to blend in with their peers

Teachers' expectations and attitude towards students with SEN.

It is also fundamental to consider teachers' expectations and attitudes towards students with SEN, which is one of the most important themes and concerns of this research, since those are the elements that might have a direct or indirect impact on SEN students' learning process and performance. Although there are studies that focus on teachers' attitudes (Unianu, 2012, p 904), they do not deal with special educational needs and their consequences on students; however, the experience seems to be dominant regarding the attitude of teachers.

As stated by the participants, they mentioned that it was definitely a challenge for them as teachers to work with SEN students, which affects their attitudes since just before teaching they begin to doubt whether they will be able to carry out an effective and inclusive classroom or not. Besides, as results showed, three out of four teachers pointed out that they should have trusted more in their SEN students.

Therefore, they seemed to show a positive attitude when they were asked to teach SEN students, but their low expectations towards them influenced their attitudes because they were more concerned about the difficulties rather than the advantages

and the possibilities that working with SEN students provides in the classroom. (Unianu, 2012, p.901).

These attitudes and teachers' behavior have an effect on SEN students. As the results demonstrated, two out of four students have preserved a negative attitude from their teachers, which could affect their learning process as well as their emotional development in the educational system. As a consequence, the students who participated in this study did not seem to pay attention to how the attitudes of their teacher affect their learning process; however, they emphasized how these attitudes made them feel in the emotional area.

Regarding the aforementioned, it could be concluded that the expectations of teachers towards SEN students could influence their attitudes (Thurstone 1928, p. 531); in addition, in the instruments, it was found that teachers tend to focus their attention on the special educational needs of the students along with their performance rather than how these students want to be treated and included in the classroom.

Teachers' initial training

Lastly, the teachers' initial training subject-matter is the last topic that is under the concern of this research because it was approached previously as something highly relevant in teachers' careers as the lack of knowledge affects the teachers' attitudes towards SEN students. For this, teachers' preparation during their initial training is minimal compared to the actual necessities that SEN students have (Villani et al., 2009, as cited in Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2012) and this is also demonstrated with Teacher 1 who said that during the period that he was in college neither he nor his classmates paid attention or gave importance to the pedagogical subjects since inclusion was not as relevant as it is nowadays.

The results found that all the teachers mentioned that the lack of information regarding SEN students in their initial training has an impact on their teaching process since as it was expressed before most of the teachers consider teaching SEN students

a challenge (Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2012), as a consequence, they seek help from the PIE program leaving the teachers with limited opportunities to decide the curriculum adjustments that SEN students may require.

In addition to their initial training, the government has different programs for teachers to become acquainted with special educational needs and how they can develop teaching skills such as 'Programa de fomento a la calidad de la formación inicial docente'. Overall, from the perspective of the Chilean Ministry of Education, it seems that there are resources that are provided by the government, therefore, it can be assumed that the inclusive school is relevant in the educational system.

However, with the application of the instruments, it was possible to observe that none of the teachers seemed to know those types of programs as they mentioned only the deficiency of external support, and that the only ones that they received were from some or none subjects in their universities during their training period. Therefore, it is a contradiction since, it is known that there are programs that have as purpose to promote inclusion in the classroom, however, it is possible to say whether teachers are not really aware of these programs; they do not give importance to such programs, or simply the implementation of such practices are not as effective as it seems.

External factors and future considerations

Regarding the limitations that occurred throughout the research, it could be assumed that in general teachers were not as specific as they were expected to be, since while the instruments were being applied, it was very difficult to schedule the meetings in order to implement the instruments, and the interviewers had to reformulate or ask some questions twice. Also, the participants; mostly teachers, took a long time to reply to the Semi-structured interview, which was due to the little time they had because of all the responsibilities in their current jobs.

Besides, the pandemic situation played an important role in the development of the study. At the beginning it was intended to apply the Life Story interview in a face-

to-face modality, therefore the results were difficult to analyze and interfered with the pandemic restrictions. Contrary to the Life Story interview, it was found that in the Semi-structured interview, teachers provided answers that seemed to be politically correct and did not have a clear position on the subject matter.

As it was mentioned previously, the pandemic situation interfered with the implementation of the instruments, that is why for future studies, it is recommended to apply a study case instrument since it would facilitate the analysis of observing the attitude of teachers inside the classroom towards SEN students. Likewise, the results would be much more significant if the number of participants is higher since the data collected could present a variety of answers to the questions and the analysis could allow the researchers to provide generalized answers.

Additionally, for further investigation related to the attitude of teachers towards SEN students, it is necessary to research further on the programs and workshops imparted by the government since the participants did not point out any external support; therefore, it seems relevant to investigate whether these programs are effective and contribute to teachers' development.

On the one hand, there were unexpected results found in this investigation from teachers as well as students. For instance, in the case of teachers' answers in the Life Story interview, it was thought that the younger would be more open-minded to the situation of the SEN students as younger generations have been more exposed to the concept of inclusion and the current society that we live in, tend to be more accepting with people's differences. However, teachers did not seem to know how to refer or treat SEN students appropriately and there was one young teacher, in particular, that referred to them in a derogatory way.

On the second hand, in the semi-structured interview for the students, there was a question about the relationship between a subject they disliked and if the teacher had to do with that dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, unexpectedly they did not have a relationship as students mentioned that they do not link together their closeness or distance with the teacher and their position about the subject. Hence, students do not

seem to know the role that teachers should perform inside the classroom, they do not pay attention or do not have the awareness that teachers' must teach them according to their necessities and provide quality education, but instead, they only focus on how they are treated by them emotionally speaking.

Summarizing all of the above, the topics approached have a relation between each other and they have a connection as cause-consequence or chain effect as teachers' initial training was described from the participants as something that they did not have enough knowledge regarding the concept of inclusion when they were at college because of the few subjects regarding the topic. This is closely related to the expectation and attitudes they had with their first SEN students at the moment of teaching them, as they felt little prepared to integrate and include them inside the classroom. For this reason, the deficiency of knowledge about special educational needs provokes exclusion and segregation not only from teachers but from all the educational systems that do not provide the tools to accomplish inclusive and integrative education to SEN students.

Conclusion

Once the data was collected and analyzed, it is important to reflect on how the implementation of the instruments and the discussion helped to carry out the main research objectives since the research problem deals with the teachers' attitudes towards SEN students and how they perceive inclusive education in the Chilean educational system. Therefore, in the three instruments, the results provided a better understanding of some attitudes in the classroom not only from teachers' perspective but also from the students.

Finally, it was possible to conclude that teachers' attitudes do have an impact on SEN students not only from an academic perspective but also in the emotional area. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the importance of indirect violence that is taking place in mainstream schools, since the attitudes and expectations that teachers

have nowadays towards students with SEN cause indirect violence. Thus, the themes developed in this research must be considered for current and future teachers so that they can become aware of this issue because in most cases neither teachers nor students can identify any type of violence in the classroom.

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APPENDIX 1

Expert Judgment Validation Record

I, Angelina Isabel Cáceres, Ma in TEFL, and professor at Universidad Mayor, hereby report my validation of the data collection instrument(s) attached for the research project *Teachers' attitudes and their effects on SEN students*, a prerequisite for the Bachelor's Degree in Education of the English Pedagogy Program.

Validation criteria	Validated	Validated with comments	Insufficient
Congruence of the instrument with the proposed objectives.		X	
Relevance of the instrument to answer the research questions/hypotheses.		X	
Clarity and precision in the instructions.	X		

Clarity and precision of questions or items.		X	
Language appropriate for the study population.	X		
Spelling and writing.		X	

Date: June 21st, 2021

Angelina Isabel Cáceres

Signature of Expert Validator

Bachelor's Thesis Office Universidad Mayor

Manuel Montt Middle 318, Providencia,
Santiago, Chile

APPENDIX 2

Instruments and Interventions: Semi-Structured interview, In-depth interview, and Life story interview.

Semi-structured interview for teachers using Google Form:

1. Nombre los tipos de necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) que conozca.
2. ¿Qué entiende usted por integración e inclusión? Explique brevemente.
3. En caso de haber tenido la oportunidad de enseñar a estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales, ¿podría describir su experiencia?
4. Con respecto a la pregunta anterior, ¿Cuáles fueron las modificaciones implementadas para enseñarle a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales?
5. Describa cuales son las emociones que le rodean al momento de tener que enseñarle a un estudiante con necesidades educativas especiales. (ej. Siento que es un desafío y me angustia que no entienda, me motiva a buscar nuevas metodologías)
6. ¿Cree usted que los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales deberían estar en un establecimiento que sea exclusivamente para estudiantes con NEE? Justifique su respuesta.
7. Supongamos que un estudiante dentro del espectro autista es integrado a una de sus clases, ¿Cómo modificaría sus clases para que el estudiante pueda aprender de igual forma que el resto?

8. ¿Cuál sería su reacción en el caso que un estudiante con necesidades educativas especiales presente una crisis dentro de la sala de clases?

9. ¿Está de acuerdo con la siguiente afirmación? "Los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales retrasan el aprendizaje de los otros estudiantes". Justifique su respuesta.

10. ¿Cree que el sistema educativo excluye a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales? Explique su respuesta

11. Durante su proceso de formación pedagógica, ¿Se le dieron las herramientas y conocimiento de cómo enseñar a estudiantes con NEE? Si este fue el caso, ¿Cómo se presentaron? (por medio de un ramo universitario, charlas, seminarios, por un medio independiente, etc)

12. ¿Conoce el Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje (DUA)? Si es así, ¿de qué forma lo aplica en sus clases?

1. In-depth interview for the students using Google form.

1. ¿Qué te gusta de ir al colegio? ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Cuál es la asignatura que más te gusta?, ¿Por qué?, ¿Te gusta el profesor/a de esa asignatura?

3. ¿Cuál es la asignatura que menos te gusta?, ¿Por qué?, ¿Te gusta el profesor/a de esa asignatura?

4. ¿Has sentido una mala actitud de parte de tus profesores hacia ti? ¿Por qué crees que ha sido?

5. ¿Te has sentido excluido (no incluido en clases) por tus profesores?

6. ¿Crees que los profesores hacen una diferencia para enseñarte? (realizan pruebas diferentes, entregan el material de estudio más personalizado, etc)
7. En una actividad pedagógica, ¿Eres un participante activo o pasivo? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Qué crees que podrían hacer mejor los profesores que trabajan contigo?

2. Life Story interview using Zoom.

3.1 Instrument for students

1. Cuenta una situación en donde te hayas sentido alegre dentro de la sala de clase por una acción que haya hecho un profesor.
2. Cuenta una situación en donde te hayas sentido excluido de la sala de clases.
3. ¿Consideras que tus profesores han usado apoyos según tu estilo de aprendizaje visual, auditivo, kinestésico, etc) para que puedas aprender de una mejor manera?
4. Cuéntanos una situación en la que el profesor haya hecho algo que no te haya gustado al momento de explicar una actividad.

3.2 Instrument for teachers

1. ¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia trabajando con estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales en el aula?
2. ¿Cómo fue su primera experiencia trabajando con estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales? (contexto, metodología implementada, tipo de NEE, nivel de preparación)
3. Cuente una situación negativa (violencia, discriminación, vulneración) que haya visto o vivido hacia un estudiante con NEE. ¿Cuál fue su reacción?
4. Mencione una experiencia en la cual usted considere que pudo haber hecho algo mejor o diferente al momento de enseñar a un estudiante con NEE.

APPENDIX 3

Informed Consent for students

Consentimiento informado para participar en un proyecto de investigación

Teachers' attitudes and their effects on SEN students.

Estimada(o) participante, nuestros nombres son: Tamara Acuña, Bárbara Faúndez, Cristian Gutiérrez y Laura Quijada, y somos estudiantes de la carrera Pedagogía en Inglés para básica y media de la Escuela de Educación en la Facultad de Humanidades de la Universidad Mayor. Actualmente, nos encontramos llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación para obtener el grado de *Licenciada(o) en Educación*, el cual tiene como objetivo Analizar las actitudes de los profesores hacia estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales en el aula y analizar el impacto que esto tiene en el aprendizaje de los estudiante.

Usted ha sido invitada(o) o su hijo(a) a participar de este proyecto de investigación académica que consiste en entrevistas a través de google form y de la plataforma zoom durante el mes de julio.

Debido a que el uso de la información es con fines académicos, la participación en este estudio es completamente anónima y los investigadores mantendrán su confidencialidad en todos los documentos, no publicándose ningún nombre y resguardando la identidad de las personas.

Si usted tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante puede realizarla directamente a las(os) investigadoras(es), o bien comunicarse con el Coordinador de Tesinas de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Mayor, al correo electrónico: marcos.lopez@umayor.cl, o concurrir a la dirección Manuel Montt Oriente 318, Providencia, Santiago de Chile.

.....

ACTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo Rut:....., **acepto participar/que mi hijo/a** participe voluntaria y anónimamente en la investigación "**Las actitudes de los profesores y su efecto en estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales**", dirigida por las(os) estudiantes Tamara Acuña, Bárbara Faúndez, Cristian Gutiérrez y Laura Quijada de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Mayor.

Declaro haber sido informado/a de los objetivos y procedimientos del estudio y del tipo de participación que se solicita, así como saber que la información entregada será **confidencial y anónima**. Entiendo que la información será analizada por los investigadores en forma grupal y que no se podrán identificar las respuestas y opiniones de modo personal. Por último, la información que se obtenga sólo se utilizará para los fines de este proyecto de investigación.

Firma

Fecha

Informed Consent for teachers

Consentimiento informado para participar en un proyecto de investigación

**“Teachers’ attitudes and their effects on SEN students”
“Actitudes de los profesores y su afecto en los estudiantes con needs”**

Estimada(o) participante, nuestros nombres son Tamara Acuña, Bárbara Faúndez, Cristian Gutierrez, Laura Quijada, y somos estudiantes de la carrera Pedagogía en inglés para Básica y media de la Escuela de Educación en la Facultad de Humanidades de la Universidad Mayor. Actualmente, nos encontramos llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación para obtener el grado de *Licenciada(o) en Educación*, el cual tiene como objetivo Analizar las actitudes de los profesores hacia los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales y el impacto que estas actitudes tienen en los estudiantes con Needs.

Usted ha sido invitado a participar de este proyecto de investigación académica que consiste en dos partes, primeramente se les enviará un formulario de Google, en este formulario se les harán preguntas sobre sus preferencias y opiniones respecto al proceso de inclusión. Segundo, se les invitará a una videollamada por Zoom para una entrevista, en esta entrevista se les preguntará por vivencias, anécdotas, y/o historias del colegio. Estas intervenciones serán realizadas entre la última semana de Julio y primera semanas de agosto del 2021

Debido a que el uso de la información es con fines académicos, la participación en este estudio es completamente anónima y los investigadores mantendrán su confidencialidad en todos los documentos, no publicándose ningún nombre y resguardando la identidad de las personas.

Si usted tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante puede realizarla directamente a las(os) investigadoras(es), o bien comunicarse con el Coordinador de Tesinas de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Mayor, al correo electrónico: marcos.lopez@umayor.cl, o concurrir a la dirección Manuel Montt Oriente 318, Providencia, Santiago de Chile.

.....
.....

ACTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Yo, Rut:....., aceptó participar de forma voluntaria y anónimamente en la investigación “ Teachers’ attitudes and their

effects on SEN students.”, dirigida por las(os) estudiantes Tamara Acuña, Bárbara Faúndez, Cristian Gutierrez, & Laura Quijada de la Escuela de Educación de la Universidad Mayor.

Declaro haber sido informado/a de los objetivos y procedimientos del estudio y del tipo de participación que se solicita, así como saber que la información entregada será confidencial y anónima. Entiendo que la información será analizada por los investigadores en forma grupal y que no se podrán identificar las respuestas y opiniones de modo personal. Por último, la información que se obtenga sólo se utilizará para los fines de este proyecto de investigación.

Firma

Fecha

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