



A SURVEY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' VIEWS ON THE TYPES AND DEGREE OF SUPPORT NECESSARY FOR THE COMPLETE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Zhang Yuke¹, LUBNA ALI²

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine preschool teachers' views on the kinds and levels of support that are crucial for assisting children with special needs to transition into mainstream classrooms. In order to gather demographic information and evaluate help needs, 1,608 instructors participated in a survey that included a 5-point Likert scale and a structured questionnaire. The researcher examined the quantitative and qualitative relationship between early childhood inclusion outcomes and help needs using SPSS version 25's descriptive statistics and ANOVA. Educators were in complete agreement when asked how critical it was to have more people, money, and training to implement inclusive practices successfully. Because each kid had unique needs, teachers worried that they wouldn't have enough resources to satisfy everyone's needs. Researchers aimed to determine whether instructors' views of support were statistically related to their ability to create inclusive classrooms for all students. The study's p-value was found to be less than 0.05, indicating that statistical significance was intended. In preschools and kindergartens, these findings show that having the support of teachers is one of the most important things for starting and keeping inclusive practices. This research adds to the current body of knowledge by illuminating the kinds of support that teachers need to fully integrate students with special needs in the learning process. This research recommends that legislators and school districts revise their strategies for professional development and resource distribution so that all kids in these schools may get a high-quality education.

Keywords: *Inclusion In Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Educators, Perspectives of Educators, Comprehensive Education.*



1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to get insight into how Chinese preschool educators feel about inclusive education. It is the responsibility of the school to provide a well-organized program for preschoolers that places an emphasis on constructive relationships. In China, parents have the freedom to pick a preschool for their children regardless of their IQ or physical abilities. Because of this, the researchers opted to carry out their study in China. One reason for the success and broad acceptance of inclusive education in China is the strong intellectual and governmental foundation it has. Teachers have long played a vital role in China's comprehensive education system, which has its roots in the country's educational reforms. It is the unwavering belief of early childhood educators that every child, regardless of their unique circumstances, should have access to a quality education. Chinese parents have had access to a wide variety of excellent daycare centers for more than a century. For families who do not qualify for federal child care subsidies, the choice of early childhood education program is entirely up to them. Numerous options exist for the care of young children of Pacific Islanders, including public and private kindergartens, community centers, playgroups, in-home care, and resources for early childhood development. Whatever is most practical for them, they are free to choose and choose. Programs providing care for young children in China must follow the country's official curriculum and pass licencing exams in order to be considered for funding under the Early Childhood Education Laws of 2008. Teachers at China's kindergartens, preschools, and first grades have a significant impact on their students. Children should have time to learn, play, and unwind, and they should also be prepared for future success in school and in life (Ring & Sullivan, 2018). As kids become responsible individuals, the



researcher need to step up their efforts to ensure that every child succeeds academically. The researcher should listen carefully to the pupils and consider their perspectives on education if they want the students to succeed in their first few years of school. Many cultures place a high value on children because of the wisdom and insight they provide on issues that affect their daily lives and because they may provide trustworthy advice on how to improve their quality of life. Today, working with young children is one of the most exciting parts of becoming a teacher. This is especially true in the area of early childhood education. Early intervention, early education, and childcare are three separate but related fields within this broader subject. A common, easily-understood definition of inclusion in early development programs has been worked out by the NAEYC and the Division of Early Development. Nevertheless, early development programs still face nationwide challenges that prevent children with impairments from participating. Inadequate financing for early children's educators and the absence of a consistent pre-service framework for educating early development experts are two of the many obstacles that researchers have identified as preventing professionals from offering high-quality inclusive early childhood education. All children with impairments, no matter how tiny, should be able to participate in programs meant for typically developing children and should be accommodated in the least restrictive environment. This is just one example of how academics and politicians need to work together to address these interconnected issues. This research examines a variety of themes in literature on inclusive practices for young children. Among these are the following: the evolution of inclusive education in the United States, various conceptions of inclusion in the early years, teacher perspectives, administrative backing for inclusion, the value of specialized education and training, and the effect of guiding philosophies and curricula on inclusive practices. At long last, they get the message:



formal education and training are essential. All children with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in early development programs, and there needs to be more research to help early childhood educators overcome the obstacles they encounter while offering high-quality inclusive education (Puig & Recchia, 2020).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ensuring that children with disabilities or special needs have access to high-quality early childhood education programs tailored to their specific requirements is a crucial component of education. Children with exceptional needs, in contrast to typically developing peers, should have access to inclusive education, according to mounting evidence. Thus, academics are advocating for this strategy. Inclusion fosters social and cognitive growth and a sense of belonging for all children, laying the groundwork for a lifetime of learning and emotional health. Despite the well-established benefits of inclusion for children, early childhood educators face a huge hurdle in creating successful inclusive practices (Karaolis, 2020). The options accessible to teachers are impacted by the heterogeneity in training, resources, and support, which in turn correlates with their judgments of their own preparation to achieve effective inclusive practice. Many teachers discourage students with disabilities from participating in their classrooms because they believe they do not have the expertise to modify existing curriculum to meet their needs. Common reasons for this include understaffing, a lack of specialized resources, and inadequate chances for career advancement. The types and levels of support that educators believe are necessary to foster successful inclusion may differ substantially. These perspectives could be influenced by personal experiences with children with disabilities, policies within institutions, and community services. It is critical to do research on educators' perspectives in order to provide training and support systems that help teachers



include all pupils. The purpose of this article was to ask early childhood educators for their opinions on the kinds and amounts of support that are necessary in inclusive classrooms. It is critical to educate policymakers, training programs, and schools about the many obstacles and needs of those striving to provide completely inclusive classrooms for every kid. These findings provide light on how to create an inclusive environment for all children in preschool programs via the use of inclusive practices (Slee, 2019).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of this research is to find out how preschool teachers feel about the best way to help students with special needs succeed in mainstream classes. Educators will be surveyed and interviewed by researchers to get insight into their opinions on the difficulties they encounter and the kind of support they would need, including resources, money, and chances for professional growth. Gaining a solid understanding of different viewpoints is crucial for developing policies and practices that might benefit the academic success of all children. In order to better customize resources and professional development programs to fulfill the diverse expectations of educators, this research seeks to illuminate those requirements.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Universal access to excellent education is emphasized by the widely used idea of inclusive education. But it won't be enough to ensure that children with disabilities and other excluded groups can fully participate. Regarding the actualization of its principles, inclusive education continues to face several challenges in today's educational institutions. In an inclusive classroom,



students with a wide range of backgrounds, abilities, and academic aptitudes work together to learn (Spandagou et al., 2020). Generally speaking, inclusive practices fall into one of four categories, according to research: (a) when parents are respected and given the same rights as other children in the community; (b) when families are valued and supported; (c) when all children are treated with respect and equality; and (d) when children with special needs have the same access to social and educational opportunities as their typically developing peers. By stressing the importance of morality and social justice, educators strive to foster a sense of community and belonging among families and students. The effectiveness of the inclusion strategy in early childhood settings, such as preschools, is a matter of debate, despite its longevity. To guarantee that kindergartens and preschools in China provide sufficient high-quality education, the Education Review Office (ERO) conducts evaluations. Instead of using a cookie-cutter approach, inclusion places students together based on how much they share or vary from one another, increasing the likelihood that all students will do well in class. Curriculum, guiding concepts, resources, collaborative approaches, and a plan to help young children establish caring and respectful relationships with others are all part of special education for children. The Ministry of Education (2017) states that schools have a responsibility to make sure that kids with special needs are included in normal classes, get the help they need, and are valued for who they are. Therefore, it is essential that all kindergartens and preschools provide an inclusive curriculum that accepts and helps kids with disabilities. Children with exceptional needs and generally developing peers are both welcomed and supported in an inclusive early childhood environment. Growing up in an inclusive environment has many benefits for children (Denisova et al., 2019). Research shows that kids are more likely to be socially engaged, have better developmental outcomes, and develop empathy. The effectiveness of



inclusion depends on teachers' preparedness and the tools they can use. There is a lot of variation in the inclusion tactics used by early childhood educators, and most of these teachers do not feel equipped to meet their students' requirements, according to the research. Systemic barriers, such as insufficient funds and manpower, further make it difficult for educators to provide sufficient student aid. According to the current research, it is crucial to learn how teachers feel about the levels and kinds of support that are necessary for students to feel included in the classroom. The goal of these efforts was to help teachers fill up the gaps so that they can provide high-quality early childhood education to all of their students. Future policies and training may be developed using this information (Ware, 2020).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of Development Support in early childhood inclusion?

6. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research refers to studies that examine numerical readings of variables using one or more statistical models. The social environment may be better understood via quantitative research. Quantitative approaches are often used by academics to study problems that impact individuals. Objective data presented in a graphical format is a byproduct of quantitative research. Numbers are crucial to quantitative research and must be collected and analyzed in a systematic way. Averages, predictions, correlations, and extrapolating findings to larger groups are all possible with their help.



6.1 Research design: In order to analyse quantitative data, SPSS version 25 was used. When analysing the statistical association, the odds ratio and 95% confidence interval were used to determine its direction and size. A statistically significant threshold was suggested by the researchers at $p < 0.05$. The primary features of the data were identified by a descriptive analysis. Mathematical, numerical, or statistical evaluations using quantitative methodologies are often used for data gathered from surveys, polls, and questionnaires, or by modifying existing statistical data using computing tools.

6.2 Sampling: A random sampling technique was applied for the study. The research relied on questionnaires to gather its data. The Rao-soft program determined a sample size of 1548. A total of 1650 questionnaires were distributed; 1632 were returned, and 24 were excluded due to incompleteness. In the end, 1608 questionnaires were used for the research comprising 983 females and 805 men.

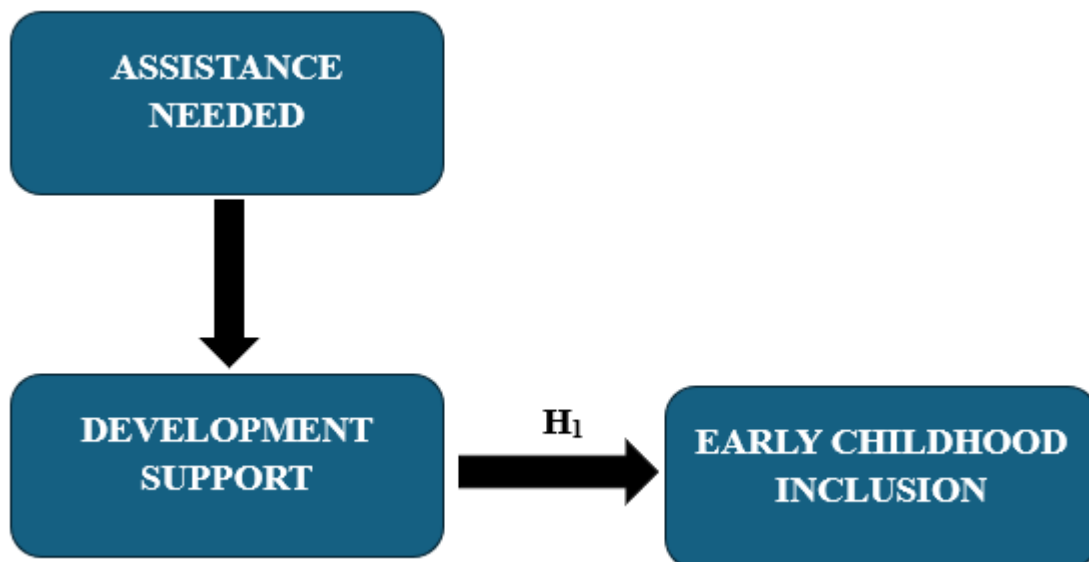
6.3 Data and Measurement: A questionnaire survey functioned as the primary data collection instrument for the investigation. The survey had two sections: (A) General demographic information and (B) Responses on online and non-online channel factors on a 5-point Likert scale. Secondary data was obtained from many sources, mostly on internet databases.

6.4 Statistical software: The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 25 and MS-Excel.

6.5 Statistical Tools: To grasp the fundamental character of the data, descriptive analysis was used. The researcher is required to analyse the data using ANOVA.



7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESULT

❖ Factor analysis

One typical use of Factor Analysis (FA) is to verify the existence of latent components in observable data. When there are not easily observable visual or diagnostic markers, it is common practice to utilize regression coefficients to produce ratings. In FA, models are essential for



success. Finding mistakes, intrusions, and obvious connections are the aims of modelling. One way to assess datasets produced by multiple regression studies is with the use of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test. They verify that the model and sample variables are representative. According to the numbers, there is data duplication. When the proportions are less, the data is easier to understand. For KMO, the output is a number between zero and one. If the KMO value is between 0.8 and 1, then the sample size should be enough. These are the permissible boundaries, according to Kaiser: The following are the acceptance criteria set by Kaiser:

A dismal 0.050 to 0.059, subpar 0.60 to 0.69

Middle grades often range from 0.70 to 0.79.

Exhibiting a quality point score between 0.80 and 0.89.

They are astonished by the range of 0.90 to 1.00.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test for Sampling Adequacy Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement:

.895

The outcomes of Bartlett's test of sphericity are as follows: Approximately chi-square degrees of freedom = 190 significance = 0.000

This confirms the legitimacy of claims made just for sampling purposes. Researchers used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to ascertain the significance of the correlation matrices. A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.895 indicates that the sample is sufficient. The p-value is 0.00 according to Bartlett's sphericity test. A positive outcome from Bartlett's sphericity test indicates that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

**Table: KMO and Bartlett's**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.895
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The overall importance of the correlation matrices was also validated by Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy is 0.895. Utilizing Bartlett's sphericity test, researchers obtained a p-value of 0.00. A notable result from Bartlett's sphericity test indicated that the correlation matrix is not valid.

❖ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

➤ Assistance Need

Researchers are referring to assistance needed when they discuss the kind and amount of support that classroom teachers and students need to succeed in inclusive environments. One kind of assistance may be the creation of adaptable educational methods, the supply of supplemental resources and staff, or specialized training for teachers (Shaeffer, 2019).

❖ FACTOR

➤ Development support

The term "development support" describes the backing and resources offered to help bring an idea for a product, service, or system to fruition. It covers a lot of ground, from design and testing to



research and scaling, and it comes with the help of knowledgeable people and financial support. In addition, it aids in meeting regulatory and compliance standards and access to necessary infrastructure such as laboratories, tools, and facilities. In order to overcome obstacles, reduce risks, and speed up timeframes without sacrificing quality or relevance, development assistance is essential. To drive innovation and achieve meaningful outcomes across sectors, it is a core essential (Wang & Deng, 2022).

❖ **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

➤ **Early Childhood Inclusion**

Inclusion in all parts of family life, community life, and society is a right of every kid and their family, irrespective of their skills. Infant and toddler inclusion policies, strategies, and principles embody this idea. Inclusionary experiences aim to provide families with and without disabilities a sense of community and belonging, foster strong friendships and social connections, and provide opportunities for learning and personal growth. To find good early childhood programs and services, it is helpful to define inclusion in terms of access, participation, and support.

❖ **Relationship between Development Support and Early Childhood Inclusion**



When it comes to promoting early childhood inclusion, development assistance is crucial because it supplies the tools, tactics, and infrastructure necessary to build inclusive and equitable classrooms. All children, regardless of their ability, background, or need, may be accommodated with the help of inclusive policies, adapted materials, and accessible facilities. Teachers and other caretakers may improve their ability to work with students who have special needs via training programs, and families can learn how to be strong advocates for their children's inclusion in school activities. Additionally, development funding allows research to continuously improve inclusive practices, advocates for more inclusive policies, and finances projects. To ensure that every child can learn, grow, and thrive, development support works to reduce access gaps and prioritize equality. This paves the way for early childhood inclusion (Shuangquan et al., 2022).

Based on the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which was to analyze the relationship between Development support and Early Childhood Inclusion.

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	642	5655.517	486.699	.000
Within Groups	492.770	965	5.356		
Total	40081.390	1607			

In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 486.699 , which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (which is less than the alpha level). This means the “*H₁: There is a significant relationship between Development Support and Early Childhood Inclusion*” is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.



9. DISCUSSION

By surveying ECE professionals about their thoughts on the kinds and levels of assistance needed to include children with special needs, this study illuminates the current status of inclusive practices in the sector. The researcher could get useful insight into the challenges and resources needed for successful implementation if they listen to this kind of practitioner, who is crucial in creating inclusive workplaces. To start, there is evidence that many educators believe they are underprepared to meet the requirements of their special education children. The majority of studies back this idea, even suggesting that the biggest roadblocks to advancement in one's profession were one's own lack of competence and proper training. Many educators have voiced their need for robust professional development and workshop programs so that they may adapt their pedagogy and lesson plans to new circumstances. Classrooms that welcome and support students from all walks of life may be made possible by equipping teachers with these skills. Educational tools and additional personnel assistance stand out as the most important supplemental resources for inclusive practice, according to the poll findings. Due to a shortage of additional workers, it is not feasible to provide personalized help on bigger courses. Organizational resource planning must, therefore, be very clear. Schools have created environments where students with special needs may participate in meaningful activities and learn from their teachers by increasing the number of staff members or bringing in expert assistants. As a third point, it's important to weigh the perceived need for help against the potential advantages of inclusion. After obtaining support, instructors are more likely to utilize inclusive tactics that work. When support intervention is available, it may really be more of a hindrance than an assist to special education. This connection



further emphasizes the significance of teachers recognizing and resolving challenges they encounter in inclusive environments, as their viewpoints directly impact the equality of education for all students. In all three parts of the survey—training background, particular classroom settings, and experience—the responses from educators demonstrated a diverse variety of viewpoints. Given that various teachers may have varying needs in response to this fact, a more tailored strategy may be necessary for addressing it. To ensure that all educators have access to high-quality professional development, it is important that programs be adaptable and flexible. In conclusion Research results emphasize the significance of support requirements in preschool integration for children with special needs. Educational institutions may encourage inclusive practices by putting an emphasis on professional development, distributing funds, and providing targeted support systems. First and foremost, it was about creating an inclusive classroom where all children, regardless of their background, skills, or challenges, could thrive and develop to their maximum potential. Legislators, educators, and everyone else engaged must keep the lines of communication open if inclusive education is to be promoted and all kids are to have equitable access to education.

10.CONCLUSION

The results of the survey of early childhood educators about their attitudes towards the types and levels of support needed to include children with special needs shed light on certain critical strategic moments when determining the business importance of having access to quality support mechanisms in the context of early childhood education. Based on the evidence that is available, educators are aware that they need more training, resources, and support staff in order to put the inclusion strategies into action. This reflects an understanding of the challenges and requirements



of making every student's educational opportunity a priority in the classroom. Since there is a substantial link between stated aid needs and the performance of inclusion initiatives, it seems that educators were able to change their teaching approaches and establish inclusive learning environments when provided the tools they required. This means that educational institutions and politicians need to provide professional development and resources to suit the diverse needs of teachers. Another reason why students' individual experiences and classroom settings are so vital makes customized aid solutions even more crucial. Focused attempts to resolve the specific challenges teachers encounter in the classroom may be much more effective than wide-ranging, one-size-fits-all answers. Making preschools and kindergartens welcoming places for all students will need patience and the joint efforts of educators, school administrators, and policymakers. Let's talk about how supporting educators' professional development might help create more fair and inclusive learning environments by bolstering the aforementioned areas. Inclusive classrooms not only help children with special needs, but they also help all students develop social skills, empathy, and a sense of belonging. This discussion must continue if they are to succeed in their efforts to restructure preschool programs so that more children can participate.

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