



AN EXAMINATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE TYPES AND EXTENT OF SUPPORT REQUIRED FOR THE FULL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

Finding out how preschool educators feel about the kind and amounts of assistance that are most important for helping kids with special needs adjust to regular classrooms is the driving force behind this research. A total of 1,608 educators filled out a survey that used a 5-point Likert scale and a structured questionnaire to collect demographic data and assess the need for assistance. Using the descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS version 25, the researcher looked at the qualitative and quantitative link between the results of early childhood inclusion and the demands for assistance. When asked how important it was to have more resources (such as personnel, funding, and training) to effectively adopt inclusive policies, educators unanimously agreed. There was concern among educators that they would not have the resources to meet the demands of all students, given the diversity of their learning styles. The purpose of this study was to find out whether there was a statistically significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of support and their capacity to make their classrooms welcoming to all pupils. The research aimed for statistical significance since its p-value was less than 0.05. These results highlight the significance of teachers' assistance in establishing and maintaining inclusive practices in early childhood education settings. This study contributes to what is already known by shedding light on the types of assistance that educators need to completely include students with special needs in the educational process. To ensure that all students in these schools have access to a high-quality education, this study suggests that policymakers and educational agencies reevaluate their approaches to teacher training and funding.

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



1. INTRODUCTION

Finding out how preschool teachers in China feel about inclusive education is the driving force behind this study. The school has an obligation to provide a structured program for preschoolers that prioritizes positive interactions. No parent in China has to worry about their child's intelligence or physical ability while choosing a preschool. Researchers chose to conduct their investigation in China due to this reason. The solid intellectual and governmental basis of inclusive education in China is a contributing factor to its success and widespread acceptance. The educational reforms that gave rise to China's current comprehensive education system have long recognized the critical role that teachers play within it. Early childhood educators are steadfast in their conviction that all children, irrespective of their individual situations, deserve a top-notch education. For over a hundred years, Chinese parents have had their pick of several top-notch childcare facilities. Families are free to choose whichever early childhood education program they choose if they do not meet the requirements for federal child care assistance. Public and private kindergartens, community centers, playgroups, in-home care, and early childhood development facilities are just a few of the many alternatives available to young children of Pacific Islanders. They are granted complete autonomy to choose and select anything they deem most practical (Yu & Cho, 2022). According to the Early Childhood Education Laws of 2008, programs in China that cater to young children are required to adhere to the approved curriculum and pass licencing examinations before they can be eligible for financing. Kindergarten, preschool, and first grade teachers in China greatly influence their children. Every child deserves the chance to study, play, and relax while simultaneously being set up for academic and lifelong success. Researchers should increase their efforts to guarantee academic success for all students as they grow into responsible adults. The



success of the children in their first years of school depends on the researcher's ability to listen to and understand the students' ideas on education. Children are highly esteemed in many cultures for the insightful and wise counsel they may provide on matters that impact their everyday lives and for the possibility that they may offer trustworthy suggestions for bettering their standard of living. One of the most rewarding aspects of becoming a teacher nowadays is interacting with elementary-aged students. Particularly in the field of preschool and kindergarten instruction is this the case. This larger topic encompasses three distinct but interconnected areas: childcare, early education, and early intervention. Together, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Division of Early Development have developed a clear and consistent definition of inclusion in EDC programs. But there are still problems on a national level with early development programs that make it hard for kids with disabilities to take part. Researchers have found several barriers that prohibit professionals from providing high-quality inclusive early childhood education, including inadequate funding for early children's educators and the lack of a standardized pre-service framework for training early development specialists. No child's disability, no matter how little, should prevent them from accessing the same programs as normally developing peers and from living in the least restrictive setting possible. This is just one way in which politicians and academia must collaborate to resolve these interrelated problems. Within the literature on inclusive practices for young children, this study delves into many issues. Among these are: the development of inclusive education in the US, early ideas about inclusion, teachers' points of view, support for inclusion from administration, importance of specialized training, and how guiding philosophies and curricula impact inclusive practices. Finally, they understand the need of formal education and training. It is important that all children with disabilities have access



to early development programs, and that researchers find ways to assist those working in early childhood education overcome the challenges they have in providing high-quality inclusive education (Cherrington et al., 2021).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Crucial to education is the provision of high-quality early childhood education programs that are adapted to the unique needs of children with disabilities or special needs. There is growing evidence that children with exceptional needs, unlike their normally developing classmates, should have the opportunity to participate in inclusive education. Because of this, this approach has the support of academics. The foundation for a lifetime of learning and emotional well-being is laid by inclusion, which promotes social and cognitive development, a feeling of belonging, and all children. The advantages of inclusion for children are well-established, yet early childhood educators have a significant challenge when trying to implement inclusive practices. The variety of training, tools, and support available to teachers influences their choices, which are in turn influenced by their perceptions of their own readiness to attain successful inclusive practice (Gulboy et al., 2023). The belief that they lack the knowledge to adapt current curricula to accommodate children with disabilities is a major reason why many educators want to keep these pupils out of the classroom. Inadequate opportunities for professional growth, understaffing, and a lack of specialist resources are common causes of this. There may be a wide variation in the kinds and amounts of assistance that teachers think are essential to promote effective inclusion. Individuals' first-hand encounters with disabled children, institutional regulations, and community resources may all play a role in shaping these views. In order to provide trainings and support structures that assist instructors in include all students, it is necessary to do research on educators'



viewpoints. The authors of this piece set out to get feedback from preschool teachers on the types and levels of assistance they believe are essential in welcoming all students. It is of the utmost importance to inform schools, training programs, and lawmakers about the many challenges faced by those working towards fully inclusive classrooms for all students. This research sheds insight on how preschool programs might use inclusive approaches to make their programs more welcoming to all children (Chadwell et al., 2020).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Finding out how preschool instructors feel about best practices for assisting kids with special needs in mainstream classrooms is the major objective of this study. In order to get a better understanding of the challenges, teachers face and the types of assistance they would need, such as financial aid, professional development opportunities, and resources, researchers will conduct surveys and interviews with educators. Developing policies and procedures that can help all children's academic progress requires a strong grasp of varied views. This study aims to shed light on the needs of educators so that resources and professional development programs may be better tailored to meet their various demands.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

A popular concept, "inclusive education" stresses the need to provide all students with equal access to high-quality education. However, this will not be sufficient to guarantee that marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities, are able to fully engage. When it comes to putting its



ideals into practice, inclusive education is still confronted with several obstacles in modern schools. Students from all walks of life and with all sorts of skills and intelligence collaborate to study in an inclusive classroom. Research suggests that inclusive practices can be broadly classified into four areas: (a) parent respect and equal rights, (b) family value and support, (c) equal treatment of all children, and (d) equal access to social and educational opportunities for children with special needs, as compared to their typically developing peers (Haug, 2020). Educators work to unite kids and their families in a common goal by highlighting the significance of ethics and social justice. Despite its durability, the success of the inclusion approach in early childhood settings, such as preschools, is still up for dispute. The purpose of the assessments carried out by the Instruction Review Office (ERO) is to ensure that Chinese preschools and kindergartens provide an adequate amount of high-quality instruction. To improve the chances of academic success for all students, inclusion groups them into groups according to their similarities and differences rather than utilizing a cookie-cutter approach. Special education for children includes a curriculum, guiding principles, resources, collaborative methods, and a strategy to assist young children in developing caring and courteous interactions with others. Schools are obligated to ensure that students with special needs are integrated into mainstream classrooms, get appropriate accommodations, and are appreciated for their unique qualities, according to the Ministry of Education (2017). As a result, every preschool and kindergarten must offer a program that welcomes and supports children with impairments. An inclusive early childhood setting welcomes and supports children with special needs as well as typically developing peers. Children gain a lot from growing up in an accepting community. Children are more likely to participate in group activities, have better developmental results, and learn empathy, according to the research.



Teachers' readiness and the resources at their disposal determine the efficacy of inclusion programs. The study shows that most early childhood educators do not feel prepared to fulfill their kids' needs, and that there is a lot of variety in the inclusion techniques utilized by these educators. It is already challenging for educators to provide adequate student help due to systemic obstacles such a lack of resources and personnel. Finding out how educators value various forms of support for their kids' sense of belonging in the classroom is vital, according to recent studies. All of these initiatives set out to assist educators in closing the achievement gap in early childhood education so that every kid might benefit from a top-notch program. This data could be useful for creating new training programs and policies in the future (Kivirand et al., 2022).

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What is the impact of Societal Guidance 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.

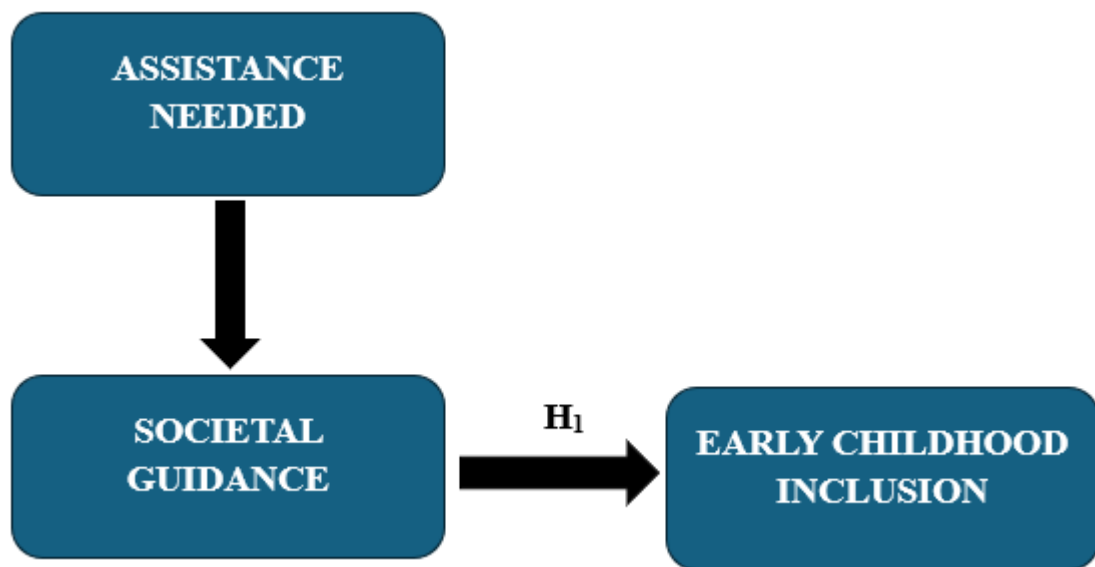
6.3 Data and Measurement: A questionnaire survey functioned as the primary data collection instrument for the investigation. The survey had two sections: (A) General demographic information and (B) Responses on online and non-online channel factors on a 5-point Likert scale. Secondary data was obtained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

.836

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 0.836 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.		.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The overall significance of the correlation matrices was further confirmed by using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A value of 0.836 was the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy. By using Bartlett's sphericity test, researchers found a p-value of 0.00. A significant test result from Bartlett's sphericity test demonstrated that the correlation matrix was not a correlation matrix.

❖ INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

➤ Assistance Need

By "assistance needed," researchers mean the sort and quantity of help that classroom instructors and students need to thrive in inclusive settings. Flexible pedagogical approaches, more personnel and resources, or enhanced professional development opportunities for educators are all examples of possible forms of support (Love & Horn, 2021).

❖ FACTOR

❖ Societal Guidance



When people, groups, or institutions provide societal guidance, it's with the intention of assisting communities and individuals in making better choices, embracing more ethical practices, and encouraging more good social behaviors. Its goals include resolving social issues, increasing acceptance of all members of society, and establishing conditions for peaceful cohabitation. For people and communities to flourish and make good contributions to the common good, social guidance primarily aims to foster a society that is supportive and cohesive. For the benefit of current and future generations, it aids in the establishment of common ideals and objectives (Locke et al., 2020).

❖ **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

❖ **Early Childhood Inclusion**

Every child and their family have the right, regardless of their abilities, to be included in every aspect of family life, community life, and society. This concept is exemplified by policies, tactics, and ideas that promote inclusion of infants and toddlers. the researcher hope that by creating inclusive activities, the researcher can help families with and without disabilities feel more connected to one another, build stronger friendships and social ties, and give everyone a chance to learn and develop. It is useful to define inclusion in terms of support, involvement, and access while looking for quality early childhood programs and services (Lesar & Mihelič, 2020).

❖ **Relationship between Societal Guidance and Early Childhood Inclusion**



The development of inclusive early childhood programs relies heavily on societal direction, which offers the moral compass, cultural awareness, and logistical assistance needed to build inclusive classrooms where every child may thrive. Communities are encouraged to adopt inclusive practices and fight prejudices that exclude particular groups, since it supports ideals such as diversity, equality, and respect. Every kid, regardless of their skills or origins, should have access to a quality education and opportunity. Societal guidance creates regulations and promotes cooperation among educators, families, and lawmakers to make this happen. Through societal leadership, communities are empowered to form a collective commitment to early childhood inclusion. This commitment is achieved by increasing awareness, advocating for inclusiveness, and addressing cultural and socioeconomic subtleties. As a result, the researcher create settings where all children may flourish and realize their full potential (Leijen et al., 2021).

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

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	643	5655.517	455.389	.000
Within Groups	492.770	964	5.356		
Total	40081.390	1607			

In this study, the result is significant. The value of F is 455.389 , 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 Societal Guidance and Early Childhood Inclusion*” is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.



9. DISCUSSION

This research of early childhood educators shed light on the present state of inclusive practices in the field by exploring their views on the types and degrees of support required to include children with special needs. If the researcher takes the time to listen to this kind of practitioner, who plays an important role in building inclusive workplaces, they may get valuable insight into the obstacles to and resources necessary for effective implementation. To begin, data shows that many teachers feel they need more training and resources to fulfill the needs of their students with special education needs. The larger body of research supports this view, even going so far as to claim that incompetence and a lack of training were the main obstacles to career development. In order to be ready to change their instructional techniques and course material, teachers have emphasized the need of strong professional development and workshop programs. By empowering educators with these abilities, the researcher can create classrooms that are inclusive and safe for students from diverse backgrounds. The results of the survey, however, reveal that instructional aids and extra staff support are the most crucial supplementary resources to aid in inclusive practice. It is emphasized that providing individual assistance on larger courses is not possible due to a lack of enough supplementary staff. Therefore, organizational resource planning has to be very clear. By incorporating higher levels of staffing or expert assistant support into educational settings, spaces were established that allow children with special needs to access meaningful interactions and learning experiences. Third, the positive benefits of inclusion must be carefully considered in relation to the amount of assistance individuals perceive as being necessary. The results show that teachers are more inclined to use effective inclusive strategies after receiving assistance. In reality,



it may be a major roadblock to special education when support intervention is present, rather than an aid to the process. The importance of educators acknowledging and overcoming obstacles they face in inclusive settings is further underscored by this relationship, since their perspectives have a direct influence on the equity of education for all children. The replies of educators showcased a wide range of perspectives in all three sections of the survey: training background, specific classroom conditions, and experience. There may be a need for a more individualized approach to dealing with this reality, as different instructors may need different levels of support based on the circumstances. Professional development programs that are up to par are flexible and accommodating to different needs so that all teachers may get the help they need. To sum up The importance of support needs in integrating children with special needs into preschool programs is highlighted by the findings of this research. Focusing on professional development, allocating resources, and offering targeted support mechanisms are ways in which educational institutions may promote inclusive practices. Above all else, it was about ensuring that students with diverse abilities, strengths, and needs had access to a welcoming classroom environment where they could reach their full potential. This means that in order to promote inclusive education and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to study, it is imperative that lawmakers, educators, and everyone involved maintain open lines of communication.

10.CONCLUSION

A survey was conducted among early childhood educators to gauge their perspectives on the various forms and degrees of assistance required to accommodate children with special needs. provide insight into key strategic moments when assessing the value of effective support systems



for early childhood education to businesses. In order to implement the inclusion techniques, educators are aware that they need more training, resources, and support personnel based on the current research. That shows that what it takes to make sure that every kid has a fair chance to learn in the classroom. It seems that educators were able to alter their pedagogical practices and create inclusive classrooms after receiving the necessary resources, since there is a strong correlation between declared assistance requirements and the success of inclusion activities. Consequently, lawmakers and educational institutions should cater to teachers' varied requirements by providing them with professional development opportunities and enough funding. Personalized assistance solutions are even more important because of the significance of students' unique experiences and educational environments. More successful than broad, one-size-fits-all solutions could be targeted efforts to address the unique problems that educators face in the classroom. Teachers, principals, and lawmakers must be patient and work together if they want preschools and kindergartens to be inclusive environments for all children. Let's discuss how reinforcing the aforementioned areas by supporting educators' professional development could lead to more equitable and inclusive learning environments. All kids, not only those with special needs, benefit from inclusive classrooms in terms of social skills, empathy, and feeling like they belong. If their plans to reorganize preschool programs to accommodate more children are to be successful, this conversation must go on.

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