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**TEACHERS' READINESS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

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**Abstract**

The relevance of the study is due to the organization and implementation of inclusive education, which is one of the leading directions of the state educational policy in Russia. New approaches to the education of children with disabilities, focused on meeting their needs, make special requirements for the professional and personal readiness of teachers to do professional activities under the conditions of inclusive education. By readiness, we mean a system of integrative qualities, properties, knowledge, and personal skills that ensure the effectiveness of pedagogical activity in the context of inclusive education of children with disabilities in educational institutions. One of the factors of its success is teachers' cognitive readiness to organize an innovative educational process. In this regard, this article is aimed at studying the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education of children with disabilities. The leading method for studying this problem is an experimental study and identification of the formation level of the cognitive component of readiness among teachers of educational organizations for inclusive education. During the experimental work, a questionnaire was carried out; questions were presented regarding the necessary knowledge, skills and work skills, characterizing the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education. The questionnaire results determined the optimal, sufficient, acceptable and critical levels of the formation of this component of teachers' readiness. The materials of the article can be useful for teachers of special pedagogy and correctional psychology, as well as for specialists working with children with disabilities and implementing inclusive education.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the characteristics of the current stage of development of the education system is the emergence and implementation of inclusive education for children with disabilities into practice.

Inclusive education is aimed at ensuring that children, regardless of their physical, mental, intellectual and other characteristics, should be included in the general education system and be educated at the place of residence together with their peers in the same educational institutions.

The analysis of research by leading experts showed that certain difficulties in the implementation and organization of inclusive education for children with disabilities arise as a result of insufficient readiness of teachers of secondary schools to implement it.

One of the conditions for the effectiveness of joint education and upbringing of children is the formation of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

Therefore, the present study, aimed at studying the level of formation of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education, seems relevant, timely and appropriate.

The novelty of the work is presented by an original diagnostic technique and a significant amount of evidence characterizing the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

The experimental base of the research was formed by educational institutions of Birobidzhan city and the Jewish Autonomous Region. 150 teachers took part in the experiment.

## 2. Problem Statement

The current stage of development of the education system is characterized by the introduction of inclusive education for children with disabilities in general educational organizations. A student with disabilities is an individual who has limitations in physical and (or) psychological development, confirmed by the psychological, medical and pedagogical commission and these disabilities hinder education without creating special conditions.

One of the main conditions for inclusion is that specially trained teachers should work in general education organizations, who are able to organize psychological and pedagogical support for the development of children with different nosological groups.

The analysis of the specialists' works suggest that a particular difficulty in the implementation of inclusive education is the insufficient level of readiness of the psychological and pedagogical staff of general education organizations to implement it.

The teacher's readiness to model an inclusive educational environment is determined by the interrelation of the following components: motivational, cognitive, operational, practical, emotional, volitional and reflexive.

The objective of this research is directly related to the study of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education.

### 3. Research Questions

The problem of studying the readiness of teachers for inclusive education is reflected in the works of domestic and foreign specialists.

Kim (2011) and Pijl's (2010) research highlights the problem of preparing teachers to work in inclusive classrooms abroad.

Ryndak (2000) notes that children with disabilities, being in the natural environment of a school, learning according to a single program, should receive the necessary help and support from specialists.

French and Chopra (2006) emphasize the role of the teacher's personality in the process of inclusive education and its impact on the quality of professional performance.

Cagran and Schmidt (2011), defining the content of teachers' readiness for inclusive education, point out that among the conditions for the success of collaborative learning are the attitude of teachers to this process, as well as the creation of a psychological climate in inclusive classes (Schmidt & Cagran, 2006).

The development of the national education system at the present stage has acquired new outlines. One of the priorities of Russia's social policy is the modernization of education in the direction of increasing accessibility and quality for all categories of citizens. In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", children with disabilities have equal rights to education.

In the Russian Federation, inclusive education means ensuring equal access to education for all schoolchildren, taking into account the diversity of special educational needs and individual opportunities.

In a situation where various models of inclusive education and upbringing are introduced into the practice of general education organizations, the problem of teachers' readiness to implement them becomes especially urgent.

According to many researchers, one of the important conditions for the implementation of inclusive education is the training of competent teachers who are able and ready to work with children with disabilities (Alekhina et al., 2011; Dmitriev, 2016; Gerasimenko, 2015; Karynbaeva et al., 2017; Karynbaeva et al., 2019).

Mazova and Khairtdinova (2017) note that the defectologist is responsible for mastering the intricacies of special pedagogy for the provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance to children with disabilities.

Yakovleva (2019) points out that the teacher of inclusive education needs to know the technologies that make it possible to effectively organize the process of teaching students with disabilities. According to the author, first, he should get acquainted with the technologies used in teaching all schoolchildren with special educational needs, and then with the specifics of using methods and techniques for students of different nosologies.

One of the options for solving the problem of updating the professional training of teachers-defectologists, according to Sergeeva (2019), inclusively-oriented training at the university at the bachelor's level can become. The analysis of the specialists' works indicate the need to form teachers' readiness for inclusive education. One of its components is cognitive readiness. Summarizing the various approaches of domestic specialists to the definition of the essence of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for

inclusive education, it should be noted that it is characterized by the presence of a systematic vision of the process of modeling an inclusive educational environment; the ability of teachers to integrate knowledge from various scientific fields, taking into account the peculiarities of the psychophysical development of students with disabilities; timely provide psychological and pedagogical assistance and support to students in the classroom; possession of a variety of educational techniques and technologies, etc.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of formation of the cognitive component of the readiness of teachers for inclusive education in educational organizations.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The study involved 150 teachers of general education institutions of Jewish Autonomous Region and the city of Birobidzhan.

In order to study the level of formation of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness for inclusive education, we conducted a survey. The cognitive component of readiness is represented by the necessary knowledge, skills, and actions. Teachers were asked to choose one of three answers: always, sometimes or never.

Evaluation scale of the cognitive component of teachers' readiness: "fully" - 3 points, "partially" - 2 points, "not at all" - 1 point.

The level of cognitive readiness for inclusive education was determined by the formula:

$$K = K_{\text{fact}} / K_{\text{max}},$$

where K is the level of the teachers' readiness component;

Fact – the actual number of points received by the teacher;

Kmax. – the maximum possible number of points.

The following indicators are used to assess the level of readiness:

critical level- $K < 0.45$ ;

acceptable level- $0.45 < K < 0.65$ ;

sufficient to  $0.65 < A < 0.85$  and;

The optimal level is  $K > 0.85$ .

The optimal level is characterized by the fact that teachers have a high level of proficiency in professional knowledge, skills and abilities (complete, solid and systematic) necessary for the organization of the educational process, taking into account the individual and age-specific development of children with disabilities. They have the ability to carry out psychological and pedagogical support of children with different variants of deviant development and carry out correctional and developmental work using modern special technologies and methods.

The sufficient level is characterized by the fact that teachers have average indicators of proficiency in professional knowledge, abilities and skills. Teachers possess the basic skills of organizing psychological and pedagogical support of children with different variants of deviating development and partially apply the main modern special technologies and methods in organizing correctional and developmental work.

The acceptable level implies the possession of fragmentary professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the organization of the educational process, taking into account the individual and age characteristics of the development of children with disabilities. Teachers have difficulties in organizing psychological and pedagogical support for children with various variants of deviant development, and they need advice. They organize correctional and developmental work with limited use of modern special technologies and methods. They do not fully know the specifics of the organization of correctional educational work. Teachers are in need of advisory and methodological assistance.

The critical level shows that teachers have an insufficient level of proficiency in professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to organize the educational process, taking into account the individual and age characteristics of the development of children with disabilities; they are not ready to provide psychological and pedagogical support for children using modern special technologies and methods. Teachers need advice and guidance.

## **6. Findings**

The optimal level of cognitive readiness was shown by 5 teachers (3% of all respondents). Their professional knowledge, skills and abilities are quite complete, solid and systemic. They do not experience any special problems in organizing the educational process, taking into account the psychophysical characteristics of the development of children with disabilities. They can provide psychological and pedagogical support for children with different variants of deviant development and carry out correctional and developmental work using modern special technologies and methods.

A sufficient level was noted among 15 teachers (10% of all respondents). They possess the basic skills of organizing psychological and pedagogical support of children with different variants of deviating development and partially apply the main modern special technologies and methods in organizing correctional and developmental work.

Teachers of these groups do not need special assistance.

78 teachers (52% of all respondents) have an acceptable level of development of the cognitive component of readiness. They possess only fragmentary professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the organization of the educational process. The answers of the teachers showed only some knowledge of the general didactic principles of education and upbringing of children with disabilities, as well as pedagogical laws of the organization of the educational process and the basic laws of family relations. They showed a partial formation of skills to use special approaches, methods and techniques of training, to carry out psychological and pedagogical support of basic educational programs, to develop and implement individual educational routes, targeted development programs for students with disabilities. It is difficult for them to assess the educational results formed in the taught subject (subject and metasubject competencies), to observe protective-pedagogical and sparing regimes in the process of teaching and upbringing children with disabilities; to determine, record and analyze the results of the correctional and educational impact.

The critical level of cognitive readiness is observed in 52 teachers (35% of all respondents). Their answers indicated that teachers do not have enough professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to organize the educational process. They do not take into account the individual and age characteristics of

the development of children with disabilities, are not ready to provide psychological and pedagogical support of students using modern special technologies and methods, do not know the requirements for the content of education of schoolchildren of this category, do not know special methods of teaching school subjects, and have difficulties in organization and compliance protective-pedagogical and sparing regimes. The teachers of this group need advice and methodological assistance.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the study showed that most teachers of general education organizations are not sufficiently oriented in the principles of correctional education, in the requirements for the content of education of schoolchildren with different nosological groups, in special methods of teaching subjects, in knowledge of etiopathogenetic factors affecting the development of a child, in the basics of psychodiagnostics and in knowledge of study methods. Teachers possess fragmentary professional knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the organization of the educational process in inclusive education, taking into account the individual and age-specific development of children with disabilities. They are not fully aware of the specifics of the organization of correctional teaching and educational work. They showed only a partial formation of ideas about inclusive education of children with disabilities. The revealed features of the formation of the cognitive component of readiness for inclusive education indicate the need to work with teachers to improve their professional competence.

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