

Current Problems of Teachers' Readiness of Higher Educational Institutions for Implementing Inclusive Education

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Abstract: The development of world education is implemented in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and other regulations that determine the right of people with disability to receive quality education at all levels, including in the field of vocational training. Studying the experience of Ukraine will provide an opportunity to take into account the trends of inclusion in higher education in order to increase its effectiveness. The purpose of the article is to study the state of teachers' readiness of higher educational institutions (HEI) for implementing inclusive education. Methods of research: analysis of literary sources on the problems of inclusive education; questioning teachers of HEI; quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of the research. The results of the study showed the insufficient readiness of teachers of HEI for implementing inclusive education as evidenced by the lack of understanding of the essence of inclusive education, special educational needs of children and the specifics of their education in inclusive institutions; prejudice against persons with SEN and inclusion processes; low self-esteem of inclusive competence and desire to increase it. According to the results of the questionnaire, the ways of development of inclusion in the HEI were outlined. The perspective task of the research is the development and testing of the content and methods of formation readiness of scientific and pedagogical workers for inclusive education.

Keywords: *inclusive education, institution of higher education, teachers' readiness, persons with special educational needs, inclusive competence.*

How to cite: Myronova, S., Dokuchyna, T., Rudzeych, I., Smotrova, O., & Platash, L. (2021). Current Problems of Teachers' Readiness of Higher Educational Institutions for Implementing Inclusive Education. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 13(3), 151-165. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/13.3/445>

1. Introduction.

Innovative development of the higher education system in the world is aimed at ensuring the right and opportunities for education of all persons in all programs. Current trends in the development of higher education for persons with disabilities are implemented in accordance with Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (United Nations, n.d.a) and other regulations that determine the right of people with disabilities to receive quality education. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (United Nations, n.d.b) proclaims the need to provide persons with disabilities with access to general higher education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. In support of this requirement in Ukraine adopted the Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Procedure for the Organization of Inclusive Education in Higher Education Institutions" (2019). Such training will be a logical continuation of the inclusive school education started in the country in 2011.

One of the tasks defined by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for higher education institutions is the training and retraining specialists for inclusive education of children with SEN. So far, this applies to all specialties in the field of knowledge 01 Education / Pedagogy, since all teachers (including primary school teachers, subject teachers and educators) are members of the team of psychological and pedagogical support for children with SEN in an inclusive education. The implementation of this task shows that teachers of HEI must first of all be prepared for inclusive education in order to develop the students' competencies. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has submitted for public discussion a draft Resolution of Government of Ukraine "Order of organization of inclusive education at institutions of higher education", which provides direct participation of teachers in the training of students with SEN. Therefore, the relevance of the problem of teachers' readiness of higher educational institutions for implementing the tasks of inclusive education is undeniable.

The study of inclusion in HEI in the European Union (Davydenko, 2015) shows, that solution of the educational problems of persons with disabilities depends on the mentality of the countries. As Ukraine wants to become a member of the European Union, it is important to understand how the mentality of teachers who form competence of future professionals

affects the education of people with SEN in the country. Studying the experience of Ukraine will enable the world community to take into account its trends of inclusion in higher education and involve the country in effective forms of cooperation.

The purpose of the article is to study the state of teachers' readiness of higher educational institutions for implementing inclusive education.

In the process of the research, the following tasks are set:

1) to carry out the theoretical analysis of the problem of inclusive education in HEI;

2) to explore the following components of the teachers' readiness of HEY for implementing inclusive education: understanding the essence of inclusive education; attitude to inclusive education; reflection on readiness for implementing inclusive education;

3) on the basis of the analysis of the results, to outline ways of development of inclusion in high school.

Theoretical Research Results

The teachers' readiness of HEI for implementation inclusive education is considered as a complex definition, which contains the following components: understanding the essence of inclusive education; cognitive and operational competence in the field of training future teachers for inclusive education of children with special educational needs; psychological preparation and self-assessment of their own competence in implementing the tasks of inclusive education in HEI. As a synonym for the concept of "readiness for inclusive education" we will use the term "inclusive competence", proposed by Khafizullina (2008), which contains content competencies: motivational, cognitive, reflexive, operational.

The analysis of literature shown that scientific research of inclusive education at HEI primarily concerns students with disabilities, in particular: Collins, Azmat & Rentschler (2018) studied the problems faced by persons with physical disabilities in institutions of higher education; Mullins & Preyde (2013) studied the difficulties encountered by individual students while studying at the University, social and organizational barriers in the institution; Kendall (2016) studied the problem of identification of students with disabilities due to their unwillingness to determine their disability, revealed insufficient support for their teachers; Fuller, Bradley & Healey (2004) studied the experience of teaching students with disabilities at the University to determine the actual needs of these students; Morina (2017) studied the actual problems of the organization of inclusive education at

higher education institutions, in particular, carried out an analysis of the current situation, promising strategies and actions to improve it; Fudorova (2011) studied higher education as a factor of improving the social status of persons with disabilities; Davydenko (2015) carried out an analysis of the experience of inclusive education at higher educational establishments of the European Union; Chaikovskiy & Dobrovitska (2018) have developed directions of socio-pedagogical work with youth with disabilities in inclusive educational space, etc.

World experience shows that one of the conditions for implementing inclusion processes in the university environment is teachers' readiness of HEY for implementing inclusive education. The importance of inclusion and inclusive education is confirmed by many scientific studies and practical experience of teaching persons with SEN. The effectiveness of inclusive education depends on the motivational, cognitive, reflexive, operational readiness for inclusive education of teachers, which is included in the content of the new state standards of higher pedagogical education. Thus, the analysis of international and domestic literary sources confirms the direct dependence of the quality of inclusive education on the readiness of teachers for it.

2. Methods

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following methods were used: of literature sources on the problems of inclusive education in HEI; questioning teachers of higher education institutions; quantitative and qualitative analysis of the research results. The analysis of the national regulatory framework of inclusive education was carried out to determine the objectives of higher education institutions in two directions: 1) training teachers to work with children with SEN; 2) training persons with SEN in the higher education institutions. The results of the analysis of literary sources served as the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. In the study of educational programs and curricula for the teachers training of different specialties revealed the presence of competencies for the training children with SEN and educational programs planned for this discipline, tasks of pedagogical practice.

Questionnaire survey of educators included 11 questions to determine various aspects of teachers' readiness of HEI to inclusive education:

- *Understanding the essence of inclusive education:*

1. Explain the terms "inclusion", "inclusive education", "inclusive competence".

2. What are the special educational needs of children that a teacher may meet at school?

3. What difficulties arise in work of teacher of secondary education institution / tutor of preschool education institution in training children with psychophysical violations?

• ***Attitude to inclusive education:***

4. How do you feel about the joint training of persons with normal and impaired development?

5. How do you feel about the fact that inclusive educational institutions provides a teacher of general education for children with psychophysical disabilities?

6. How do you think should we include in the professional education of primary school teachers / subject teacher / teacher of preschool education, the disciplines that would prepare him for work with children with special educational needs?

7. How do you feel about teaching people with disabilities at higher education institution?

8. Do you think it is necessary to form inclusive competence of teachers of higher education institution?

• ***Reflection on readiness for implementing inclusive education:***

9. How do you assess your level of inclusive competence?

10. What kind of assistance do you need to work with people with special educational needs at a higher education institution?

11. Would you like to get assistance for the work with people with special educational needs at higher education institution?

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results of the study allowed to determine the actual problems of the teachers' readiness of higher education institutions to implement inclusive education at both the school and higher education levels.

3. Results

Questioning of teachers took place on the basis of Kamianets-Podilsky National Ivan Ohienko University. The respondents were 214 scientific and pedagogical workers who teach such specialties in the field 01 Education/Pedagogy: Preschool education; Primary education; Secondary education (Physical education; History; Fine arts; Music; Biology and Human

health; Geography; Language and literature (English, German, Polish); Ukrainian language and literature; Mathematics; Physics). The survey was conducted with the consent of all participants and carried out anonymously, which prompted the respondents to give more frank answers. So next we going to analyze the results obtained by the components of the survey.

Understanding the essence of inclusive education

Respondents were asked to explain how they understand the terms "inclusion", "inclusive education", "inclusive competence". 32.24% of respondents did not provide answers on all terms, which indicate both a lack of understanding and disregard for inclusion processes. In part of the questionnaires, one concept was unanswered. In general, 41.6% - did not explain the term "inclusion"; 41.12% - "inclusive education"; 43.46% - "inclusive competence".

A holistic analysis of the responses indicates that about half of the respondents are guided by the fact that the process of inclusion is aimed at integrating people with the SEN into the social environment, meeting their needs and opportunities: *"inclusion is the process of including people with disorders of psychophysical development in active social life, ordinary life"; "inclusion is a process of increasing the participation of people with in society"; "inclusion is the inclusion of children with SEN in the general education space, their joint training with other (healthy) children"*.

At the same time, only about one third of the respondents understand inclusive education as a joint education for children with different levels of development and one that creates conditions for providing opportunities for different categories of students: *"education (provision of educational services) to children with SEN at a General education institution"; "the system of educational services based on the principles of the basic right to education for children with SEN (due to the place of residence, in a General education institution); "education, rising and development of children with mental and physical disabilities with taking into account special needs and opportunities"*.

12.61% of respondents think that inclusive education is called any education of children with psychophysical disabilities: *"individual system of training children with violations of psychophysical development in conditions of General educational establishment"; "education, the discipline of which is taught by a teacher trained to work with such children"*. Some respondents identify inclusive education with social services.

42% of scientific and pedagogical workers understand inclusive competence as a complex of knowledge, skills, motivational readiness for the training of persons with SEN: *"the level of knowledge and skills which is necessary for the implementation of inclusive education"; "readiness of the teacher to work with*

persons with psychophysical disorders"; "integrated framework (integrated education) aimed at the implementation of professional functions in the process of inclusive education"; "teacher's ability to perform professional functions in the process of inclusive education". However, the majority of respondents in the answers determined only certain content components of this concept, for example: *"positive attitude to a child with disabilities"; "psychological readiness for work in inclusive institutions"; "the ability to build relationships between children with typical development and special educational needs".* Some respondents do not understand the term "inclusive competence", believe that it is: *"teachers' knowledge and skills to work with gifted children"; "ability to control your emotions"; "social competence".*

Only 17.76% of respondents mentioned special educational needs of children: *"psychophysical disorders"; "needs caused by somatic problems"; "belonging to national minorities".* 49.53% of respondents did not answer the question about the special educational needs of children at all. 32.71% of respondents indicated on the educational needs, in particular, the desire for special organization of training and educational and social difficulties. The analysis of these features proves that teachers confuse such concepts as *"special educational needs" "difficulties of children" "teaching methods", "social problems", "educational and development tasks".* So, the level of teacher ideas about the contingent of children with SEN is very low.

We have analyzed if the teachers understand the difficulties that may arise for future graduates while working at inclusive institutions. 40.19% of respondents did not answer this question, 0.93% - indicated that no difficulties arise, which means 41.12% - do not understand the differences in the pedagogical work of teachers in the conditions of inclusion. 58.88% indicated various difficulties, for example: *"low level of inclusive competence of teachers", "lack of working experience with children with developmental disabilities", "lack of understanding of the features of education children with mental and physical disabilities", "ignorance of correctional methods and forms of work with children with SEN", "a significant number of children in the classroom", "psychological barrier in the perception of a child with disabilities" etc.* The analysis of answers shows that in general, the respondents referred to the majority of real difficulties that can be encountered by the teachers of general education during the study of children with SEN.

Attitude to inclusive education

Only 45.79% of teachers approve coeducation of children with normal and impaired development; 33.18% treat it negatively; and 21.03% cannot decide (Figure 1).

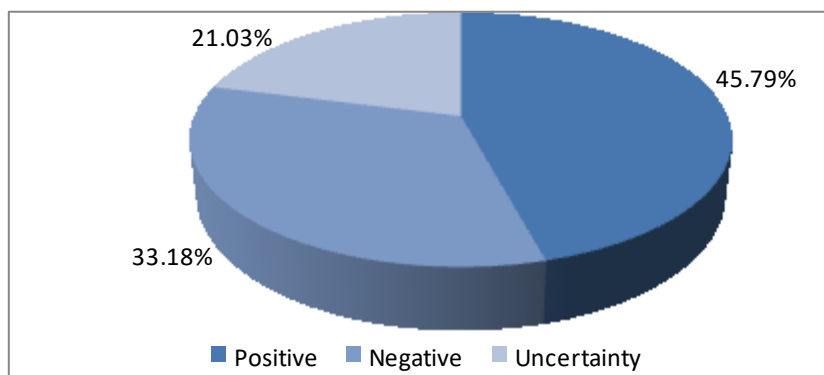
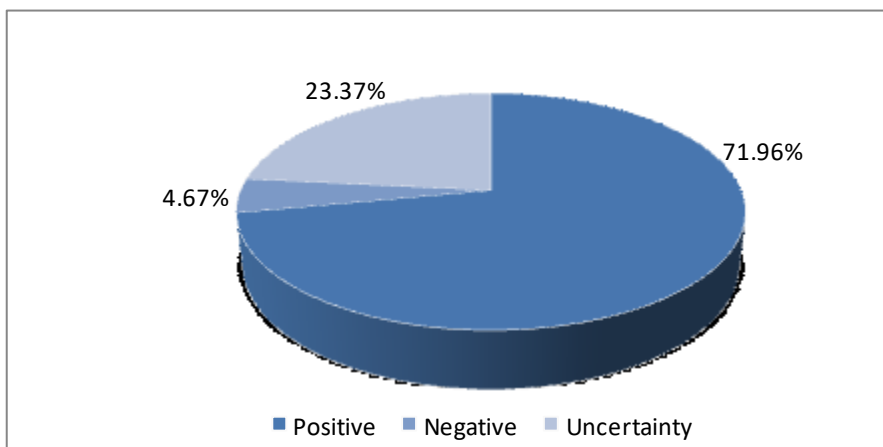


Figure 1. Teachers' attitude to inclusive education of children with SEN
Source: Authors' own conception

The consequence of this is the negative attitude of teachers to the fact that at inclusive institutions the training of children with SEN is carried out by a teacher with general education, namely: 57.01% of respondents do not perceive such functions; 21.96% - cannot decide; only 21.03% approve this practice. These results indicate the prevalence of negative attitudes towards inclusion and bias against the opportunities of children with SEN. This finding is supported by an assessment of the special educational needs that teachers can meet in their work at inclusive institutions.

66.35% of respondents believe that professional education in pedagogical specialties should include disciplines that will prepare students to work with children with special educational needs. 17.76% believe that such training in the institution is unnecessary; 15.89% - undecided. The majority of respondents shows insufficient positive attitude to inclusive education, which is being implemented in the state.

However, 71.96% of respondents approve education of persons with disabilities in higher education institutions; 23.37% - cannot decide; 4.67% - object to it (Figure 2).



Fig

Figure 2. Teachers' attitude to education of students with SEN in HEI

Source: Authors' own conception

At the same time, 74.77% of respondents believe that teachers of higher education institutions need to form an inclusive competence; 16.35% - do not consider it necessary; 8.88% - are indifferent to such a component of their professionalism. In general, these indicators show a fairly positive attitude of the majority of teachers to the inclusion in higher education institutions and their willingness to create an inclusive environment at the University.

Reflection on readiness for implementing inclusive education:

According to the results of self-assessment by teachers of their inclusive competence, it was determined that 2.34% evaluate it on a very high level of 53.74% - sufficient; 43.92% low (Figure 3). A comparison of self-assessments with previous statements indicates a lack of understanding by respondents of the definition "inclusive competence of the teacher".

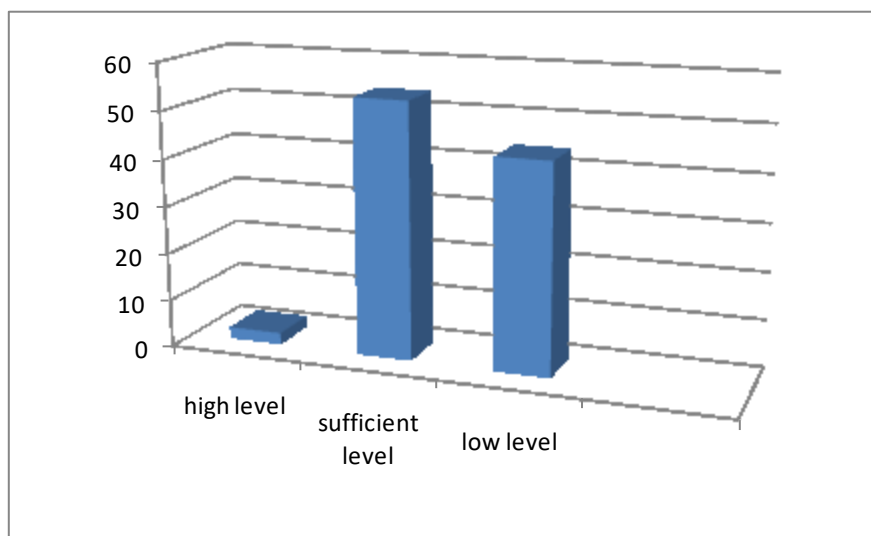


Figure 3. Teachers' self-assessment of inclusive competence
Source: Authors' own conception

So we found out what kind of help teachers need in dealing with people with SEN in higher education institutions. 44.39% of respondents did not answer the question; 11.22% of respondents do not need any help; 44.39% want to get help to work with SEN in higher education institutions and expressed their wishes regarding the content, forms and types of such assistance. The majority of those who commented on this issue noted the Advisory-methodical help from the experts in training individuals with the SEN. Respondents also offered forms of such assistance (let us give them by the number of names): self-education-61; seminars-92; consultations-93; other-30 (off-the-job courses, distance education, webinars, trainings, interactive lectures, workshops).

Such indicators suggest that the reflection on readiness for implementing inclusive education by respondents correlates with their surface perceptions of inclusive.

In general, the psychological readiness of respondents to inclusion at the University is higher than in school inclusion. However, its cognitive component requires purposeful formation.

4. Discussion

Investigating the teachers' readiness of HEI for implementing inclusive education was carried out in several content components proposed

by Khaifzullina (2007), Chaikovskiy (2012), Movkebayeva, Oralkanova, Mazhinov, Beisenova & Belenko (2016): cognitive, psychological and reflexive. We did not study the operational component, as inclusion has not yet been fully implemented in the HEI and teachers have almost no experience working with persons with disabilities.

The analysis of the results shows that many respondents have a negative, biased attitude to the processes of inclusion and people with special educational needs. The results of study confirm the general trends in the views of inclusion in the early stages of its implementation, described by scientists from different countries (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). However, modern studies have already shown a positive attitude of teachers to inclusive education (Martin & Kudlacek, 2010; Pappas et al., 2018). We also identified narrow understanding the concept of "inclusive education" by teachers, namely, the respondents interpret it only as inclusion in the studying of people with special educational needs. Although this term in "The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education" (UNESCO, n.d.) is considerably broader and involves taking into account the special educational needs of different categories of persons.

We determined insufficient level of psychological readiness of scientific and pedagogical workers for inclusive education in different types of institutions. At the same time, the psychological readiness of respondents to inclusive education of persons with disabilities at the university is higher than to inclusion at school. We can assume that this is due to a low level of respondents' understanding of the special educational needs of children and the specifics of their studying in inclusive institutions. However, this hypothesis requires careful proof of individual research. The difficulties faced by teachers in the context of inclusive education were identified by Demchenko (2015), Lambe (2011), Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel & Malinen (2012). In this case, the difficulties that can be encountered in the work of scientific and pedagogical workers of training of students with disabilities have not yet been the subject of a special study. The reflective component of readiness is also not formed at a sufficient level, because despite the low self-assessment of inclusive competence, most respondents do not want to receive help to increase it.

The analysis of literary sources, the experience of inclusive education of domestic and foreign HEI allows us to determine two aspects of the problem of teachers' readiness of HEI for implementing inclusive education: 1) the formation of inclusive competence of scientific and pedagogical workers for the training of persons with disabilities at the university; 2) the participation of teachers in preparing students of pedagogical specialties for

solving the problems of inclusive education in pre-school and secondary education institutions. The first aspect is actively studied by scientists. In particular, Bondar (2014) determines the necessity of creating an inclusive environment at HEI; Hryshko & Klevaka (2017), Chaikovskiy & Dobrovitska (2018) work on the development of content and organizational support for students with disabilities; Rabi, Ghazali, Rohaizad & Zulkefli (2018) investigated some components of pre-service teachers' readiness for inclusion and offered to introduce the inclusive education course at the university level. However, the content and methods of formation of inclusive competence of scientific and pedagogical workers, its level need targeted special studies. We believe that the experience of foreign institutions, including Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Canada, could be used here.

Based on the results of the study, we outlined **ways of developing inclusion at HEI**: development of inclusive policies and inclusive culture at the university; organization of special seminars, trainings of formation of cognitive, motivational, reflexive and operational component of inclusive competence of teachers; professional training of future teachers for the realization of the tasks of inclusive education; extra-curriculum work aimed at forming the psychological readiness of future educators; creation a scientific and methodological center of inclusive education for counseling students and teachers, the support of students with disabilities.

5. Conclusion

The theoretical and practical aspect of the research of the problem shows its relevance both in Ukraine and abroad. The study revealed problems of teachers' readiness of HEI for implementing inclusive education, in particular, lack of understanding of the essence of inclusive education, vaguely positive attitude to inclusive education, insufficient level of inclusive competence and the desire to increase it.

The study does not claim to be complete coverage of the problem and requires systematic scientific research. The perspective task of the research is the development and testing of the content and methods of formation readiness for inclusive education of scientific and pedagogical workers of HEI.

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