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Quality Improvement in Inclusive Education for Support Systems and Attitudes - Evidence from the Sichuan Province of China

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Abstract. The global trend of inclusive education has accelerated the process of education inclusion worldwide. China has embraced this trend through the practice of inclusive education in regular classrooms. Using the quantitative methods of descriptive analysis and regression analysis, this paper examines the relationship between the quality of inclusive education and the supporting environment and attitudes in Sichuan Province, China. A total of 6,000 respondents from 21 cities and prefectures in Sichuan Province participated in the survey and completed questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.01 software. The study analyzes public perceptions of inclusive education, views on the quality of inclusive education, evaluations of student participation, and perceptions of the supporting environment. The results indicate that the quality of inclusive education is influenced by attitudes towards inclusive education, teacher support, societal and environmental support, and parental support. To enhance the quality of inclusive education, the focus should be on cultivating positive attitudes toward inclusive education, developing inclusive education policies, and strengthening support systems. Furthermore, the

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analysis reveals that increasing student participation in school activities, enhancing knowledge and teaching strategies related to inclusive education, and improving support resources can effectively enhance the implementation quality of inclusive education.

Keywords: quality improvement; support systems; attitudes; inclusive education; Sichuan of China

1. Introduction

The development of inclusive education plays a pivotal role in ensuring the equal right to education and serves as a crucial benchmark for societal advancement. The foundation of inclusive education, as recognized today, can be traced back to the Salamanca Statement issued during the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994. This seminal statement declared that "Regular schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions," formally establishing the concept of inclusive education and resonating globally. Moreover, inclusive education was enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, becoming an obligatory provision of international law binding on all nations.

In the context of China, inclusive education is referred to as "learning in the regular class." Its origins can be traced back to the 1950s, emerging spontaneously during a unique period in China's history as an "inevitable" and "necessary" response to the prevailing social and historical circumstances. It swiftly evolved into a mandatory and practical requisite for the popularization and advancement of special education within China (Li, 2009, pp. 3-7). Following the developmental guidelines of special education and drawing from years of educational practice, the Chinese Ministry of Education introduced a visionary directive in 1988. This directive advocated for the gradual establishment of a new educational paradigm for children and adolescents with disabilities, with a prominent role for special education schools and a substantial presence of special classes and inclusive schooling as its core components.

The Chinese government furthered its commitment to learning in the regular class through a series of initiatives, including three pilot projects on learning in the regular class in 1989, 1992, and 2003, as well as multiple conferences addressing inclusive education. The issuance of the Trial Measures for the Implementation of Learning in the Regular Class for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities in July 1994 marked a significant milestone, providing impetus to the development of inclusive education in China. Over nearly four decades, China's progress in learning in the regular class has closely paralleled global trends in inclusive education and has yielded remarkable results in ensuring the equal right to education for individuals with disabilities.

This paper delves into the intricate relationship between the enhancement of inclusive education quality and the perceptions of support systems and attitudes among respondents engaged in the implementation of inclusive education in

Sichuan Province, China. The research is structured into six sections, encompassing a theoretical framework and research questions, a detailed methodology, empirical results, an insightful discussion, a conclusion, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for future studies.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

2.1 Key concepts considered

Inclusive Education. The essence of inclusive education, learning in the regular class, and mainstreaming, is generally consistent, emphasizing the full inclusion of all educational subjects and non-discriminatory treatment in educational content. China is the most populous country in the world, and is faced with the significant challenge of guaranteeing the equal right to education of a super-large-scale of young people. Since 1988, over the course of more than three decades, China's learning in the regular class efforts have achieved significant milestones. These efforts have substantially increased the enrollment opportunities for school-age children with disabilities in China, leading to a considerable rise in the enrollment rate of children with disabilities in compulsory education. This has ensured the right to education for children with disabilities, elevated the level of equity in China's compulsory education, dismantled the exclusivity of special education, raised awareness about children with disabilities, promoted an understanding of special education, and contributed to inclusivity, harmony, and cultural progress in Chinese society. The process of inclusive education in China is generally synchronized with the global development trend.

Based on a comparison of the changes in the number of in-school students receiving inclusive education in Sichuan Province and the entire nation from 2011 to 2021 (refer to Table 1), over an eleven-year period, inclusive education in China experienced an overall fluctuating growth trend. Notably, from 2011 to 2013, there was a sustained small decline in the scale of mainstreamed in-school students. Conversely, the scale of in-school students in inclusive education in Sichuan Province exhibited more substantial fluctuations, with consecutive years of decline in the number of mainstreamed in-school students in 2012 and 2015, and it continued to rise in 2018-2021.

Table 1: Comparison of the Changes in the Number of Students Receiving Inclusive Education between Sichuan and China (2011-2021)

Year	Sichuan		China	
	figure for the current year (10000 person)	increment from the previous year (10000 person)	figure for the current year (10000 person)	increment from the previous year (10000 person)
2011	3.21		22.52	
2012	3.47	0.26	19.98	-2.54
2013	3.41	-0.06	19.09	-0.89
2014	3.13	-0.28	20.91	1.82
2015	3.12	-0.01	23.97	3.06

2016	3.44	0.33	27.08	3.11
2017	3.55	0.11	30.40	3.32
2018	3.28	-0.27	32.91	2.51
2019	3.91	0.63	39.05	6.14
2020	4.64	0.73	43.58	4.53
2021	4.90	1.26	46.41	2.83
Cumulative increase		2.70	Cumulative increase	23.89

Note: The data in the table is compiled from annual statistics provided by the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education's 'Basic Situation of Education in Sichuan Province' and the Ministry of Education's 'Statistical Bulletin on Education Development' on their official websites (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022; Sichuan Provincial Department of Education, 2022).

In comparison to the nationwide situation, although Sichuan's annual proportion of students in inclusive education among students with disabilities has shown a declining trend over the years, the annual average proportion remains high at 72%. This figure surpasses the national average proportion by 20 percentage points (see Figure 1). This indicates that inclusive education in mainstream classrooms is the predominant mode of education for children with disabilities in Sichuan Province.

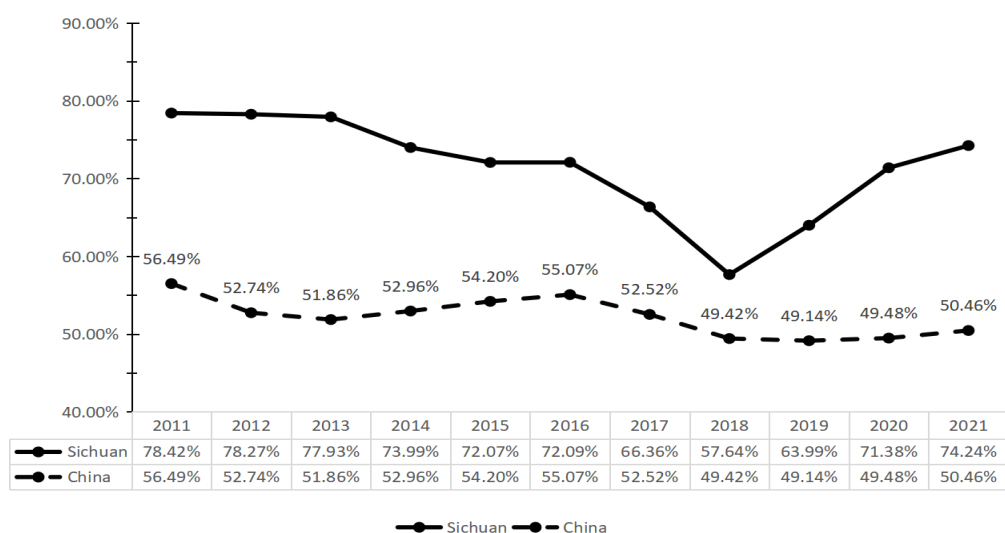


Figure 1: Proportion Comparison of Inclusive Education Students among Special Education Enrollments (2011-2021)

Education Quality. Inclusive education serves as the foundation for quality education. In the Calí Commitment published by UNESCO in 2019, it is emphasized that "inclusive education needs to ensure that everyone can achieve a higher level of learning motivation, participation, and quality learning outcomes"(UNESCO, 2019, pp. 1-2). In fact, since the Salamanca Statement in 1994 explicitly introduced the concept of "inclusive education," the academic performance of inclusive education students has attracted widespread international attention.

Jiaoning and Li (2008) pointed out in their research that the challenge facing China's inclusive education lies in the less-than-ideal quality of mainstreaming, which has fallen into formalism, where mainstreamed students are not receiving

the necessary guidance and support. Research by Yang and Zhang (2010) also found that there are significant challenges in effectively addressing the different needs of special education students and regular students in terms of curriculum and improving the academic performance of inclusive education students. Xiong (2015) pointed out that during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan period, mainstreaming education in China experienced a decline trend, raising concerns about its quality.

In Sichuan Province, where mainstreaming is the primary mode of placement, the quality of mainstreaming significantly affects the retention rate of compulsory education students. In fact, many grassroots education workers have reported in recent years that mainstreaming education is easy to implement in the classroom but challenging in terms of learning, with most mainstreamed children not receiving the special education they need. Low-quality education is likely to lead to higher dropout rates. The effectiveness of mainstreaming has become a major issue in the healthy development of special education in Sichuan Province, directly affecting the full and effective realization of the right to education for disabled children.

Support Systems. Educational support is an indispensable focus for promoting inclusive education. Chinese researchers generally consider elements such as families, teachers, society, policies, and more as the main components of the theoretical framework of inclusive education support systems. Qing and Liu (2007) divided the support system for mainstreamed special children into five subsystems: school support, family support, community support, government support, and self-support. Based on ecological system theory, Sun et al. (2020) proposed constructing a professional support system for inclusive education that focuses on the development of special students at the macro, meso, and micro levels. Lishuai (2021) made a similar point. Tagayuna et al. (2005), and others divided support for special education into eight categories, including regular support, educational or personal strategic teaching support, vocational assistance and work experience support, assistive technology support, administrative management support, and accessible facilities support.

Konur (2002) summarized support for higher education for disabled individuals from an assessment perspective, including support during the expression process, support during response, environmental support, and support related to time and scheduling. Regarding educational support, due to the complexity of addressing individual differences among students in inclusive education, relying solely on school support is far from sufficient. A comprehensive support system is needed to support the implementation of inclusive education.

The Relationship Between Inclusive Education and Support Systems. Inclusive education, as a form of widespread education, requires efforts from various sectors, including the government, society, schools, families, and others, to establish an effective support system. The original intention of inclusive education is to ensure that every child receives equal education. However, due to a lack of understanding of inclusive education and the absence of related

support, special needs children have faced exclusion after entering regular schools. Xiong and Sun (2014) conducted a survey on the current status of inclusive education for autistic children and found that, in the survey, only six children were mainstreamed, even though national regulations stipulate that regular schools should admit autistic children who are capable of learning in school. Nevertheless, some schools still reject these children. Yiman (2018) conducted research on eight mainstreamed children in Shanghai and found that these children experienced forms of educational exclusion such as physical exclusion, devaluation, and deprivation of rights within the school environment. The support system is a crucial element for the quality of inclusive education. The effective implementation of inclusive education depends on the level of support system development and the completeness of the support system.

2.2 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions: (a) What is the level of quality assessment of inclusive education in Sichuan Province, China? Specifically, in what areas does it manifest? (b) Is there a correlation between the quality of inclusive education, and support system of inclusive education and attitudes to inclusive education?

2.3 Variables

(a) The independent variables in this study include inclusive education support system and attitudes to inclusive education. (b) The dependent variable in this study is the quality of inclusive education.

3. Methodology

3.1 Survey Participants

Survey participants include school administrators, teachers, parents of students in Sichuan Province's inclusive education, as well as personnel from local education administrative authorities and the community. Stratified sampling was carried out to cover 21 cities and prefectures in Sichuan Province, and 6000 respondents were selected (see Table 2). Among them, there are 3,138 participants from rural areas, and 2,862 participants from urban areas, accounting for 52.3% and 47.7% of the total survey sample, respectively.

Table 2: Regional Distribution of Survey Participants (N=6000)

Survey Region	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)	Survey Region	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Aba	168	2.8	Meishan	330	5.5
Bazhong	120	2.0	Mianyang	198	3.3
Chengdu	690	11.5	Neijiang	150	2.5
Dazhou	168	2.8	Nanchong	216	3.6
Deyang	168	2.8	Panzhihua	306	5.1
Ganzi	132	2.2	Suining	270	4.5
Guang'an	348	5.8	Ya'an	216	3.6
Guangyuan	216	3.6	Yibin	180	3.0
Leshan	846	14.1	Ziyang	252	4.2
Liangshan	342	5.7	Zigong	162	2.7
Luzhou	522	8.7			

3.2. Instruments

All respondents completed three questionnaires, including the Inclusive Education Attitude Questionnaire, the Inclusive Education Support Questionnaire, and the Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire. The Inclusive Education Attitude Questionnaire reflects the respondents' attitudes toward inclusive education, the Inclusive Education Support Questionnaire reflects the level of support for inclusive education among the respondents, while the Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire reflects the respondents' evaluation of the quality of inclusive education.

Regarding the respondents' attitudes toward inclusive education, a self-developed Inclusive Education Attitude Questionnaire was used. After conducting an internal consistency test on the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.915, indicating that the Inclusive Education Attitude Questionnaire has a good internal structure and a high degree of consistency among its test items.

Regarding the level of support for inclusive education among the respondents, a self-developed Inclusive Education Support Questionnaire was utilized. After conducting an internal consistency test on the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.966, indicating a high degree of consistency among the questionnaire's test items and a good internal structure for the Inclusive Education Support Questionnaire.

Concerning the respondents' evaluation of the quality of inclusive education, a self-developed Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire was employed. After conducting an internal consistency test on the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.92, indicating a high degree of consistency among the questionnaire's test items and a good internal structure for the Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire.

3.3 Procedure

Before collecting data, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Leshan Normal University. Once permission was granted, participants voluntarily chose to participate in the survey.

To facilitate the smooth progress of the research and ensure its quality, a survey team was formed comprising 128 undergraduate students majoring in psychology, education, preschool education, and primary education with a focus on special education from the School of Education Sciences at Leshan Normal University. These students had completed relevant courses in educational measurement and statistics, and they possessed professional knowledge and some experience in conducting surveys. Before starting the survey, team members received specialized training on the requirements of the questionnaire survey, clarified the tasks, requirements, and precautions during the survey process.

The survey team conducted the questionnaire survey in relevant schools and kindergartens in 21 cities and prefectures in Sichuan Province. Team members carefully checked each collected questionnaire. A total of 6,000 questionnaires

were distributed for each survey, and after checking, 854 invalid questionnaires were removed. A total of 5,146 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.4 Data Analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics 29.01 software was used to process and analyze the questionnaire data. First, the validity of the data was checked, resulting in 5,146 valid data sets for each survey. To test the reliability and validity of the scales, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was performed on the questionnaire data. Descriptive statistics (such as number, percentage, mean, standard deviation, *F-test*) were used for data analysis. To explore the relationship between inclusive education quality, support systems, and attitudes, a linear multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess which support system elements were associated with attitude factors.

4. Results

Question 1: What is the quality of inclusive education in Sichuan Province?

4.1 Overall Evaluation of Inclusive Education Quality

The evaluation of inclusive education in Sichuan was as follows: 33.56% of respondents rated it as "good" or "very good," while 66.44% rated it as "average or below" (see Table 3). This indicates that the overall evaluation of inclusive education quality in Sichuan is generally average.

Table 3: Frequency Table of Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire (N=5146)

Question Category	Poor		Not Very Good		Average		Good		Very Good	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Inclusive education quality	301	5.8	995	19.2	2111	40.7	1474	28.5	265	5.1
School activity participation	370	7.1	1187	22.9	2041	39.4	1304	25.2	243	4.7
Policy environment friendliness	204	3.9	916	17.7	2131	41.1	1627	31.4	268	5.2
Education integration satisfaction	292	5.67	1033	20.07	2094	40.7	1468	28.53	259	5.03

To further explore the characteristics of inclusive education quality, the changes in students receiving inclusive education, their level of participation in school activities, and the friendliness of the school environment were analyzed.

4.2 Changes of Students Receiving Inclusive Education

Regarding the "Changes of students with disabilities after entering regular schools," 34.5% of respondents indicated "significant" or "quite significant" changes, which is higher than the 26% who reported "not significant" or "not very significant" changes (see Table 4). For "Changes in the daily habits of students with disabilities at school," 33.6% of respondents reported "significant" or "quite significant" changes, compared to 24.2% who reported "not significant" or "not very significant" changes. Additionally, for "Changes in the study habits of students with disabilities at school," 32.6% of respondents reported "significant" or "quite significant" changes, while 26% reported "not significant"

or "not very significant" changes. However, the mean scores for all three items are not very high, indicating that the changes in inclusive education students are not substantial. This further supports the conclusion that the overall evaluation of inclusive education quality is generally average.

Table 4: Analysis of Students' Changes in Integrated Education (N=5146)

Question Category	Not significant		Not very significant		Average		Quite significant		Significant		M	SD	s ²
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Changes in the daily habits of inclusive education students at school	236	4.6	1015	19.6	2155	41.6	1475	28.5	265	5.1	2.10	.929	.86
Changes in the study habits of inclusive education students at school	263	5.1	1030	19.9	2163	41.7	1435	27.7	255	4.9	2.08	.936	.88
Changes in inclusive education students after enrolling in school	403	7.8	941	18.2	2016	38.9	1511	29.2	275	5.3	2.06	1.00	1.0

Regarding the aspects in which students receiving inclusive education have shown improvement after entering regular schools, the top-ranked area is "study habits," followed by "behavioral habits," "interpersonal relationships," and "participation level" in descending order. On the other hand, when asked in which areas students still need improvement, the responses, in descending order of frequency, were "behavioral habits, study habits, interpersonal relationships, social skills, self-confidence, learning abilities, self-care skills, daily life habits, participation level, and the severity of disabilities" (see Figure 2).

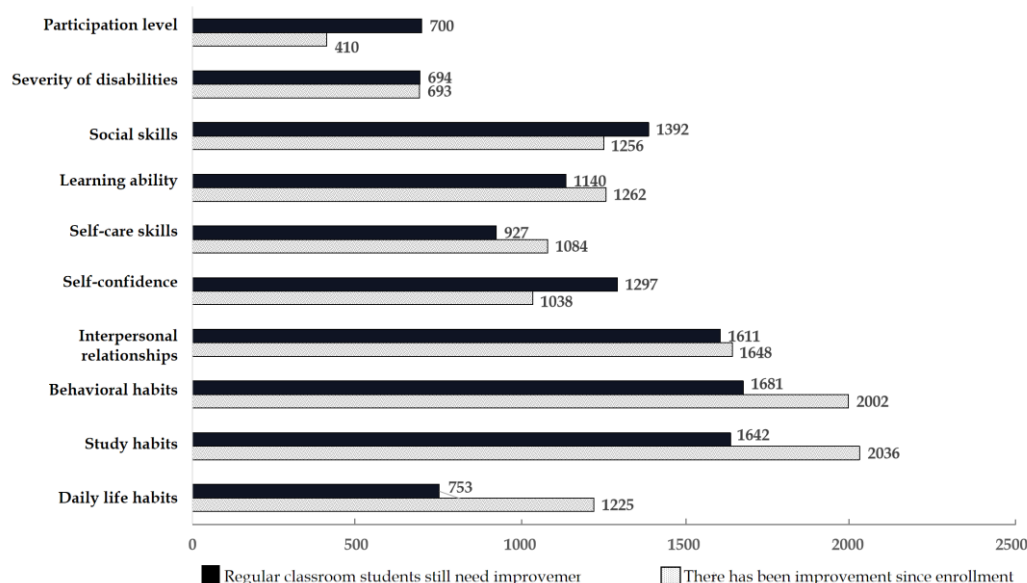


Figure 2: Classification Analysis of Students' Changes in Inclusive Education (N=5146)

Comparing these two sets of responses, it becomes evident that inclusive education has led to significant improvements in the behavioral habits, study habits, daily life habits, self-care skills, and learning abilities of students with disabilities. There is also substantial room for improvement in their participation levels, self-confidence, and social skills. This suggests that inclusive education's direct effects on students with disabilities are most pronounced in the enhancement of behavioral habits, study habits, daily life habits, and self-care skills.

In summary, the quality outcomes of inclusive education primarily manifest in changes related to inclusive education students' study habits, behavioral habits, and interpersonal relationships. However, these changes are not substantial, and there is still a significant gap between these outcomes and the expectations of schools, parents, and the wider community.

4.3 Analysis of Students' Participation in School Activities in Inclusion Education

Upon further analysis, the average scores for the three items, "Inclusive Students' Participation in Collective Activities," "Inclusive Students' Participation in Extracurricular Activities," and "Inclusive Students' Classroom Learning Participation," are 1.97, 1.95, and 2.00, respectively. All of these scores are lower than the median value (see Table 5). The proportions of low and not very low scores are 30.5%, 30.9%, and 28.7%, respectively. This indicates that inclusive students' participation in educational activities is not at a high level, which directly affects the assessment of inclusive education satisfaction. This suggests that the phenomenon of "just sitting in" or "just blending in" is not baseless but rather an objectively existing phenomenon.

Table 5: Analysis of School Activity Participation (N=5146)

Question Category	Low		Somewhat Low		Average		High		Very High		M	SD	s ²
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Participation in inclusive classroom activities	377	7.3	1204	23.2	2014	38.9	1299	25.1	252	4.9	1.97	.987	.975
Participation in out-of-school activities for inclusive students	395	7.6	1207	23.3	2009	38.8	1305	25.2	230	4.4	1.95	.986	.972
Participation in inclusive classroom learning	339	6.5	1151	22.2	2100	40.5	1308	25.2	248	4.8	2.00	.967	.934

4.4 Analysis of the friendliness of the school environment.

In terms of the "Living conditions of inclusive education students at school," "Interaction between inclusive education students and regular classmates at school," and "Interaction between inclusive education students and teachers at school," nearly 40% of the responses indicated "very good" or "good" evaluations. The average scores for these three items were higher than the midpoint (see Table 6). This suggests that in Sichuan, inclusive education students have a positive interpersonal environment in regular schools. The school staff and students seem to care about inclusive education students and have created a favorable atmosphere for inclusive education.

Table 6: Analysis of School Environment Friendliness (N=5146)

Question Category	Poor		Not Very Good		Average		good		Very good		M	SD	s ²
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
How inclusive students fare in school life	183	3.5	898	17.3	2056	39.7	1762	34	247	4.8	2.19	.902	.814
How inclusive students interact with regular peers at school	194	3.7	991	19.1	2188	42.2	1508	29.1	265	5.1	2.13	.909	.826
How inclusive students interact with teachers at school	236	4.6	858	16.6	2149	41.5	1612	31.1	291	5.6	2.17	.928	.862

In further analysis, the factors influencing the inclusion of disabled children in regular classrooms were identified. These factors, ranked from high to low frequency, are as follows: severe emotional and behavioral problems in special education students, a lack of effective special education methods and strategies, significant differences between special education students and regular students, poor learning and self-care skills in special education students, a lack of teaching equipment and accessible environment support, and inadequate administrative support for education (see Figure 3).

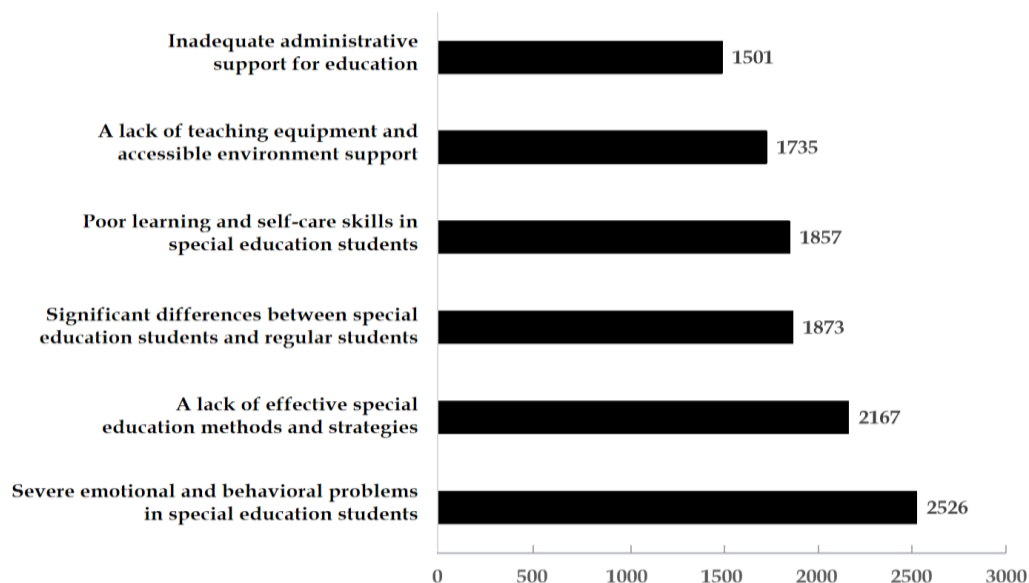


Figure 3: Frequency of Factors Affecting Inclusive Education (N=5146)

Among these factors, the most significant one affecting the quality of inclusive education is the lack of effective special education methods and strategies in schools. Additionally, the absence of teaching equipment and inadequate support for creating accessible environments, as well as insufficient administrative support for education, also have a direct impact on the quality of inclusive education.

Question 2: What is the relationship between inclusive education quality and support system, as well as attitudes to inclusive education?

To further explore the relationship between the quality of inclusive education and the support system, as well as attitudes to inclusive education, the Canonical Regression Analysis (CATREG) method was used to conduct a regression analysis of the factors influencing the quality of inclusive education. The regression equation obtained is as follows: Inclusive Education Effectiveness = 0.170 * Government and Social Support + 0.022 * School Support + 0.185 * Teacher Support + 0.141 * Parental Support + 0.338 * Inclusive Education Attitude + 0.021 * Inclusive Education Cognition.

The results of the F-test (see Table 7) indicate that four variables, namely Inclusive Education Attitude, Teacher Support, Government and Social Support, and Parental Support, have a significant and important impact on the effectiveness of inclusive education at a significance level of 0.001.

Table 7: Regression Equation and Correlation Coefficient Analysis of Inclusive Education Quality with Support Systems and attitudes to inclusive education

	standardized coefficient		df	F	Sig.
	Beta	Bootstrap (1000) estimate of standard error			
Government and societal support	.170	.013	2	178.735	.000
School support	.022	.022	1	.998	.318
Teacher support	.185	.016	3	126.229	.000
Parental support	.141	.018	1	61.310	.000
Attitude toward inclusive education	.338	.015	3	530.599	.000
Cognition of inclusive education	.021	.016	2	1.628	.197

Based on the importance coefficients, it can be observed that the attitude towards inclusive education has the highest importance in the equation for the quality of inclusive education (with an importance coefficient of 0.436). Next in importance is teacher support, followed by government and social support, then parental support, and the least important is inclusive education cognition (see Table 8).

Table 8: Correlation and Tolerance of Regression Equations for Inclusive Education Quality with Support Systems and Attitudes

	Correlation			Significance	Tolerance	
	Zero-order	Partial	Part		Transformed	Original
Government and societal support	.379	.192	.153	.166	.814	.778
School support	.099	.028	.022	.006	.977	.979
Teacher support	.467	.172	.137	.224	.544	.490
Parental support	.424	.136	.107	.155	.580	.466
Attitude toward inclusive education	.498	.351	.294	.436	.756	.723
Cognition of inclusive education	.254	.024	.019	.014	.823	.767

Through partial correlation coefficients, it can be observed that when the variable of inclusive education attitude enters the equation for the quality of inclusive education, the correlation coefficient increases by 0.294. This indicates that the attitude towards inclusive education has the most significant impact on the quality of inclusive education. The significance level (Sig.) of the F-value from the analysis of variance is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the regression equation is statistically significant (as shown in Table 9).

Table 9: Analysis of Variance Table for the Regression Equation of Inclusive Education Quality with Support Systems and Attitudes

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1983.292	12	165.274	268.596	.000
Residual	3151.708	5122	.615		
Total	5135.000	5134			

The linear transformation (as shown in Figure 4) indicates that there is a strong linear relationship in fusion education quality.

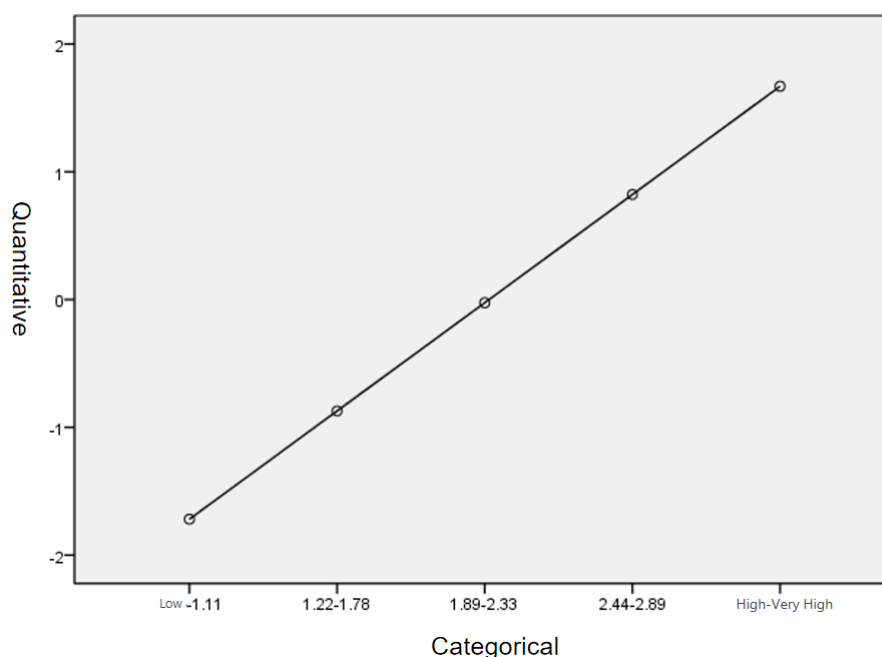


Figure 4: Transformation Graph of the Regression Equation for Inclusive Education Quality with Support Systems and Attitudes

5. Discussion

This study aims to understand the quality and manifestations of inclusive education in Sichuan Province, China. It also predicts the improvement in the quality of inclusive education through support systems and cognition. The research findings provide the following insights:

Inclusive education quality is not satisfactory: Previous studies have indicated that low quality is a common issue in the implementation of inclusive education, and the results of this study support this conclusion.

Manifestations of inclusive education quality: This study further reveals that the unsatisfactory quality of inclusive education mainly manifests in minimal student improvements, especially in learning habits, behavior habits, and interpersonal relationships. The extent of student participation in school activities is also shallow, with a phenomenon known as "just sitting in class."

Schools lack effective inclusive education methods and strategies, and support systems are insufficient.

The relationship between inclusive education quality, support systems, and attitudes: The results of this study demonstrate a linear relationship between inclusive education quality and support systems, as well as cognition. Regression models indicate that attitudes toward inclusive education, teacher support, government and societal support, and parental support are positively correlated with inclusive education quality, with attitudes having the most significant impact. This aligns with existing research indicating that attitudes significantly influence teaching behavior and support provided to students with special needs.

The importance of attitudes: Attitudes have the greatest impact on inclusive education quality, according to their importance ranking. Attitudes directly influence teaching behaviors and the support provided to students with special needs, ultimately affecting the quality of inclusive education (Domingo, 2020, pp. 1-2). It is widely recognized that attitudes reflect values, and values are the core and foundation of attitudes. Therefore, changing attitudes toward inclusive education is essential. Promoting the value and significance of inclusive education, fostering an inclusive, caring, and understanding value culture, eliminating misconceptions about inclusive education, and creating an inclusive education atmosphere are crucial steps in changing attitudes. Additionally, providing effective guidance and support for inclusive education through practical implementation can demonstrate the positive values of inclusive education and promote attitude change.

The significance of teacher support: Teacher support ranks second in importance, consistent with the consensus in the academic field. Teachers are the primary implementers of education and play a key role in education quality. In the context of inclusive education, the quality of teachers is crucial. Countries with a high level of inclusive education development invariably prioritize the construction of their inclusive education teacher workforce. For example, in Sweden, all individuals wishing to become inclusive education teachers must undergo 10 weeks of special education knowledge training (Xiong & Lei, 2013a, pp. 9-14). Additionally, all teachers receive special education skills training. Effective teacher training programs in inclusive education, such as including special education courses and assessments in teacher education programs, are essential to improving teacher quality in inclusive education.

Schools play an extremely important role in inclusive education. The results of this study have also found that the lack of inclusive education methods and strategies is the most important factor affecting the effective implementation of inclusive education in ordinary schools. School support is a key driver of inclusive education (Stelitano et al., 2020, pp. 535-575), to provide students with a wide range of support through the construction of a multi-layer support system (MTSS) framework (Jimenez & Barron, 2022, pp. 168-182), promote effective learning for all students (Wang & Takeda, 2022, pp. 83-93). Currently,

in schools in the United States and elsewhere, multiple support systems (MTSS) have become dominant (Sailor et al., 2021, pp. 24-41).

In recent years, researchers have paid more attention to the comprehensive inclusive support framework. Teachers can improve and enhance universal instructional opportunities for all students by adopting Integrated Multilayer Support Systems (I-MTSS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and embedded learning (Thomas et al., 2023, pp. 57-69), supporting every student to learn effectively in the classroom (Coogle et al., 2022, pp. 867-877). For example, primary school teachers in Finland have facilitated the effective implementation of inclusive education through a three-tiered support system (Eklund et al., 2021, pp. 729-742). Integrated education teachers in Zimbabwe and South Africa use interprofessional collaborative (IPC) support strategies to meet the needs of learners with developmental language disabilities (DLD) (Ndou & Omidire, 2022, pp. e1-e13).

Environment support serves as the foundation for active participation of disabled students in the educational process (Алехина, et al., 2022, pp. 69-84). For instance, online learning platforms play a supportive role in inclusive education (Dhingra, 2021, pp. 227-230). Open, distance and digital education (ODDE) can provide unique educational opportunities for everyone (Kocdar & Bozkurt, 2022, pp. 1-16). Fiji accurately identifies children with disabilities through the Education Management Information System to promote the quality implementation of inclusive education (Sprunt & Marella, 2021, pp. 1-13). In countries such as the Czech Republic and Germany, which are part of the OECD, nearly every mainstream school building, teaching facilities, and activity areas are designed with accessibility in mind. They provide specialized desks, chairs, beds, and bathing facilities for disabled individuals, as well as accessible pathways and elevators equipped with buttons for people with disabilities (Budyně nad Ohří School, 2023, pp. 9-11). In essence, schools have achieved a high level of accessibility for disabled children in their learning, extracurricular activities, and daily life.

Government and societal support play a significant role in improving the quality of inclusive education. The development and implementation of policies or laws related to inclusive education are common practices worldwide to promote inclusive education effectively. Examples include the Together to School inclusive education program in the Netherlands (Xiong & Lei, 2013b, pp. 55-63), India's Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) program (Yan et al., 2011, pp. 61-65), the Framework for Comprehensive School Transformation in the United States (Zhang et al., 2023, pp. 53-68), and the enactment of the Individualized Support for Special Education Act in the Czech Republic in 2015, which mandates the rights of students with special education needs to receive support in mainstream education (Shewbridge et al., 2016, pp. 60-65). Supporting students' social participation is a central challenge in inclusive education (Hosshan, 2020, pp. 1-2). Inclusive education volunteers are also an important part of social support resources and have important social value for the development of inclusive education (Zhang & Xu, 2021, pp. 79-86).

In China, the government initiated two phases of the Construction Plan for Special Education Schools in the Central and Western Regions in 2007 and 2012. In 2014 and 2017, two phases of the Special Education Enhancement Plan were introduced to further support the development of inclusive education. Therefore, government and societal support are crucial guarantees for the quality of inclusive education.

Parental support also has a positive impact on improving the quality of inclusive education. It is well-known that parents play an irreplaceable and crucial role in their children's education and growth. Family plays an important role in the process of inclusive education for special children (Tian et al., 2021, pp. 30-36). Qing and Liu (2007) pointed out that family support and school support are core support systems among the five subsystems. Niu et al. (2005) found that parents of disabled young children have a significantly higher level of support for inclusive education than parents of typical young children. The results of this study support this common perception.

In conclusion, this study underscores the multifaceted factors influencing inclusive education quality and highlights the importance of addressing attitudes, teacher support, government and societal support, and parental involvement to enhance the quality of inclusive education in Sichuan Province, China. This will help to clarify the development path of inclusive education and accelerate the development of inclusive education in Sichuan Province along a high-quality and benign track.

6. Conclusion

This study fills the research gap regarding the support system and quality improvement of inclusive education in Sichuan Province, China. The findings indicate that the quality of inclusive education in Sichuan Province is unsatisfactory, with students having limited participation in school activities, minimal changes in learning outcomes, and inadequate support systems. This study suggests that attitudes towards inclusive education, teacher support, government and societal support, and parental support have positive impacts on the quality of inclusive education. Improving the support system could contribute to enhancing the quality improvement of inclusive education.

7. Recommendations

For policymakers, it is recommended that the education authorities strengthen the top-level design of the quality development of inclusive education, formulate an operational policy framework, ensure the sustainability of policy implementation, and enhance the stability of funding. For educators, it is recommended that schools accelerate their transition to inclusive and comprehensive schools, establish a multi-tier support system (MTSS) framework, and strengthen the pre-service training and in-service training of inclusive education teachers.

In addition, teachers should master knowledge and skills such as universal learning design (UDL), individualized education planning (IEP), and embedded learning in inclusive education to enhance their professional competence. For stakeholders, it is recommended that parents actively participate in school activities and work together to help children grow. The society should create a positive atmosphere, strengthen the promotion of knowledge and values related to inclusive education, change incorrect perceptions and attitudes, and form a collective effort to support inclusive education.

8. Limitations and Future Studies

This study has several limitations to consider. First, although the study had an adequate sample size, it only focused on Sichuan Province and did not encompass other Chinese provinces. Future research could expand the investigation to include more representative regions to compare differences and commonalities in inclusive education quality.

Second, besides support systems and cognitive factors, there are other factors that influence inclusive education quality, such as individual student differences, the adoption of modern information technology, and classroom culture, among others. Future research could explore these aspects to further enrich the study.

Third, potential influencing factors or confounding variables, such as the level of economic development, the sustainability of policies, and the resilience of financial support, also affect the quality of inclusive education and need to be noted when using the results of this study.

Fourth, this study primarily used quantitative methods, which allow for data collection on a relatively large scale. However, future research could employ qualitative research methods such as interviews, observations, case studies, and qualitative analyses to gain deeper insights from participants and uncover underlying content not readily apparent.

Fifth, there are potential areas that have not been addressed or require further exploration in this study. Future research could build on the findings of this study, such as conducting surveys on the specific effects of support system strategies or examining the impact of inclusive education on student performance, among others.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire on Effectiveness and Support System of Inclusive Education in Sichuan Province

Hello! Thank you for participating in our survey on the effectiveness of inclusive education and support system in Sichuan Province. This survey is anonymous. There is also no right or wrong answer. The results of the survey are only for academic research. Please feel free to answer according to your experience. Your comments are very valuable; thank you for your enthusiastic cooperation and support!

Part I Basic Information

1. Your gender:
 - Male
 - Female
2. What is your identity?
 - Principal
 - Middle Manager
 - Teacher
 - Parents of students
 - Public

Part II Inclusive Education Attitude Questionnaire

3. What are your views on the education of disabled students in schools (kindergartens)?
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Never mind
 - Not quite agree
 - Disagree
4. Students with disabilities should receive the same quality of education as ordinary students.
 - Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - General
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
5. What do you think is the attitude of school (kindergarten) principals towards disabled students entering schools (kindergartens)?
 - Willing to accept
 - Accepted
 - Not clear
 - Not quite accepted
 - Not acceptable at all

6. What do you think is the attitude of teachers towards disabled students entering schools (kindergartens)?
- Willing to accept
 - Accepted
 - Not clear
 - Not quite accepted
 - Not acceptable at all
7. What do you think is the attitude of parents of disabled students towards their children entering schools (kindergartens)?
- Very willing
 - Relatively willing
 - It doesn't matter
 - Not very willing
 - Not willing at all
8. What do you think is the attitude of parents of ordinary students towards their children attending classes with disabled students?
- Very willing
 - Relatively willing
 - It doesn't matter
 - Not very willing
 - Not willing at all
9. Students with disabilities can benefit from inclusive education.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
10. In integrated classes, ordinary students will also benefit.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
11. With disabled students in the class, teachers will have less time and energy to take care of ordinary students.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
12. The presence of disabled students in a class affects the quality of education for ordinary students.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
13. Students with disabilities should receive more attention from their classmates and teachers in class.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. student with disabilities should be treat on an equal footing with ordinary students and should observe that same norms and meet the same requirement.

- Fully agree
- Relatively agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. Teachers should change their teaching methods to meet the needs of disabled students. What is your attitude?

- Fully agree
- Relatively agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. You are willing to provide necessary assistance to disabled students or their families as a volunteer or volunteer.

- Very willing
- Relatively willing
- It doesn't matter
- Not very willing
- Not willing at all

Part III Inclusive Education Support Questionnaire

17. Policy support from the local government to ordinary schools (kindergartens) receiving disabled students

- Very much
- Relatively much
- Not too much
- Not much
- Not much at all

18. The local government provides special funding support to ordinary schools (kindergartens) receiving disabled students.

- Very much
- Relatively much
- Not too much
- Not much
- Not much at all

19. The local government will send commissioners to guide the work of integrated education in ordinary schools (kindergartens).

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

20. The community provides barrier-free facilities for students with disabilities.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
21. Communities organize activities for persons with disabilities.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
22. The community will provide the necessary assistance to disabled students and their families.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
23. Schools (kindergartens) are equipped to enable disabled students to live barrier-free in schools (kindergartens).
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Don't quite agree
 - Disagree
24. Schools (kindergartens) are equipped for the learning of students with disabilities.
- Fully agree
 - Relatively agree
 - Neutral
 - Don't quite agree
 - Strongly disagree
25. Schools (kindergartens) will organize school-wide publicity activities to enable more teachers and students to accept disabled students.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
26. Schools (kindergartens) will organize teachers to participate in learning activities for disabled students.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
27. Schools (kindergartens) appoint teachers with special education background

to lead classes with disabled students.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

28. Schools (kindergartens) will cooperate with special education schools (kindergartens) to seek professional guidance and help.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

29. Schools (kindergartens) will arrange resource teachers or itinerant guidance teachers to provide teaching guidance.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

30. School (kindergarten) teachers will design individualized education plans according to the needs of disabled students.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

31. Schools (kindergartens) will arrange relevant professional teams (such as speech and rehabilitation therapists) to provide speech and rehabilitation training for disabled students.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

32. Schools (kindergartens) allow parents or other caregivers to assist disabled students in their study and life.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Not at all

33. Schools (kindergartens) will fully communicate with parents about the placement and counseling of disabled students.

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely

- Not at all
34. In terms of performance evaluation, schools (kindergartens) will adjust the evaluation methods and the degree of difficulty according to the abilities of disabled students.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
35. What kind of disabled students can teachers accept into your class (multiple choices)
- Hearing impairment
 Visual impairment
 Intellectual impairment
 Learning impairment
 Speech and language disorders
 Emotional and behavioral disorders
 Autism & physical disorders
 Multiple disorders
 Infirmary
 Days
 Others
62. What are the barriers to teachers' willingness to accept students with disabilities?
- Mild
 Moderate
 Severe
36. The reason why teachers do not agree with the admission of disabled students to schools (kindergartens) is (multiple choice):
- The degree of obstacles is overwhelming
 Teachers cannot give these special consideration
 Teachers with special education knowledge and skills are lacking
 Special education equipment is lacking
 Parents who are worried about ordinary students will oppose it.
 Other reasons
37. Teachers will guide ordinary students to take the initiative to accept and assist disabled students through group games.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
38. Teachers will teach ordinary students to get along with disabled students in the right way and attitude.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely

- Not at all
39. Teachers will make use of school schedules and clocks to enable disabled students to work and rest regularly in schools (kindergartens).
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
40. Teachers will pay more attention to disabled students in the classroom.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
41. Teachers will give special guidance and education to disabled students outside school hours.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
42. Teachers will adjust the level of difficulty of homework according to the ability of disabled students and reduce the amount of homework.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
43. Teachers' and parents' associations discuss the problems of disabled students and work together to find solutions.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
44. Parents of disabled students will cooperate with schools (kindergartens) to provide the necessary assistance and manpower support.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely
 Not at all
45. Parents of disabled students and parents of ordinary students will discuss the problems of disabled students together.
- Always
 Often
 Occasionally
 Rarely

- Not at all
46. Parents of disabled students will provide you with relevant information about the situation of disabled students at home, personal preferences and the like.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
47. Parents of disabled students will inform teachers of the individual needs of disabled students and provide effective strategies.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
48. Parents of students with disabilities actively participate in the development of individualized education plans and school (kindergarten) education programs.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
49. Parents of students with disabilities will participate in accompanying reading or other volunteer activities.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
50. Parents of ordinary students will teach their children to get along with disabled students in the right way and attitude.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all
51. Parents of ordinary students will agree that their children should provide the necessary help to disabled students.
- Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Not at all

Part IV Inclusive Education Quality Questionnaire

52. Disabled students live in schools (kindergartens)
- Very happily
 - Relatively happily
 - Average
 - Not very happily
 - Unhappily
53. How do disabled students get along with ordinary classmates in school (kindergarten)?
- Very well
 - Fairly well
 - Average
 - Not so well
 - Not well at all
54. How do disabled students get along with teachers in school (kindergarten)?
- Very well
 - Fairly well
 - Average
 - Not so well
 - Not well at all
55. Living habits of disabled students in schools (kindergartens)
- Very good
 - Fairly good
 - Average
 - Not so good
 - Not good at all
56. Learning habits of disabled students in schools (kindergartens)
- Very good
 - Fairly good
 - Average
 - Not so good
 - Not good at all
57. Levels of participation of disabled students in collective activities
- Very high
 - Relatively high
 - Average
 - Not very high
 - Not high at all
58. Levels of participation of disabled students in extracurricular activities
- Very high
 - Relatively high
 - Average
 - Not too high
 - Not high at all
59. Levels of participation of disabled students in classroom learning
- Very high
 - Relatively high
 - Average
 - Not too high

- Not high at all
60. Changes of disabled students after entering school
- Very significant
 - Relatively significant
 - Average
 - Not too significant
 - Not significant at all
61. What aspects of disabled students have been improved since they entered school (multiple choices)
- Living habits
 - Learning habits
 - Behavior habits
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-care ability
 - Learning ability
 - Communication ability
 - Degree of disability
 - Participation
62. What aspects do disabled students need to improve (multiple choices)?
- Living habits
 - Learning habits
 - Behavior habits
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-care ability
 - Learning ability
 - Communication ability
 - Degree of disability
 - Participation
63. The factors affecting the integration of children with disabilities in regular classes are (optional):
- There is a big difference between disabled students and ordinary students.
 - Emotional and behavioral problems of disabled students are serious.
 - Poor ability of disabled students (learning, self-care) .
 - Lack of effective special education methods and strategies.
 - Insufficient administrative support for education.
 - Lack of teaching equipment.
64. How satisfied are you with the current situation of school (kindergarten) support for disabled students?
- Very satisfied
 - Quite satisfied
 - Average
 - Not very satisfied
 - Not satisfied at all