



Research Article

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Received: 19 May 2024 / Accepted: 27 June 2024 / Published: 8 July 2024

Creating a Responsive Society for Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education: The Case for the Adoption of the Socioecological Model

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/jicd-2024-0005>

Abstract

Inclusive education increases human capital such as knowledge, skills, social interactions, and health, which enhance individuals' chances for higher earnings, social mobility, and sustainable growth within communities and countries. For inclusive education to be successful, a written plan or an individualized education plan has been advocated for. The concept of this plan defines special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will provide for students or the practice of helping students meet their educational goals through educational programs that modify certain course requirements to be either above or below age-appropriate, grade-level expectations, and the provision of alternative course or class expectations that help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not part of the curriculum. Therefore, using this plan, the proponents of inclusive education advocate for the inclusion of individuals living with physical and mental impairments, such as sensory or mobility limitations, intellectual disabilities, language disorders, and behavior disorders, to promote education access to marginalized groups in society. On the other hand, the opponents of inclusion education argue that the concept of a written plan, or an individualized education plan, seems ineffective and paradoxical to the general government's policy on an inclusive classroom. A review of existing literature on inclusive education shows that the inconsistencies in both the concept and implementation of inclusive education are the outcomes of the dichotomy between an unresponsive society, which encourages a stagnant or ill-prepared system, and a rapidly evolving political correctness environment. As a way forward, we recommend the adoption of a social-ecological model for creating a responsive society for the effective development and implementation of inclusive education policies based on the findings of our consolidated literature review.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Selective exclusion, Individualized education plan, Political correctness, Paradoxes of inclusive education, Responsive society, Systems theory, and Socioecological model*

1. Introduction

The provincial and territorial education Acts provide access to public education for children from ages six to eighteen years in Canada. These Acts in addition to the human rights Acts guarantee both access as well as protection from discrimination (Inclusive Education Canada, 2020). For instance, the province of Alberta promotes inclusive education as both an ideology and a system that supports the unconditional acceptance and participation of all students irrespective of their abilities or sociocultural background. This supports the 1961 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convention against discrimination in education and other international human rights treaties that forbid any form of segregation from, or restriction to, educational opportunities due to socially constructed or alleged differences such as gender, ethnic or socioeconomic background, language, religion, nationality, mental and physical ability. Thus, all students have an undeniable right to be included in the conventional learning environment or educational program of their choice (Inclusive Education Canada, 2020).

In particular, Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) forbids discrimination against children with disabilities and mandates their right to inclusive education. This stipulation is designed to eliminate barriers to participation in traditional classrooms in public schools as well as promote inclusion in the community and society in general (United Nations Human Rights, 2023).

Mostly, inclusive education tries to educate individuals with intellectual disabilities by admitting them into the traditional structures of the educational system. However, the proponents of inclusive education mandate the use of selective exclusion or partial exemption from grades, special classes, special treatment by teachers, etc. In addition, the concept of a written plan or an individualized education plan, which describes special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will provide for students or the practice of helping students meet their educational goals through educational programs that modify certain course requirements to be either above or below age-appropriate, grade-level expectations and the provision of alternative course or class expectations that help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not part of the curriculum seem paradoxical to the general concept of an inclusive classroom.

These contradictions increase the challenges of implementing a wide-ranging inclusive education across all levels of the contemporary education system. Such challenges include the education system's inability to effectively communicate to parents and students about their right to accommodation, lack of adequate training for educational institutions and their teachers on disability-related matters, and the responsibility to make exceptions for students with disabilities, inadequate resources and assistance in the classroom, delay in students' assessments, negative approaches, and stereotypes, inaccessible classrooms, and school environment, mandatory medical

report, poor dispute resolution procedures, and total denial of disability-related accommodations (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016).

A review of existing literature on inclusive education shows that the inconsistencies in both the concept and implementation of inclusive education are the outcomes of the dichotomy between an unresponsive society, which encourages a stagnant or ill-prepared educational system, and a rapidly evolving political correctness environment. As a way forward, we support the adoption of a social-ecological model for the development and implementation of inclusive education policies based on the findings of our consolidated literature review.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Inclusive education

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (2023), inclusive education involves admitting all children into the same classroom irrespective of their abilities or disabilities. Thus, inclusive education entails providing concrete learning opportunities for groups who have been conventionally excluded from the traditional classrooms and not merely children with disabilities but speakers of minority languages too. Kirschner in Scarlett (2015) describes inclusive education as a method of schooling in which students with various forms of disabilities and learning needs are educated in the same classrooms as non-disabled and traditionally developing students. The emphasis in an inclusive classroom is the strong commitment to cater to the diverse learning needs of all the students without taking them away from the classroom.

Typically, the phrase, “inclusive education” describes the inclusion of individuals living with physical and mental impairments, such as sensory or mobility limitations, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, language disorders, behavior disorders, etc. However, some educators and theorists broadly describe “inclusion” as an educational system created to promote education access to marginalized groups in society and schools. In this regard, inclusive education is the thoughtful and self-conscious development of the school and classroom settings that promote accessibility to students with impairments and to those who might be excluded or disempowerment because of their ethnicity, social class, gender, culture, religion, immigration record, or other features (Kirschner in Scarlett, 2015).

Proponents of inclusive society posit that inclusive education demonstrates the values of a democratic society. For instance, the Open Society Foundations (2019) asserts that inclusive education respects diversity and the exceptional contributions each student makes to the classroom and that it provides better quality education for all children and is instrumental in changing prejudice. In addition, inclusive education can provide many different academic and social advantages for students with disabilities, such as higher achievement in language and mathematics, improved rates of high school

graduation, and more prosocial interactions with non-disabled students (Hehir et al., 2016). Similarly, studies and assessment data on inclusion demonstrate a strong movement toward improved outcomes in the students' academics, attitudes, and socialization for both students with disabilities and general education students (Lipsky, Kerzner, and Gartner, 1995).

Notwithstanding the notable benefits of inclusive education and the vastly structured and multifaceted education framework created to accommodate the "special needs" of students, individuals with disabilities find it difficult to access educational services worldwide.

"Disability" remains the most notable ground of discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016). Statistics Canada posits that Ontarians with disabilities have lower educational achievement levels, a higher unemployment rate, and are more likely to have low income than people without disabilities (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2016). Pettinicchio and Maroto (2020) assert that 59.4 percent of Canadians with disabilities were employed in 2015, as against 80.1 percent of the rest of the population. Even when they are employed, individuals with disabilities mainly have low-paying and more unstable jobs that are at risk of disappearing because of technology. For example, the annual incomes of full-time workers with disabilities range between \$2,000 to \$8,000 less per year for full-time workers with disabilities (Pettinicchio and Maroto, 2020).

2.2 Selective-exclusion

Winter (2020) in Filho et al., defines exclusive education as the education of students by selective capability, which may or may not be due to discrimination by educational authorities, representatives, or other stakeholders. Alchin (2014) described selective exclusion in a classroom as a rational modification deficit philosophy, which can limit people's thinking and hinder meaningful classroom participation. The concept of selective classroom exclusion supports the idea that more time and resources should be allocated to designing learning experiences and assessments for average learners before considering those students with limitations (Alchin, 2014). The selective exclusive classroom is a reactive and not proactive approach founded on the illusion of the average student.

On the other hand, Henderson, Sugden, & Barnett (2007) used the concept of mental age instead of chronological age to explain the importance of selective exclusive classrooms. This concept suggests that if students of divergent ages but all with high intellectual capability are grouped in the same classroom, it will enable them to learn at a faster rate, with a more demanding and stimulating curriculum more appropriate to their intellectual capacity (Henderson, Sugden, & Barnett, 2007). In this regard, the overarching obligation of the schools is to provide students with educational opportunities that match their exclusive needs such that their academic development

corresponds with their innate ability, and facilitates their healthy social and emotional development (Henderson, Sugden, & Barnett, 2007). Since equity is about creating equal access to appropriate education for every student, it is morally imperative for all school stakeholders to ensure that all children reach their potential instead of asking them to come to school to waste their time (Henderson, Sugden, & Barnett, 2007) in an uncoordinated inclusive classroom.

However, Alchin (2014) asserts that extensive educational research recognizes that learners bring a substantial variety of skills, needs, and interests to their learning. For instance, developments in neuroscience show that learner dissimilarities are as diverse and exclusive as human DNA or fingerprints in the three neural networks of recognition, strategy, and affect. The level of these differences discredits many assumptions, mainly about the average learner's belief, or the notion of teachers who 'teach to the middle' as there is enough research evidence to indicate that the differences among the learners' are 'the norm, rather than the exception (Alchin, 2014).'

2.3 Individualized education plan

An individual education plan (IEP) is a document that outlines special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will offer a student. These educational plans are based on a detailed assessment of a student's strengths, needs, and ability to learn and demonstrate learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2022). According to the United States Department of Education (2020), the IEP promotes collaboration among teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students to improve educational results for children with disabilities and it is the foundation for quality education for each child with a disability.

The IEP is essential in developing a quality educational curriculum because it is used to direct the student's learning while in special education. An IEP defines the length of time that a student with an intellectual disability will spend receiving special education, any related services that the student will receive, and the academic or behavioral goals and expectations for the year

(OSPI, 2015). The IEP team determines and assesses the student, designs, and revises a student's IEP, and decides the school or setting where the student will receive his or her special education services in agreement with the IEP federal Act (OSPI, 2015).

At its inception in the United States, IEPs were not aligned with the general education curriculum, which seems to suggest that individuals with intellectual disabilities were excluded from the mainstream education program. However, the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) made it obligatory for IEPs to be aligned) with the general education curriculum (Macquarrie, 2009). This alignment links IEPs to the general education curriculum and provides positive directions for the student's educational goals and interventions. It also outlines the standards that can be used to identify explicit educational contents that are critical to the student's

successful progress in the general education curriculum. In addition, it promotes a single educational system that is inclusive through a common language and curriculum while ensuring greater consistency across schools and districts and encouraging higher expectations for students with disabilities (Macquarrie, 2009).

Despite these laudable benefits, notable research reports suggest that IEPs alone cannot resolve most of the challenges facing families of children with intellectual disabilities. In addition, some experts in the field of inclusive education posit that IEP processes tend to place more emphasis on one's disabilities instead of the individual's abilities. Similarly, the lack of understanding of the range of capabilities among students with intellectual disabilities makes it more difficult for the effective implementation of IEPs. Hettleman (2013) supports these assertions by suggesting that the policy on which IEPs are implemented is limiting in nature.

For instance, in the United States, students with disabilities are expected to attain minimum academic proficiency, which means that children with intellectual disabilities are not entitled to receive services that will help them maximize their full potential (Hettleman, 2013).

This issue is compounded by the lack of evidence-based research. Furthermore, the nonavailability of other scientific tools for the identification and treatment of disabilities; the propensity for educators to blame students with intellectual disabilities and their parents or families for low performance; and false reports and inflation of students' progress make it almost impossible for IEPs to enhance the lives of children with intellectual disabilities and their families and promote inclusive education.

2.4 Political Correctness

Political correctness describes the act of avoiding language and behaviors that demean, exclude, or harm people who are already experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. According to Reynolds (2024), the notion of political correctness is constructed on the belief that language or behavior that is offensive to people or divergent groups' sensibilities must be abolished, through regulations or penalties if required. Ely, Myerson, and Davidson (2006) assert that political correctness is an implicit norm of politeness that dictates behavior in cross-cultural interactions among people of diverse races, genders, religions, and other emerging emotionally sensitive social identity groups due to the commitment to equity, which promotes political correctness. Lee (2016) suggests that political correctness invokes powerful forces, that are resolute in conquering inconvenient truths by monitoring language.

Historically, before the late 1980s, the term "political correctness" was used only among the left to criticize extreme orthodoxy. The feminist group known as the Lesbian Sex Mafia was the first group of people to unify against "political correctness (Basiliere, 2008)." This group organized a rally against another feminist group that condemned pornography and bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism, and masochism

(BDSM) (Basiliere, 2008).

The adoption of the term inclusive education or classroom mirrored the advent of the concept of social inclusion, which became a policy response to social exclusion during the latter part of the 1980s when the European Community first used the word social exclusion (Wilson, 2017). Williams and White (2016) state that the acceptance of the concept of social inclusion by the European Community (EC) was remarkable as it indicated that the organization in the bid to be politically correct declined to accept poverty as the appropriate word to label the quandaries of those excluded from mainstream society. Most probably, the adoption of social inclusion as against social exclusion was based on the fact that social exclusion was not merely associated with poverty, but it also included numerous barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully in community activities (Obisike, Adalikwu-Obisike, Cox, Romeo, & Adjei, 2023).

The contemporary world no doubt emulates America whose pursuit of a political dream of humanitarian development is encapsulated in a free, open, and inclusive multicultural society (Williams & Bauer, 1994). However, this lofty and complex ideology poses numerous problems, such as how to provide the same education for all children irrespective of their physical, emotional, and mental abilities and inabilities, and levels of preparedness or unpreparedness. The idea of including children and youth with significant disabilities in traditional classrooms may be politically expedient but it is an entirely irrational method to enhance the quality of learning (Williams & Bauer, 1994).

2.5 Paradoxes of Inclusive Education

According to Engeström and Sannino (2011), paradoxes are a major factor in promoting organizational change. Thus, in inclusive education, the recognition and resolution of inconsistencies between social policies and the management of diverse classrooms can facilitate a change from segregated teaching and learning environments towards the inclusion of students with special needs in traditional classrooms. In the context of inclusive education, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016) asserts that every student's participation in constructive interaction in a classroom must be accommodated.

However, this demands that teachers with various professional specializations play a dominant role in the implementation of inclusive education (Liasidou, 2015). Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild (2009) noted that one of the major issues with inclusive education is the paradoxes in teachers' skills and professional development versus societal demand for the promotion and implementation of inclusive education policies.

Paju, Kajamaa, Pirttimaa, and Kontu (2018) describe inclusive education as an intricate and relative scheme. For instance, the policies that mandate inclusive education or classrooms failed to fully explain how inclusion should be implemented. In

addition, there is no universally acceptable definition of the concept (Allan, 2014; Allan & Slee, 2008; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006) because the various characterizations of inclusive education stem from policy- and culture-orientated interpretations (Sharma, Loreman, & Macanawai, 2016).

Vislie (2003) states that the term integration has conventionally been used to define the admission of students with special needs in mainstream educational and social environments after some adaptation and with additional resources. Conversely, the distinction between the terms “included” and “integrated” is considerable. For example, integration indicates the fitting of students with special needs into the mainstream classroom, while inclusion embraces all students as people (Vislie, 2003). In this regard, inclusion may be puzzling to educators because of the numerous practices and definitions of inclusive education (Kiuppis, 2014).

Consequently, a major issue with inclusive education is the educators’ approach toward inclusion (Norwich, 2014). While the majority of the teachers are generally positive towards inclusive education on a philosophical level, they do not have a common understanding of inclusive education (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006). Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2011) infer that teachers are undecided or have negative attitudes toward inclusive education and they may not be willing to admit students with behavioral challenges in their classrooms.

A notable paradox of inclusive education is the use of mandatory selective exclusion or partial exemption such as grades, special classes, special treatment by teachers, etc. The problem is that most mainstream classes are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of diverse pupils. For instance, Connor and Ferri (2007) suggest that the teachers in mainstream classrooms are often not well prepared, thus, it is unreasonable to design the inclusion of students with substantial disabilities in congested classrooms where the teacher does not have adequate training and skills in special education. While the proponents of inclusion and inclusive education state that special education and social exclusion promote isolation, students with disabilities can equally be alienated in an inclusive classroom or society. Connor and Ferri (2007) suggest that merely allowing students to be present and visible in an inclusive classroom is not the same as promoting interaction or integration. Anything less than meaningful participation, which will demand fundamental variations in general education such as the use of selective exclusion or partial exemption such as grades, special classes, and special treatment by teachers, violates the values of inclusion (Connor and Ferri, 2007).

Furthermore, Kaufmann and Hallahan (1995) posit that complete inclusive education is an illusion as it is not achievable. In this regard, they provided evidence to support the need to maintain distinct educational facilities for children who are blind and deaf, which implies that certain educational needs for certain groups must be met separately from the mainstream classroom. Cohen (1994) supports Kaufmann and Hallahan’s assertion by describing how the student was not included completely in academic or social activities in the mainstream classroom and education system and, as

a result, became excessively dependent. According to Cohen (1994), such students would benefit from a school for the deaf 'where all the students can relate with each other, all the instructions and lessons are presented visually, teachers sign and deaf adults work as role models.

Villa & Thousand (1995) and many other experts on this subject view inclusive education as a cost-saving strategy, which is not influenced by humanistic reform, but rather a means to bureaucratic fiscal prudence. Divergent to cost reduction theories, inclusive education or society may be more expensive than special or exclusive education, depending on how systematically and responsibly it is executed (Villa & Thousand, 1995). However, the rigidity of the sources of funding may affect the implementation of inclusive education.

2.6 *Responsive society*

A responsive society acknowledges the differences of its members, adopts systems that respect people, and enables people's voices to be heard (Moses, 2014). It is a pragmatic society that is receptive to the objective needs of all community members and demonstrates a proper balance between authority and independence (Etzioni, 1995). Like a dynamic person, a responsive society relentlessly embraces changes, improving conditions of existence, changing and promoting inclusive, and innovative pragmatic social constructs.

According to Etzioni (1995), the conventional paradox between laws and autonomy can be reduced by collective community responsiveness that respects society's historical standpoint, and when rules and regulations become the only basis for implementing new social constructs, an emphasis must be placed on the individual and not the system. In terms of inclusive education, Head Start (2021) suggests that responsive learning environments such as classrooms, play spaces, homes, outdoor areas, and other areas visited by children during their daily lives must be convivial and engaging. Accordingly, in this learning setting, lessons need to be designed and delivered according to the individual needs and interests of all children. In addition, creating an inclusive classroom and education entails the involvement of a responsive team such as parents, caregivers, teachers, home visitors, and other education staff because they are nurturing and sensitive to every child's disposition and needs (Head Start, 2001).

In creating a responsive society, Green and Mercer (2001) redefined a community as everyone who will be affected by social policies, and research outcomes including nonprofessional residents of a community, professionals, service agencies, and policymakers. Thus, creating a responsive society revolves around collaboration and participation by all the stakeholders in making and implementing policies that will affect each member.

In summary, incorporating inclusive and responsive practices into the pedagogy is critical for all students to succeed. When teachers treasure each pupil's uniqueness and

can help them develop a sense of belonging in their classrooms, the pupils are better equipped to attain academic excellence. Responsive societies prepare educators and leaders with wide-ranging learning opportunities based on the identifiable needs of their community and adapt individual buildings to develop inclusive and responsive environments (Better Lesson, 2022). Accordingly, Community Responsive Education (2020) asserts that a responsive society integrates the community's context in the education of children and youth. Community or society includes the cultural, political, social, and economic environments and places that influence student and family lives. In this regard, a responsive society approach to inclusive education embraces an equity-centered education framework that is responsive to socioeconomic circumstances that are specific to a student's lived experience in society and the events that shaped that experience. When properly implemented, inclusive education becomes the medium for freedom through the development of students' critical awareness that propels actions that will enhance wellness through racial and social justice in their personal lives, families, communities, and the world (Community Responsive Education, 2020).

2.7 Systems theory

According to Ritzer (2011), the systems theory also known as the social system theory in social sciences describes society as a large system, which comprises different interdependent sections. Watson (2012) suggests that systems theory tries to identify the dynamic behavior of intricate systems, including how the various interactions within the system affect the behavior of the system in unpredictable, nonlinear fashions. In this context, anything that transpires within a system should be examined within the setting of that system because every part of a system influences the entire system in the same way that we cannot isolate people from the system they live in, the system cannot exist without the people that institute and preserve it (Plett, 2022).

Bertalanffy (1972) asserts that we cannot explain anything by isolating any component of a system. Thus, systems theory seems to view the school as a unified, purposeful organization, or as a system comprised of interrelated parts. Vancouver (2005) advised educational administrators/managers to look at the educational system as a whole instead of breaking it into various separate parts because any part of the system has a direct influence on every other part of the educational system. To accurately explain and advance an understanding of the issues affecting inclusive education, all its components must be analyzed to find the root of the problem (Elujekwute, et al., 2022).

Gibson (2023) traced the origin of the concept of systems theory to the work of British sociologist and philosopher Herbert Spencer and French social scientist Émile Durkheim. While Spencer argued that a single form of the social system was regularly developing into an even more complex state of perfection, contemporary sociological scholars posit that society is not developing into a perfect state; rather, it is changing to

a state of increasing complexity known as structural differentiation, which demands that society adapt to its environment by changing its intricate internal structures (Gibson, 2023).

Bertalanffy's biological studies focused on developing the theory of unobstructed systems, to grasp how systems interact with the environment as seen in every functioning system. Therefore, the systems theory is an interdisciplinary concept regarding every system such as the ecosystem, society, and other scientific domains that offers a basis to examine phenomena from a holistic method. The purpose of the system theory is to explain dynamic associations and interdependence among components of the system and the organization in that a system is founded on the structure and patterns of the bonds that result from the interactions among the various components (Lai & Lin, 2017). In summary, the focus of systems theory is on three stages of studies, which include the environment, the social organization as a system, and human participants within the organization. This multidimensional emphasis stems from the process of interchange among stakeholders (Lai & Lin, 2017).

In the case of an inclusive classroom, this may be the whole school, the school board, the community, or the family. Thus, it is not enough for governments worldwide to adopt a politically correct social concept and leave the responsibility of effecting such a complex construct in the hands of school administrators and their teachers because schools do not function in isolation from the communities and broader State, national, global, and historical contexts (Anderson, Boyle, and Deppeler, 2014). These historical and socioecological contexts interact with internal school and classroom dynamics to determine whether or not inclusive education will accomplish its mandates. In other words, for the school board and the administrators to implement this transformation, they must collaborate with the various community stakeholders within the confines of the cultures in which they operate.

2.8 Social-ecological model

The social-ecological model is a multilevel conceptualization of inclusive education that includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, environmental, and public policy influences on social and educational policy interpretation, application, and learning outcomes. The socialecological model underlines multiple levels of influence and supports the idea that social service and education providers and consumers affect and are affected by various contexts. It is a visual illustration of the dynamic interactions among individuals, groups, and their environments (Lieberman et al., 2015). According to Akoto et al (2022), the social-ecological model is a person-process and context framework. Bronfenbrenner (1976) suggests that people are trapped in a nested system where diverse parts perform major functions in their development. The socioecological model was developed as a framework to explain the influence of the interaction between human beings and their environment on development. While children play an

active role in society, the environment within which they find themselves defines how well they develop (Akoto et al., 2022).

Lund et al., (2018) noted that children and teenager's optimum growth and well-being depend on the interaction between their biological and environmental/contextual factors such as family, community, sociocultural, economic, political, and legal influences, and the services and structures they live in, which influence their development through their lifetime. UNICEF (2017) posits that children, adolescents, and families bring their coping skills in dealing with societal and life challenges, thus, the social-ecological model shows the benefits of social networks and structure within the environment a child or adolescent lives, which have the ability or inability to protect their well-being and sense of agency, and in enhancing their optimal growth.

The multifaceted complexity associated with the implementation of inclusive education policy is reflected within the social-ecological model. Developing a thorough understanding of the complexity, particularly the interactions between levels of influence, the social-ecological model encourages the adoption of inclusive education beyond the rhetoric of social policy. The issue has never been about adopting an inclusive education or classroom policy, but about how to implement an effective inclusive education and classroom. In this regard, Liang et al (2022) posit that intrapersonal factors are the focus of the model because it focuses on an individual's impairment, attitudes, and knowledge unlike the interpersonal factors or the second level of social-ecological level that focuses on the social relationships involving teachers, peers, and family members or the third level, which focuses on organizational factors.

UNICEF (2017) suggests that the adoption of the social-ecological model might resolve the paradoxes of inclusive education and create a responsive society and classroom because the adoption of the social-ecological model can increase people's understanding of reasons behind problems as well as suggest possible approaches to address them. Also, the social-ecological model can be effective in identifying and resolving most of the challenges facing inclusive education because the model relates to an interplay between the individual, the environment, and the institution. Therefore, policymakers must consider the importance of all the stakeholders such as family and peers as well as improve support services to effectively include students with disabilities in traditional schools (Akoto, 2022). **Figure 1** illustrates the multi-level influences on the inclusive physical education involvement of students with special education needs.

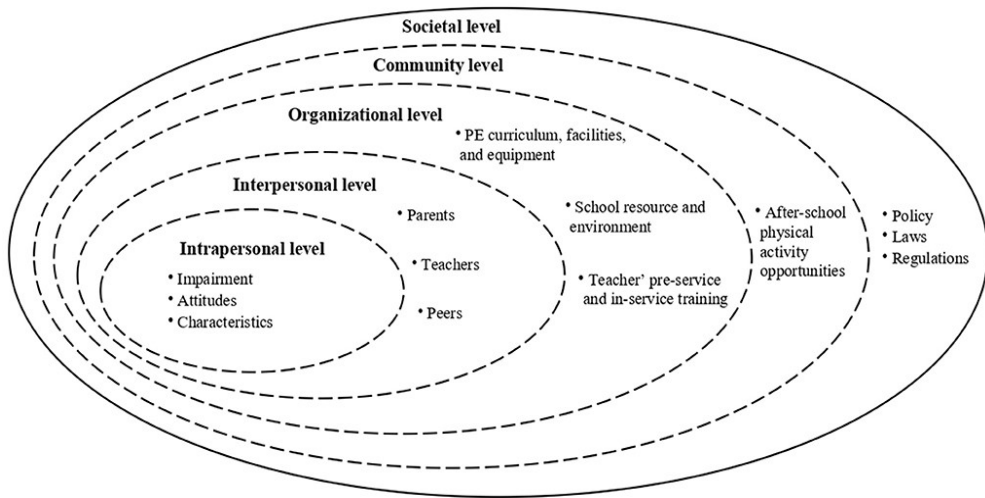


Figure 1. Socio-ecological model taken from Liang, X., Li, M., Wu, Y., Wu, X., Hou, X., & Sit, C. H. (2022).

3. Methods and Procedures

This study used a systematic research method to find and synthesize existing literature on how the adoption of the socioecological model might create a responsive society for the effective implementation of inclusive education. All the articles selected for this review met the following criteria: (a) they described how the use of a social-ecological model supported the effectiveness of inclusion of individuals with disabilities in a school setting. (b) the use of the social-ecological model was aimed at modifying knowledge, beliefs, or behavior related to social inclusion; (c) the study focused on students with disabilities, their families, teachers, or schools; (d) the study was based on qualitative and systematic studies; (e) the study was published in a peer-reviewed journal; (f) the study was published in the English language; and (g) the study was published between 2013 and 2023. The reviewed articles were identified through Google Scholar, Medline, PubMed, PsycINFO, and ERIC databases. We collected data from grey literature by searching the websites of Organisations of People with Disabilities and government reports, policy literature, working papers, and newsletters by using the following keywords: Inclusive education, selective exclusion, individualized education plan, political correctness, paradoxes of inclusive education, systems theory, and social-ecological model. Furthermore, we reviewed the World Health Organisation's policies and directives on inclusive society and classrooms.

This paper excluded studies focusing on the paradox of inclusive education without the use of a social-ecological model as a means of enhancing students' participation or learning experiences. In addition, we excluded all the studies published in non-English

language journals. To ensure the currency, we excluded studies published earlier than 2013.

3.1 Quality Assessment

We used the Jadad scale to control the likelihood of bias (Portney & Watkins, 2015). We completed an in-depth analysis on randomization, blinding, and attrition as they helped to determine the quality of the studies included in this study (Portney & Watkins, 2015). To promote the accurate interpretations of the results of our research data, we carefully reviewed the similarity (homogeneity) and the dissimilarity (heterogeneity) of the various facets of the articles that we have included in this review (Portney and Watkins, 2015). The PEDro Scale was used to determine the validity of our selected research articles. This process ensured that all the eligibility criteria were met (Portney & Watkins, 2015). We assigned one point to every research article that meets each criterion while we gave a zero point to each criterion that was not met.

4. Results

An initial search across databases generated 250 possibly eligible peer-reviewed articles. Before screening, we removed 100 articles that appeared to be duplicated. We dropped another 100 articles that were published before 2013 and that are outside the scope of this paper. After reviewing the abstract of the remaining 50 articles, we dropped 30 articles whose research methodologies and control measures did not meet our selection criteria. Out of the remaining 20 articles, we only retrieved the full texts of 12 articles. Of the 12 articles whose full text we retrieved, eight studies describing the outcomes of the use of the social-ecological model on inclusive education or social inclusion were finally selected for inclusion in this review (See Figure 1 below). We jointly conducted the literature search and selected articles for inclusion. In cases of disagreement, we discussed any differences in opinion until we reached an agreement. One (12.5%) of the eight articles included in this study used a Randomized Control Trial research method while four (50%) of the studies used qualitative study design. In addition, two (25%) of the articles we selected for this scoping review were systematic reviews, and one (12.5%) was a program brief (Grey Literature) from the United Nations Children's Fund (See Table 1).

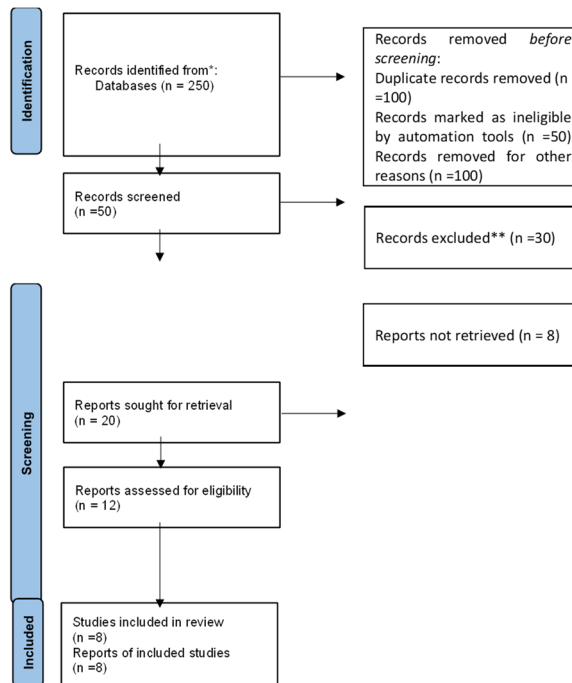


Figure 2: Data Collection Chart

Table 1: Summary of the Research Methodology of Selected Articles

Research Methodology of Selected Articles	Number Articles Located	Author/Year
Randomized Control Trial	1	Shams, H., Garmaroudi, G., Nedjat, S., & Yekaninejad, S. (2018).
Qualitative	4	Akoto, Y., Nketsia, W., Opoku, M. P., Fordjour, M. O., & Opoku, E. K. (2022). Trang Thu, D. N., Thi Thu Thuy, L., Blackburn, C., & Puttick, M. R. (2022). Meys E, Hermans K, Maes B. (2021). (2021). Tahir, K., Doelger, B., and Hynes. M. (2019).
Systematic review	2	Liang X, Li M, Wu Y, Wu X, Hou X & Sit C-P (2022). Juvonen, J., Lessard, L.M., Rastogi, R., Schacter, H.L., & Smith, D. S. (2019).
Program Brief (Grey Literature)	1	UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region (2015)

Table 2: Summary of Research Findings

Journal Article Citation	Summary of Outcomes
Shams, H., Garmaroudi, G., Nedjat, S., & Yekaninejad, S. (2018). Effect of education based on socio-ecological theory on bullying in students: an educational study.	This field trial study was conducted on 237 middle school students in Gonabad City (Iran), between September 2015 to May 2016. The aim was to establish the impact of education based on the socio-ecological model on bullying among students. The study concluded that intimidation is a major challenge facing schools and affects the academic and social competencies of students. In this aspect, the teachers play a vital role, and education based on the socioecological model was proven to be capable of reducing bullying. Thus, educational intervention must be implemented at two levels between the school and the family.

<p>Akoto, Y., Nketsia, W., Opoku, M. P., Fordjour, M. O., & Opoku, E. K. (2022). Applying a Socio-ecological model to understand the psychosocial support Services available to students with disabilities in Universities.</p>	<p>This qualitative study used Bronfenbrenner’s socio-ecological model to investigate the nature and scope of psychosocial support available to students with disabilities in universities in Ghana. The findings of this study indicate that students with disabilities received most of their psychological support from the micro-system and mesosystem. This study asserts that the support, reassurance, care, and respect that the students with disabilities get from their families and the community at large enhance the students’ learning experiences.</p>
<p>Trang Thu, D. N., Thi Thu Thuy, L., Blackburn, C., & Puttick, M. R. (2022). Towards an ecological model of inclusive practice for children with special educational needs in Vietnam: perceptions of primary school teachers.</p>	<p>This study used online surveys to investigate the opinions and experiences of teachers in primary schools in Vietnam about inclusion, diversity, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in primary school children in Vietnam, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) based on the United Kingdom–Vietnam joint project. This study concludes that inclusive education needs a satisfactory balance between financial support at a national (macro) level, supervision from school directors, and governing bodies (exo level) and strong and effective communication with and leadership/support from families at the meso level.</p>
<p>Meys E, Hermans K, Maes B. (2021). Using an ecological approach to grasp the complexity of social inclusion around a person with a disability.</p>	<p>This study investigates how the use of the ecological model of Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek, and Leahy (2015) can help as a framework to develop a tool that creates different empowering and restricting variables on interpersonal interactions and community involvement, as well as the contributions of people with a disability, network adherents, and professionals. This study asserts that the socio-ecological model is an effective framework for creating empowering and incapacitating factors of social inclusion in individual cases.</p>
<p>Tahir, K., Doelger, B., and Hynes, M. (2019). A case study on the ecology of inclusive education in the United States.</p>	<p>This qualitative study investigated eco-logical aspects that influenced the adoption of inclusive education in two conventional schools on Long Island, New York, in the United States. This study indicated that two schools on Long Island used different approaches to implement their inclusive classes. The two schools used collaborative practices and a positive learning environment to promote the best learning opportunities possible for students with and without disabilities.</p>
<p>Liang X, Li M, Wu Y, Wu X, Hou X & Sit C-P (2022). A socio-ecological approach to inclusive physical education in China: A systematic review.</p>	<p>The objective of this systematic review was to present a detailed summary of the issues affecting inclusion in Inclusive Physical Education of students with Special Education Needs in China using a socio-ecological. The study identified multi-level influences varying from intrapersonal to societal levels that either promote or hinder Students with Special Education Needs from participating in Inclusive Physical Education.</p>
<p>Juvonen, J., Lessard, L.M., Rastogi, R., Schacter, H.L., & Smith, D. S. (2019). Promoting social inclusion in educational settings: Challenges and opportunities.</p>	<p>This study aimed to present an objective analysis of challenges to social inclusion in schools and recommend inclusive educational practices that promote inclusive education. The authors assert that school administrators and teachers play vital roles in decreasing exclusion and encouraging inclusion in schools. Even in racially or socioeconomically isolated neighborhoods, every school has some differences in the student body. Nevertheless, this study indicates that diversity does not naturally promote social inclusion, but school administrators and educators need to create environments that are safe and welcoming for all students.</p>
<p>UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region (2015). A social and behaviour change agenda for inclusion and equity in Education</p>	<p>This report focuses on the results from the 2015 UNICEF Global C4D in Education review and related research, which supported the adoption of Communication for Development (C4D) ideologies and procedures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of inclusive, equitable, and quality education for everyone. The report asserts that all levels of society must be included in education guidelines and strategies focusing on marginalized groups at each level of the education system (Early Childhood Education and Development, Primary, and Secondary), and in formal and non-formal social environments, as well as in development and humanitarian settings. It concludes that creative and hands-on ways of engaging with communities must be implemented to deal with elite bias, tokenism, and indifference. Additionally, society must adopt more effective approaches to communicating the voices of community members and students and speak for them in policy-making at local and national levels.</p>

5. Discussions

Several studies on inclusive education indicated that the inconsistencies in both the concept and implementation of inclusive education are the outcomes of the dichotomy between an unresponsive society, which encourages a stagnant or ill-prepared educational system, and a rapidly evolving political correctness environment. During our systematic literature review, we noted that the contemporary policies on Inclusive Education at all educational levels, hinge on the subject of fundamental human rights and social justice, principally for individuals with disabilities (De Becco, 2014). Precisely, Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) forbids discrimination against children with disabilities and mandates their right to inclusive education. This stipulation is designed to eliminate barriers to participation in traditional classrooms in public schools as well as promote inclusion in the community and society in general (United Nations Human Rights, 2023).

Unfortunately, most built environments such as educational facilities, private and public human services offices, hospitals, and amusement parks, remain inaccessible for individuals with disabilities who are at risk of segregation in societies (Tudzi et al., 2017). Likewise, notwithstanding the immensely structured and multifaceted education framework created to accommodate the “special needs” of students, living with a “disability,” inclusive classrooms remain the most notable ground for discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018).

Yamagata-Lynch and Haudenschild (2009) suggest that one of the major issues with inclusive education is the paradoxes in teachers’ skills and professional development versus societal demand for the promotion and implementation of inclusive education policies. Paju, Kajamaa, Pirttimaa, and Kontu (2018) state that inclusive education is an intricate and relative scheme. For instance, the policies that mandate inclusive education or classrooms failed to fully explain how inclusion should be implemented. In addition, there is no universally acceptable definition of the concept (Allan, 2014; Allan & Slee, 2008; Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006) because the various characterizations of inclusive education stem from policy- and cultureorientated interpretations (Engsig & Johnstone, 2014; Smith, 2014; Schwab et al., 2015; Sharma, Loreman, & Macanawai, 2016).

In addition, we noted that the adoption of the term inclusive education or classroom mirrored the advent of the concept of social inclusion, which became a policy response to social exclusion during the latter part of the 1980s when the European Community first used the word social exclusion (Wilson, 2006). Williams and White (2003) state that the acceptance of the concept of social inclusion by the European Community was remarkable as it indicated that the organization in the bid to be politically correct declined to accept poverty as the appropriate word to label the quandaries of those excluded from mainstream society. Most probably, the adoption of social inclusion as against social exclusion was based on the that fact social exclusion

was not merely associated with poverty, but it also included numerous barriers that prevent individuals from participating fully in community activities (Obisike, Adaliku-Obisike, Cox, Romeo, & Adjei, 2023). Villa & Thousand (1995) and many other experts on this subject view inclusive education as a cost-saving strategy, which is not influenced by humanistic reform, but rather a means to bureaucratic fiscal prudence.

Divergent to cost reduction theories, inclusive education or society may be more expensive than special or exclusive education, depending on how systematically and responsibly it is executed (Villa & Thousand, 1995). However, the rigidity of the sources of funding may affect the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, the objective of this study was to establish how the adoption of the socioecological model might create a responsive society for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

Our findings showed consistent support for the adoption of the socioecological model in creating a responsive society for the effective implementation of inclusive education for individuals living with intellectual disabilities. For example, Green and Mercer's (2021) redefinition of a community as everyone who will be affected by social policies, and research outcomes including nonprofessional residents of a community, professionals, service agencies, and policymakers is entrenched in the social-ecological model. Thus, creating a responsive community revolves around collaboration and participation by all the stakeholders in making and implementing policies that will affect each member.

In addition, the multifaceted complexity associated with the implementation of inclusive education policy is reflected within the social-ecological model. The social-ecological model encourages the adoption of inclusive education beyond the rhetoric of social policy, thus using this model in executing Inclusive Education policies might help all the stakeholders develop a thorough understanding of the complexity, particularly the interactions between levels of influence, because the issue has never been about adopting an inclusive education or classroom policy, but about how to implement an effective inclusive education and classroom (Liang et al., 2022).

UNICEF (2017) suggests that the adoption of the social-ecological model might resolve the paradoxes of inclusive education and create a responsive society and classroom because the adoption of the social-ecological model can increase people's understanding of reasons behind problems as well as suggest possible approaches to address them. Also, the social-ecological model can be effective in identifying and resolving most of the challenges facing inclusive education because the model relates to an interplay between the individual, the environment, and the institution. Therefore, policymakers must consider the importance of all the stakeholders such as family and peers as well as improve support services to effectively include students with disabilities in traditional schools (Akoto, 2022).

6. Conclusion

This study provides a consolidated literature on inclusive education by highlighting its pros and cons. It also explains why there are inconsistencies in both the concept and implementation of inclusive classrooms and society. In addition, the outcomes of all eight studies included in Table 2 of this review offer useful guidelines on how to effectively implement inclusive education in mainstream traditional institutions such as the use of collaborative practices and the creation of a positive learning environment to promote the best learning opportunities possible for students with and without disabilities (Tahir, Doelger, & Hynes, 2019). In particular, the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region (2015) demonstrated the benefits of using creative and hands-on methods to engage communities to deal with elite bias, tokenism, and indifference. In this regard, society must adopt more effective approaches to communicating the voices of community members and students and speak for them in policy-making at local and national levels. All these can be accomplished when societies are responsive to people's needs through the application of the social-ecological model.

Finally, while we acknowledge that creating a responsive society and educational system may not resolve all the paradoxes of inclusive education and society, our study outcomes indicate that the use of the social-ecological model in inclusive education and society might help families, educators, school administrators, community leaders, and social policymakers to move beyond the rhetoric of social policies and cultural norms because the social-ecological model provides a multilevel conceptualization of inclusive education that includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, environmental, and public policy influences on social and educational policy interpretation, application, and learning outcomes. Also, the social-ecological model underlines multiple levels of influence and supports the idea that social service and education providers and consumers affect and are affected by various contexts and it provides a visual illustration of the dynamic interactions among individuals, groups, and their environments (Lieberman et al., 2015).

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