

DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**Jasmina Turdiqulova**

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Abstract: This article examines the development of professional competencies of special educators working within the inclusive education system from a scientific and pedagogical perspective. The study investigates the significance of professional knowledge, practical skills, communicative competence, and innovative approaches required of educators in contemporary inclusive educational settings. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of inclusive education largely depends on the professional preparedness, methodological competence, and psychological readiness of special educators. The article also highlights the importance of correctional-pedagogical expertise, digital literacy, and multidisciplinary collaboration in supporting learners with special educational needs. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the necessity of continuous professional development and the implementation of innovative educational technologies in inclusive learning environments.

Keywords: inclusive education, special educator, professional competence, correctional pedagogy, innovative methods, communicative competence, professional development, special educational needs, pedagogical mastery, inclusive environment.

Introduction

The educational system of the twenty-first century is increasingly developing on the principles of humanism, equal opportunities, and social integration. In particular, the worldwide expansion of the concept of inclusive education has transformed the issue of providing quality education and social adaptation for children with special educational needs into one of the most significant global pedagogical challenges. Consequently, the development of professional competencies among special educators working in inclusive educational environments has become one of the most urgent scientific and practical issues of our time.

Currently, millions of children around the world require special educational support due to various physical, psychological, intellectual, or sensory developmental characteristics. According to UNESCO, more than 240 million children worldwide require special education and support services. At the same time, many countries consider the development of inclusive education a priority area of social policy.

Inclusive education is not merely the placement of children with disabilities into mainstream educational institutions. Rather, it is a complex pedagogical system aimed at providing high-quality educational support tailored to the individual needs of every learner. The effectiveness of this system largely depends on the professional competence and preparedness of educators.

Today's special educator is expected to function not only as a subject teacher but also as a psychologist, correctional specialist, communicator, and innovator. Working in an inclusive environment is considerably more demanding than traditional teaching, requiring individualized instruction, emotional resilience, and multidisciplinary cooperation.

Lev Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction and pedagogical support in child development. According to his perspective, developmental limitations do not fully



determine a child's potential; rather, appropriate educational support can significantly enhance developmental opportunities. From this standpoint, the competence of special educators represents one of the central factors determining the success of inclusive education. Similarly, Maria Montessori stressed the importance of considering each child's individual pace of development and unique educational needs. Modern inclusive education is fundamentally based on individualized approaches and adapted teaching technologies.

In recent years, the rapid integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence into educational systems has created new demands for special educators. Contemporary educators are expected not only to master traditional teaching methods but also to effectively utilize interactive platforms, assistive technologies, and innovative correctional programs. These technologies provide significant opportunities, particularly in working with children who have hearing impairments, visual impairments, speech disorders, or developmental delays.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the development of inclusive education has been identified as one of the priority directions of state policy. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education," the Law "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," as well as various presidential decrees and resolutions related to inclusive education, have elevated support for children with special educational needs to the level of national policy. Nevertheless, several challenges remain within the practical implementation of inclusive education, including shortages of qualified special educators, limited practical experience, insufficient methodological resources, and inadequate inclusive competencies among some teachers.

In many cases, educators possess theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills for working effectively in real inclusive environments. Modern special educators must demonstrate high levels of communicative competence, stress tolerance, empathy, and the ability to make prompt pedagogical decisions. Therefore, the development of professional competencies among special educators represents a crucial condition for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of inclusive education.

Literature Review and Methodology

The issue of developing professional competencies among special educators in inclusive education has become one of the most important areas of research in pedagogy, psychology, and correctional education. Contemporary studies indicate that the effectiveness of inclusive education depends largely on educators' professional preparation, communicative skills, and ability to apply innovative teaching methods.

Vygotsky's theoretical framework emphasizes that child development is shaped through social interaction and pedagogical support. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development scientifically justifies the importance of individualized instruction in inclusive education. The development of children with special educational needs depends significantly on the professional approach adopted by educators.

Maria Montessori emphasized the necessity of recognizing children's individual characteristics and creating environments that support independent development. This principle remains one of the fundamental foundations of contemporary inclusive education. Likewise, Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights the relationship between cognitive processes and educational experiences, emphasizing the importance of adapting instructional materials to learners' psychological and intellectual capabilities.

Recent studies identify several key dimensions of special educators' professional competence:

- Pedagogical competence;
- Communicative competence;
- Psychological preparedness;
- Correctional-pedagogical expertise;
- Digital literacy and technological skills;



- Competence in applying innovative teaching methods;
- Multidisciplinary collaboration skills.

Research conducted by UNESCO and UNICEF emphasizes that the success of inclusive education depends significantly on the specialized preparation of educators. International experience demonstrates that professional training programs incorporating practical workshops, simulation-based learning, and innovative technologies produce highly effective results.

The study employed scientific, systematic, humanistic, and individualized methodological approaches. Research methods included literature analysis, pedagogical observation, interviews, questionnaires, comparative analysis, monitoring of inclusive educational practices, and descriptive-statistical analysis. The professional activities, pedagogical approaches, and communicative competencies of special educators working in inclusive educational institutions were examined. Particular attention was paid to their methodological preparedness and ability to implement innovative technologies in educational practice.

Conclusion

The development of professional competencies among special educators represents one of the most significant priorities in contemporary inclusive education. The findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of inclusive educational environments depends largely on educators' professional preparedness, communicative competence, psychological resilience, and ability to implement innovative pedagogical approaches.

The analysis revealed that working with children who have special educational needs requires far more than conventional teaching skills. Special educators must demonstrate individualized approaches, empathy, patience, and correctional-pedagogical expertise. These competencies are particularly critical when working with children with autism spectrum disorders, hearing impairments, speech disorders, or intellectual developmental differences.

The study further indicates that educators who effectively utilize digital technologies, interactive methods, and assistive tools achieve better educational outcomes. This finding underscores the necessity for continuous professional development and lifelong learning among special educators.

Moreover, the results confirm that multidisciplinary collaboration among educators, psychologists, speech therapists, and parents significantly enhances the effectiveness of inclusive education. Children's development is influenced not only by classroom instruction but also by family and social environments. Therefore, collaborative efforts among all stakeholders are essential for achieving successful educational outcomes.

In conclusion, the development of professional competencies among special educators is one of the key factors in improving the quality of inclusive education. The integration of contemporary knowledge, innovative technologies, and humanistic pedagogical approaches creates favorable conditions for the comprehensive development and successful social integration of children with special educational needs.

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