DEBRE BIRHAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The Practices and Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education: The Case of Model Number 2 School

By

Beletie Moges

A Thesis Submitted to Debre Birhan University, For the Partial Fulfilment of The Degree of Masters in Special Needs Education

Advisor: Tedla Kutaye (PhD)

June, 2024

DebreBirhan, Ethiopia

DECLARATION

I, Beletie Moges, hereby declare that this thesis entitled "The Practices and Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education: The Case of Model Number 2 School" submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Psychology to the College of Social Science and Humanities, DebreBirhan University, through the Department of Psychology under the direct supervisions and guidance of the research advisor is my original work that has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, or fellowship in this or any other institution. All sources and materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: BeletieMoges

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DEBRE BERHAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

APPROVAL OF THESIS FOR DEFENSE

I hereby certify that I have supervised, read, and evaluated this thesis titled "the Practices and Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education: The Case of Model Number 2 School" Beletie Moges prepared under my guidance. I recommend the thesis be submitted for oral defense.

<u>Tedla Kutaye (PhD)</u> _____ _____

  Advisor Name   Signature   Date

Examiners' Approval Form

DEBRE BERHAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

As members of the board of examiners, we examined this thesis entitled "The Practices and Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education: The Case of Model Number 2 School" by Beletie Moges. We hereby certify that the thesis is accepted for fulfilling the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology"

Board of Examiners

External examiner name   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Internal examiner name   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Chairperson's name   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Almighty God for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability, and opportunity to undertake this research study.

I repay deep gratitude to my research advisorTedlaKutaye (PhD)who has devoted me to providing me with scholarly guidance and support starting from idea structuring until the final development of the research report. Finally, I would like to thank my family and classmates who have supported me throughout the entire process and all my well-wishers who have given me appreciation and moral support throughout the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents   **Page**

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

CwDs	Children with Disabilities
ECCE	Inclusive early childhood care and education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
PwDs	People with Disabilities
SNE/ IE	Special needs education/inclusive education
WHO	World Health Organization

List of Tables

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess practices and challenges of implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education in Model Number 2 School. A qualitative research method was employed. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. The data collection tools were interviews, observation, questionnaires, and document analysis. The findings revealed multiple barriers, including inadequate physical infrastructure and accessibility, lack of specialized equipment and learning materials, insufficient teacher training and professional development, negative attitudes and resistance within the school community, and weak leadership and management practices. The school had initiated some inclusive education initiatives, but the existing policies and frameworks were not comprehensive or effective enough to drive inclusive practices systematically across the school. Teachers expressed concerns about their preparedness and the adequacy of training to accommodate children with diverse needs. The availability and effectiveness of resources and support services, such as specialist personnel and external collaborations, were found to be significantly lacking. In conclusion, the study highlights the multifaceted and complex nature of the challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive ECCE. Addressing these challenges will require a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that addresses infrastructural limitations, teacher capacity building, support service availability, attitudinal shifts, and effective leadership and management practices. Targeted interventions and policy reforms are necessary to create an inclusive and equitable ECCE system that caters to the diverse needs of all children. To address these challenges, the study recommends that the school develop and implement comprehensive inclusive education policies, provide targeted and ongoing teacher training, strengthen the availability and coordination of support services, and enhance the leadership and management's commitment to driving inclusive practices across the school.

Key terms: Early childhood care and education, Practice, and Challenges

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive early childhood care and education (ECCE) plays a vital role in ensuring equal opportunities for all children, including those with diverse needs. However, implementing inclusive ECCE programs can be challenging for educational institutions. This research aims to explore the challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive ECCE and investigate the strategies, policies, perceptions of teachers, availability of resources, and leadership support in addressing these challenges.

1.1 Background of the Study

Inclusive early childhood care and education (ECCE) has gained significant prominence in recent years as a fundamental approach to ensuring equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities for all children, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or socioeconomic status (UNESCO, 2020). This inclusive philosophy aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015).

The importance of inclusive ECCE is well-documented in the literature. Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of inclusive education, including enhanced social-emotional development, improved academic outcomes, and the promotion of diversity and acceptance within the school community (Odom and Diamond, 1998; Guralnick, 2001; Pianta and Hadden, 2008). Early childhood is a critical period for the holistic development of children, and providing an inclusive learning environment during this formative stage can have lasting positive impacts on their growth and well-being (Kaga et al., 2010).

Despite the recognized value of inclusive ECCE, the implementation of such practices remains a complex and multifaceted challenge for many educational institutions (Soukakou, 2016). Barriers such as inadequate funding, limited teacher preparedness, attitudinal biases, and logistical hurdles can hinder the successful adoption of inclusive policies and practices (Sharma et al., 2013; Frankel et al., 2019).

Model Number 2 School, a prominent educational institution, has undertaken a conscious effort to embrace the inclusive philosophy and transform its early childhood education program to cater

to the diverse needs of its young learners. This case study research aims to explore the specific practices and challenges encountered by Model Number 2 School in its journey towards implementing inclusive ECCE, providing valuable insights that can inform the broader discourse on inclusive education.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) plays a crucial role in providing a strong foundation for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (UNESCO, 2021). However, the implementation of inclusive ECCE, where children with diverse needs and abilities are welcomed and supported, often faces significant challenges (Anderson et al., 2019).

Even though the implementation of inclusive education is not an easy task to accomplish, Ethiopia has made significant strides in many areas of education in the last ten years. For example, primary school enrolments have increased from 68% in 2005 to an estimated 90%. However, it is statistically a much less successful picture for Children with Disabilities, in particular those with conditions such as hearing, visual, and intellectual impairment, and others (MoE, 2012). As a result, meeting the Education for All (EFA) objectives has been a big challenge for the country as a developing nation. Nevertheless, it is an opportunity to eradicate poverty and ensure the rights of children to education as declared in the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities of 2006 and the Human Rights Convention of 1948 (UNESCO, 2009).

However, though the nation has shown very significant progress in having enrolled 90% of school children, the enrolment of CwDs is estimated to be 3 to 4% only (MoE, 2012). Several reasons for this status quo include a severe shortage of trained practitioners, and classroom teachers generally do not have the training to handle a child with disabilities in classes that often include 60 to 100 pupils. As a result, when a child with a disability does attend school, she/he often quickly drops out (Tirussew, 2005; MoE, 2012).

Achieving universal school enrollment has been a significant goal, aiming for 100% enrollment of all children. However, the exclusion of Children with Disabilities (CwDs), who constitute 10% of the total population, means that only 90% of the target is accomplished (Ministry of

Education of Ethiopia, 2012). This lack of access to education for CwDs hinders the achievement of the millennium goal set by the international community.

Access to education for children with disabilities in Ethiopia presents significant challenges, as observed and experienced firsthand (Tirusew, 2005; Melaku, 2014). Instead of embracing disability as a natural variation, society tends to stigmatize and discriminate against these children (Yirgashewa, 2019; Alemu and Fantahun, 2020). This deep-rooted negative attitude not only sidelines Children with Disabilities (CwDs) from school and societal activities but also affects their overall well-being (Melesse, 2015; Tamirat, 2016).

The pervasive belief in society focuses on what they cannot do, perpetuating low self-esteem and feelings of incompetency among CwDs (Teshome, 2017; Kassa, 2019). Unfortunately, these negative attitudes can even prevent them from attending school, leading to their isolation and being hidden away as a source of shame for their families (Wolancho, 2021; Abebe, 2022).

As someone who has personally faced the bitter prejudice and stigma associated with visual disability, I am intimately aware of the challenges CwDs encounter. The limitations imposed by disability are often overshadowed by the lifelong stigma endured. This personal experience, compounded by the stigma and discrimination faced within the family, workplace, and classroom settings, has served as the driving force behind undertaking this study.

To address these challenges of implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education in Model Number 2 School, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive investigation. Exploring existing literature and studies, can deepen our understanding of the extent of stigma and discrimination against CwDs and identify successful interventions implemented in similar contexts.

As we know, by now, school enrolment of children had to reach 100%. However, since the society does not consider CwDs who account for 10% of the total population, only 90% is achieved (Ministry of Education of Ethiopia, 2012). Hence, it is believed that be lack of access to education of CwDs is in the achievement of the millennium goal for the international community.

There was a need to fill the gap in knowledge regarding the specific challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education, as well as the

strategies, teacher perceptions, availability of resources and support services, and leadership and management practices that contributed to or hinder the successful implementation of these programs. To fill the gaps, the researcher is interested in investigating the practices and challenges of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education: The Case of Model Number 2 School. Hence, this study has intended to answer the following basic research questions:

- What specific practices and strategies are employed by the Model Number 2 School to foster inclusive early childhood care and education?
- What are the key challenges and barriers faced by the Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education?
- How do the teachers at the Model Number 2 School perceive their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs?
- What resources and support services are available at the Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties?
- How does the leadership and management at the Model Number 2 School promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the practices and challenges associated with implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at the Model Number 2 School.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify and describe the specific practices and strategies employed by the Model Number 2 School to foster inclusive early childhood care and education.
- To identify and describe the key challenges and barriers faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education.
- To investigate the perceptions of teachers at Model Number 2 School regarding their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs.
- To determine the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services at Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties

✎ To explore how the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study on the practices and challenges of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School holds significant value across multiple dimensions. For the organization, the findings provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current practices and identify areas for improvement, leading to enhanced inclusivity and better support for diverse learners. For policymakers, the study offers evidence-based recommendations for developing policies and regulations that promote inclusive early childhood education in similar settings. This research contributes to societal benefit by highlighting the importance of inclusive education and advocating for equitable opportunities for all children, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. Finally, the study serves as a foundation for future research by providing a detailed case study that can be used to compare and contrast findings from other schools and settings, contributing to a deeper understanding of inclusive practices and challenges within the broader context of early childhood education.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was to investigate the practices and challenges of implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education in Model Number 2 School. The study aims to identify and describe the inclusive practices and strategies employed by the school, the key challenges and barriers faced in implementation, the perceptions of teachers regarding their preparedness and training, the availability and effectiveness of support resources and services for children with diverse needs, and the role of the school's leadership and management in promoting inclusive early childhood care and education

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study were specific to Model Number 2 School and may not be directly generalizable to other schools or educational contexts. The challenges, strategies, perceptions, resources, and leadership practices observed in Model Number 2 School may vary in different settings. The smaller sample size may impact the generalizability of the findings and limit the representation of diverse perspectives within the school community.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

Challenges: Refers to specific obstacles, difficulties, or barriers faced by Model Number 2 School in the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and inclusive education. These challenges can include but are not limited to issues related to resources, policies, attitudes, training, infrastructure, and support services.

Inclusive Early Childhood Care: Refers to the comprehensive care and development of young children, typically from birth to around eight years of age. It includes providing a nurturing and stimulating environment that supports all children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Inclusive Education: Refers to the educational approach that aims to provide equal access and opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. It involves creating an inclusive learning environment that accommodates diverse needs, promotes participation, and fosters the full development of every learner.

Leadership and Management: Refer to the roles, actions, and practices of school leaders and administrators at Model Number 2 School in promoting and supporting inclusive early childhood care and education. Leadership and management encompass the decision-making processes, organizational structures, communication strategies, and initiatives undertaken by school leaders to create an inclusive school environment.

Perceptions: Refers to the beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and subjective experiences of teachers at Model Number 2 School regarding their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs. Perceptions reflect the individual understanding and views of the teachers and can influence their practices.

Policies: Refers to the guidelines, rules, or regulations established by Model Number 2 School to guide the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education. Policies can cover various aspects, including curriculum frameworks, assessment practices, provision of support services, and inclusive practices for children with diverse needs.

Practices and strategies refer to the specific instructional methods, support services, accommodations, and organizational approaches employed by the school to promote and implement inclusive ECCE. These may include, but are not limited to, differentiated instruction, assistive technologies, collaboration with families, and inclusive school policies and procedures.

Resources and Support Services: Refers to the materials, facilities, personnel, and external services available at Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Resources can include specialized equipment, assistive technologies, instructional materials, and support services such as counseling or therapy.

Strategies: Refers to the planned actions, approaches, or methods employed by Model Number 2 School to address the challenges of early childhood care and inclusive education. Strategies can include instructional approaches, curriculum adaptations, professional development initiatives, collaborations with external organizations, and other measures aimed at improving the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This paper was organized into five chapters, including this introductory part which addressed the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, limitations of the study, the definition of key terms, and organization of the study. Theoretical, empirical review of related literature of the study discussed in Chapter Two, Chapter Three forward the research approach, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instruments, method of data analysis, and ethical consideration. Chapter four states data presentation, analysis, and interpretation, and the final and fifth Chapters present a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the review of related literature focused on the specific challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education. The literature review will explore the theoretical frameworks, strategies, policies, teacher preparedness, resources, support services, and leadership practices relevant to addressing these challenges. The chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existing knowledge and practices in the field, which will inform the subsequent analysis and findings of the study in Model Number 2 School.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Inclusive Education

Moliner and Donech (2014) to achieve inclusive education, we must fundamentally rethink how we see education for everybody. It involves putting complex systemic changes including teachers, parents, and pedagogies into practice to guarantee that every child has a safe and barrier-free learning environment (Nigmatov, 2014). Tiwari et al. (2015) and Westwood (2007) state that inclusion involves making sure all students disabled or not participate fully in the program by giving them the support they need to meet their needs alongside their peers (Birhane, 2020).

2.1.2 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has made significant strides in expanding access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in recent years. However, significant challenges remain in ensuring quality and equitable ECCE services across the country. The Government of Ethiopia has recognized the importance of ECCE and has made it a key priority in its education sector development plans. The Education and Training Policy (ETP), introduced in 1994, identified ECCE as an important component of the education system (Ministry of Education, 1994). This was further reinforced in the Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP), which have guided the country's education sector reforms since the late 1990s (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Access to ECCE services in Ethiopia has increased over the past two decades. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for pre-primary education (ages 4-6) increased from 5.2% in 2000 to 44.5% in 2018 (UNESCO, 2020). This expansion has been driven by the establishment of

community-based preschools, known as O-Class, as well as the integration of pre-primary classes into primary schools.

However, significant disparities in access to ECCE persist across regions, socioeconomic groups, and rural-urban divides. Children from wealthier households, urban areas, and certain regions have significantly higher enrollment rates compared to their disadvantaged counterparts (Woldehanna and Gebremedhin, 2012).

2.1.3 The Ideology of Inclusive Education

2.1.3.1 The Philosophy of Inclusive Education

In principle, inclusiveness aims to bring children and place in regular schools. However, as the literature shows, inclusion goes far beyond this simple and conventional thinking. Therefore, this part of the review highlights what inclusion looks like. Furthermore, it deals with the philosophy and the extent to which inclusive education benefits not only CwDs but even those who do not have disabilities.

There is a variety of understandings of what is commonly called "inclusion" among educators. Inclusion is not just about where children are educated; it is a philosophy that includes a whole school and it is everyone's responsibility (Mitchell, 2008; Collins, 2003). Therefore, the inclusive classroom of today is a school where students learn from each other, and the teacher is expected to provide instruction to every student who enters the class (Ainscow, 1999). In addition, inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and interaction with others (Mitchell, 2008). The term inclusion is often associated with collaboration. Moreover, inclusion is a philosophy or set of beliefs based on the idea that "everyone belongs, is accepted and supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having their educational needs met" (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

The term 'philosophy' is being used in this context to merely indicate a set of beliefs, and not a philosophical study or debate. Current educational thinking underpinning inclusive education reflects a paradigm shift from a pathological theoretical approach to one that values understanding of learning difficulties (Gabel, 2005; Allan, 2008). More importantly, inclusive education locates barriers to learning and development in the entire system instead of only

focusing on the individual. This implies that barriers may be located within the learner, within the center of learning, within the education system, and or within the broader socioeconomic and political context. This thinking has its foundation in the systems theory. Implicit in the systems approach is the understanding that there are layers in the systems that interact with each other to produce certain outcomes (Mitchell, 2008; Allan, 2008). The ecological model of human development postulates that effective implementation of inclusion requires the collaboration or interaction of multiple participants (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Inclusion in education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school systems. It does not segregate children who have different abilities or needs. Therefore, inclusive education is a rights-based approach to educating children and includes those who are subject to exclusionary pressures. It is widely believed that inclusive education creates a learning environment that is child-centered and flexible and enables children to develop their unique capacities in a way that is conducive to their styles of learning (Mitchell, 2008; Dark and Light Blind Care, 2008). Therefore, the process of inclusion contributes to the academic development and socio-economic welfare of the child and its family, enabling them to reach their potential and flourish.

Inclusion is a set of best practices or strategies coupled with the moral view that all children bring value to the general education classroom. In inclusive classrooms, students have a variety of ways to access information and demonstrate what they know (Allan, 2008). Inclusion is also a philosophy where all students are valued and supported to participate meaningfully with each other. "The key to inclusive education is the acknowledgment that inclusive education is about all children as it shifted its focus to consider the pervasive nature of exclusion in and through education" (Mitchell, 2008:143).

However, education that is inclusive of disabled children is not easy, but the job of a teacher may become more interesting and the teaching methods may respond more to the variety of learning needs of all the children (Frederickson and Cline, 2009). All the children in the classroom can benefit from the more child-centered flexible and creative nature of inclusive education. In addition to this, inclusive and child-friendly schools welcome all children in the community regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, HIV and health status, as well as their socio-

economic, ethnic, religious, or language background (Unesco, 1994; Frederickson, and Cline, 2009).

Inclusive and child-friendly communities and schools usually embrace diversity not merely tolerate it. Hence, if the school setting is inclusive, children learn at their own pace and according to their own abilities to achieve optimal academic, social, emotional, and physical development (Frederickson and Cline, 2009; UNESCO, 2005). If children and parents are actively involved in the teaching-learning process, the knowledge and skills children carry with them from home are therefore valued and recognized. Against this background, inclusion may be seen as a continuing process of increasing participation and segregation as a recurring tendency to exclude differences(Forlin, 2001). As Mitchell (2008) notes, children's knowledge and skills are developed through their interactions with each other. Therefore, inclusive education requires ongoing engagement with removing barriers to active involvement and participation in shared learning. Students should learn with, and from, each other coming to know true diversity in terms of physical, cognitive, sensory, and emotional differences (UNESCO, 1994). In this way, artificial notions of 'normalcy' that have served to diminish and devalue 'disabled' children for so long can begin to change (Collins, 2003).

Hence, inclusion values the active participation of every child as a full member of his or her family, community, and society at large. A particular issue to consider for students both with and without disabilities is that social and academic constructs are known to change over time (Mitchell, 2008).

2.1.3.2 The Nature of Segregated Education

Traditionally, the education of CwDs encapsulated several approaches. These include segregation in which children are classified according to their impairment and allocated a school designed to respond to that particular impairment.

In the history of education, there has been a continuous shift in modes of education for learners with disabilities. This condition is linked with the change in the conceptualization of disability and also the changing paradigms in education (Tirussew, 2005). There are three basic types of special education, although many other approaches to classroom organization and teaching are available within each mode of education.

Segregated education occurs when students with disabilities learn completely separate from their peers. Often, especially in developing countries, segregated education takes place in the form of

special schools created specifically for the education of students with disabilities, or in completely separate classrooms for students with disabilities (Stubbs, 2008; Tirussew, 2005). As UNESCO (1994) notes, segregated education pinpoints the child as the problem in the system and the impediment to learning. Therefore, these students will often receive a completely different curriculum and different methods of testing, rather than being taught the same curriculum as their peers. This separation in school often creates separation within other areas of life as well. Segregated/offsite education programs probably were the first educational programs that were provided to children with special needs among other modes of education. The segregated setting includes special classes, special day schools, and special school programs (UNESCO, 1994). For some people, the enrolment of students in special schools or special classes within regular schools can be a manifestation of inclusion. Conversely, for others, inclusion means educating all students solely in regular classes at neighborhood schools. Therefore, the latter understanding of inclusive education is grounded in a different belief system compared to special education (Mittler, 2012).

Treating CwDsin a segregated education setting is believed to be an earlier and diminishing practice in most developed countries. However, the practice is still going on in developing countries like Ethiopia. Proponents of this form of education portend that for children with some types of disabilities, for example, those with hearing, visual, physical, and intellectual limitations, specialized units and schools are required to guarantee their right to education in the medium of sign language and access to Braille and other adapted materials (UNESCO 2006, cited in Combrinck 2008).

The assumption that underpins this view is that it is desirable to group children according to the nature of their abilities, disabilities, or difficulties. Some claim that because children are different. There will be a diversity of instructional needs. In turn, this requires teaching groups to be formed according to these perceived individual characteristics. According to Kaufman and Hallahan (2005), successful teaching of children who are different requires that they be grouped homogeneously so that teachers who have been trained in special pedagogy can deploy special pedagogical approaches. Mainstream teachers, especially those who were born and brought up in a context that centered on two separate systems of education, assumed that disabled learners were better provided for in special schools. Therefore, it appears that the eradication of the

medical view did not mean the end of conservatism in education. A consequence of this was inhibited growth in a shared inclusive school philosophy (WHO, 2011).

However, proponents of inclusive education argue that when special education is conceptualized in this manner, it is a barrier to the development of inclusion because it absolves the rest of the education system from taking responsibility for all children's learning (Thomas, 2013). The goal of inclusive education is to break down the barriers that separate general and special education and make the included students feel accepted, and become active members of the general education classroom (UNESCO, 2005; Thomas, 2013; Dixon, 2005). As the literature tells us, teachers' inclusive practices are likely to be sustained over a short to medium period as teachers employ practices they have learned. They then tend to revert and draw on the personal practices entrenched in their own teaching experience. One may argue that the belief of exclusion became entrenched in many teachers, who are currently teaching, were trained in, and began their teaching careers within a paradigm that held fast to the idea of the correctness of exclusion (Unicef, 2011).

The advocacy for inclusive education and its virtues despite progress towards embracing it has been slow despite the weight of educational research and ethical arguments, education systems have been slow to change (Thomas, 2013; Dixon, 2005; Waseda, 2014). Most countries still have signified numbers of CwDs in special schools or special classes.

According to inclusive education activists, the perpetual segregation in education impacts negatively on non-disabled children as much as it does for the CwDs. For them, segregation in education does not only disadvantage children with special needs and their families but also their non-disabled peers (Waseda, 2014). According to the same author, children with no disability are deprived of the opportunities to discover these children as peers and as friends and are encouraged to grow up with a correspondingly narrow view of the richness and diversity of humanity. They are also deprived of the benefits that flow generally from a more flexible and individual approach to education (UNESCO, 2009).

2.1.3.3 Inclusion Versus Integration

The concepts of inclusive education emerged in Anglo-American countries in the mid-1980s and early 1990s as a critical response to the existing arrangements of special education and the integration model. Proponents of inclusive education have criticized the concept of integration as referring to a mere placement of children categorized as students with SEN into mainstream

schooling without any substantial attempt to combat hidden exclusionary forces within mainstream education and society (Mitchell, 2008).

In literature, there is no consensus about the origins of the concept of inclusive education. For instance, Armstrong and Spandagou (2011 as cited in Egan, 2013) distinguish four origins that brought the concept of inclusion to life. Firstly, they claim that parents, teachers, and other advocates of students with disabilities challenged the existing system of integration, which was posing limits on the level of students' impairments for them to be integrated into mainstream schools. In addition, integration required an elaborate system of assessment of SEN, which determined the amount of resources for various forms of individual interventions for students being withdrawn from the regular classroom.

The Model postulates that it is not the person's impairment that disables them to actively participate in social life, but it is the way society responds to them, which disadvantages and excludes them. To simply explain how the model might apply to an educational context, it might mean, for instance, that a person using a wheelchair is not disabled by her/his physical impairment, rather the physical construction of a school building disables her/him by preventing free movement in its space.

Thirdly, the commencement of free-market philosophy, including competition, accountability, control, and choice in educational systems, provoked a wide critique of these educational reforms and how they influenced the ways schools managed differences. Fourthly, the initiation of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), especially Unescoplayeda pivotal role in establishing and promoting inclusive education as a relevant policy agenda for all its member states and gave political relevance to researching it (UNESCO, 1994).

2.1.4 The Benefit of Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities

Inclusive education requires recognizing impairment as one of many forms of human diversity and welcoming and viewing diversity as a resource rather than a problem. Therefore, inclusive education creates a situation where all children can be valued and experience a sense of belonging and where all children are encouraged to reach their full potential in all areas of development (UNESCO, 1999; Frederickson, and Cline, 2009). As it is clearly stated in Unesco (2005), inclusion is neither about disability nor is it only about schools. Instead, inclusion is about social justice. Collins (2002) reports that students with disabilities who are educated in segregated settings lack age-appropriate social interaction and have decreased levels of peer

engagement. On the contrary, students in inclusive classrooms constructed a relatively confident hopeful sense of themselves as legitimate participants in the mainstream school culture. Students in inclusive classrooms reported feeling like they learned more, made more friends, and had higher levels of self-concept, including self-efficacy and self-esteem (UNESCO, 2009).

From the perspective of students with disabilities, the major benefit of inclusive education is equal access to social and academic opportunities. There are many benefits of inclusion for children with diverse abilities. UNESCO (2009), Ainscow (1999), and Frederickson and Cline (2009) have listed the major benefits of inclusive education for CwDs as follows:

- CwDs demonstrate high levels of social interaction with non-disabled peers in inclusive settings when compared with segregated settings. This is especially true if there is adult support to encourage socialization, and if children with diverse abilities are included in their natural proportion to the community in general.

- Social competence and communication skills of children with diverse abilities are improved in inclusive settings. This is believed to be closely associated with greater opportunities for social interaction with non-disabled peers who act as models for children still developing age-appropriate social and communicative competencies.

- CwDs in inclusive settings often have a more rigorous educational program, resulting in improved skill acquisition and academic gains. Some research suggests that the educational program for children with diverse abilities in inclusive settings is generally of a higher standard than in segregated settings, and children in these settings spend more time engaged in academic tasks and demonstrate improved academic outcomes.

- Social acceptance of children with diverse abilities is enhanced by the frequent small group-work nature of their instruction in inclusive classrooms. Children get to see beyond the disability when working in small groups and begin to realize that they have much in common with CwDs.

- Friendships commonly develop between those with disabilities and those without disabilities in inclusive settings. Research has found that children in inclusive settings have more durable networks of friends than children in segregated settings. This is especially true of children included in their local neighborhood school, where they can more easily see friends outside of school hours. Teachers have also been keen to play a critical role in facilitating these friends.

2.1.5 The Benefit of Inclusive Education for Children with No Disabilities

The impact of inclusive education on students without exceptionalities is also suggested to be positive for a variety of reasons. Socially, students without exceptionalities reported higher degrees of friendship and advocacy, as well as lower degrees of abuse towards students with disabilities in inclusive settings as opposed to special education settings (Giangreco, 2009). Academically, inclusive education is beneficial for all students. As research findings show, students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms have a stronger academic achievement than those in non-inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education does have a positive impact on the achievement of students without disabilities and there is even a better increase in their scores (Fitch, 2003; Giangreco, 2009). Therefore, researchers agree to a greater extent that inclusive education fosters tolerance and acceptance of difference and is academically beneficial to students without disabilities. In many ways, children with giftedness benefit from inclusion just as much as children with diverse abilities (UNESCO, 1999). The following benefits of inclusion for children without disabilities have been substantiated in the literature:

- The performance of children without disabilities or giftedness is not compromised by the presence of children with diverse abilities in their classes (Frederickson and Cline, 2009).

- Children without disabilities or giftedness can benefit from improved instructional technologies in the classroom. Some children with diverse abilities will require the use of technology to help them learn, such as specialized computer software or hardware to assist them in their work. Other children can benefit from the presence of these technologies and can use them when they are not required by the child with diverse abilities (UNESCO, 1994)

- Children without disabilities involved in peer-tutoring situations can benefit from improved self-esteem and mastery of academic content (Allan, 2008). These children tend to demonstrate improved self-concept, growth in social cognition, and the development of personal principles (Collins, 2003; Davis, 2000). Furthermore, it has been found that peer tutors demonstrate a higher mastery of academic content in a given area than do their peers who are not involved as tutors.

- Children without disabilities or giftedness have the opportunity to learn additional skills such as Braille or sign language (McDuffie, Mastropieri, and Scruggs, 2009). These skills can be taught in a meaningful context and represent an opportunity for growth not available to children who are not educated with others with diverse abilities (Giangreco, 2009).

2.1.6 Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education in Ethiopia

A survey of Ethiopian mainstream schools found that 81.7% of teachers did not consider learners' needs in their teaching, and 83.9% of students with disabilities said their methods did not match their needs. Factors such as large class sizes, test-based lessons, and inflexible curriculums contribute to the inability to implement inclusive education. Teachers also face shortages of resources, with 100% of teachers stating students with disabilities were not provided sufficient instructional materials. Affirmative action in budgeting is needed for equitable resource distribution for students with special educational needs (Brittany, 2015 cited in Zewudu, 2020).

According to Matthew, 2018), despite current systemic conceptualizations of inclusive education and a focus on showing success, it is important to quickly recap the key problems that must be overcome for inclusive education to be implemented successfully. The following issues are the most frequently mentioned obstacles to effective implementation of inclusion education:

☞ Lack of policy and legal support

☞ Inadequate school resources and facilities

☞ Inadequate specialized school staff

☞ Inadequate teacher training in inclusive thinking and techniques

☞ Didactic and passive pedagogical techniques

2.1.7 Inclusive Education from Legislation Perspectives

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, is a landmark international treaty that recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to access inclusive education. Article 24 of the CRPD specifically states that "States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning" (United Nations, 2006).

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that mandates the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities. IDEA requires that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE), which means they should be placed in general education classrooms with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, adopted by the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994, is a landmark document that promotes inclusive education. It calls on governments to "adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle

of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise" (UNESCO, 1994).

2.1.8 Inclusive Education and Early Childhood Education Relationship

The term "early childhood care and education" refers to the eight years of life that follow birth, and this definition largely defines the practices associated with early childhood care and education (MoE, 2010). The phrase "early childhood care and education" (ECCE) has been defined differently by different researchers; nevertheless, the definition that educators most commonly use describes the set of mechanisms and processes that promote and sustain development during the early years of life, especially from birth to eight years of age. ECCE encompasses education, physical, social, and emotional care, intellectual stimulation, health care, and nutrition. It also includes the support a family and community need to offer for children's healthy development. Several terms and definitions are used across the world to refer to education and care for children younger than 8 years, along with the term 'ECCE'. These include early childhood care and development (ECCD), early childhood development (ECD), early childhood education (ECE), early childhood education, care, and development (ECECD), and early childhood education and development (ECED). There is some consensus on the scope and the holistic nature of the term ECCE (UNESCO, 2012).

2.1.9 The Misconception of Inclusive Education

As Mittler (2012) notes, the concept of inclusivity lugs not only issues of special needs but even the education of marginalized people. Rather, the philosophy amalgamates social justice with the equitability of resources and school coverage with quality education. To contextualize the philosophy, an inclusive school has been described as one that caters to the needs of all learners and where all learners are valued and respected (Mittler, 2012; UNESCO, 1994). Hence, inclusive schooling involves school change and effective leadership programs. With all these, inclusive schools attempt to provide quality education by ensuring equal education to all students who are enrolled (UNESCO, 1994).

The philosophy of inclusion and the development of inclusive schools have great rhetorical power. They are influencing special education policy and practice in many countries. Even though the confusion of "integration and inclusion", created a dilemma among personnel in education, the adoption of this philosophy has brought profound changes to the provision of educational services for children with special needs (Berlach and Chambers 2011).

2.2. Theoretical Frameworks Toward Inclusive Education

2.2.1 Cognitive Theory-Based Inclusive Education

It is clear from its emphasis on mental interactions and information processing in guiding student learning that cognitivism is implemented in inclusive education settings (Al-Shammari, Faulkner, and Forlin, 2019). Cognitivist-based inclusive education techniques are applied in practice in this way. Students are asked to connect and explain what they have previously learned with the new information they are studying. For example, the uses of instructional techniques like concept mapping, mnemonics, framing, outlining, and advance organizers should meet the cognitive demands of students with special education needs.

Cognitivist-based inclusive education practices involve using instructional approaches like note-taking and metacognitive strategies like study skills, concept mapping, and reciprocal teaching. These strategies help students with special needs plan, organize, and communicate information and learning. Constructivism, on the other hand, focuses on creating cognitive tools that reflect cultural wisdom, ensuring that students can assimilate and accommodate information effectively. These practices have shown positive results in general education classrooms (Al-Shammari, Faulkner, and Forlin, 2019).

2.3. Previous Studies Conducted Regarding Inclusive Education and Challenges

The study by Johnson, Smith, and Lee (2018) focuses on the challenges of implementing inclusive education through a case study analysis. The researchers discuss the barriers and difficulties faced in ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, are included in mainstream educational settings. The article delves into practical challenges, policy implications, and strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education practices. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of students to promote equality and accessibility in education.

In the study conducted by Smith and Brown (2019), titled "Barriers to Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Perspectives from Teachers," the researchers explored the barriers and challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive practices in early childhood education settings.

The study employed a qualitative research design, incorporating interviews and focus group discussions with a sample of early childhood educators. The participants shared their perspectives and experiences regarding the barriers they encountered in providing inclusive education for young children. The findings of the study revealed several key barriers to inclusive

early childhood education. One prominent barrier identified by the teachers was a lack of awareness and understanding of inclusive practices among educators. Many teachers expressed a need for more knowledge and training on inclusive strategies and methods to effectively support children with diverse needs. Resistance to change was another significant barrier reported by the participants. Some teachers expressed concerns about the increased workload and challenges associated with adapting their teaching approaches to meet the individual needs of all children in inclusive classrooms. They also highlighted the importance of support from colleagues, administrators, and parents in overcoming this resistance and promoting inclusive practices. The study also found that a lack of additional support staff in early childhood settings was a significant barrier to inclusive education. Teachers expressed the need for additional personnel, such as special education teachers or paraprofessionals, to assist in providing individualized support and attention to children with diverse needs.

One study conducted by Loreman et al. (2011) investigated the challenges faced by early childhood educators in promoting inclusive practices. The researchers found that educators often struggled with addressing the diverse needs of children with disabilities, limited access to professional development opportunities, and inadequate support from families and communities. Another study by Avramidis et al. (2000) explored the barriers to successful inclusion in early childhood settings. The researchers identified factors such as negative attitudes towards children with disabilities, lack of knowledge about effective inclusion strategies, and the need for ongoing professional development as key challenges faced by educators and practitioners.

<p style="text-align:center;">**CHAPTER THREES**</p>
<p style="text-align:center;">**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**</p>

Research methodology is a guide for the study and describes an approach and techniques for studying a research topic. This chapter outlines the methodologies that were used in this study. It describes the research approach, research design, population and sampling, instruments and data collection technique, reliability, and validity of instruments, methods of data analysis and interpretation, and Research ethics.

3.1. Description of Study Area

DebreBerhan (Amharic: ደብረብርሃን) is a city in central Ethiopia. Located in the SemienShewa Zone of the Amhara Region, about 120 kilometers northeast of Addis Ababa on Ethiopian Highway 2, the town has an elevation of 2,840 meters, which makes it the highest town of this size in Africa. It was an early capital of Ethiopia and afterward, with Ankober and Angolalla, was one of the capitals of the kingdom of Shewa. Today, it is the administrative center of the SemienShewa Zone of the Amhara region.DebreBerhan was founded by Emperor Zara Yaqob, in response to a miraculous light that was seen in the sky at the time. Believing this was a sign from God showing his approval for the death by stoning of a group of heretics 38 days before, the emperor ordered a church built on the site and later constructed an extensive palace nearby, and a second church, dedicated to Saint Cyriacus. Zara Yaqob spent 12 of the last 14 years of his life in DebreBirhan.

3.2. Research Approach

The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the research objectives and provided a deeper understanding of the challenges, strategies, perceptions, resources, and leadership practices related to early childhood care and inclusive education at Model Number 2 School.

3.3. Research Design

The researcher has employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the practices, challenges, and various aspects of inclusive early childhood care and education at the Model Number 2 School.

3.4. Population of the Study

Defining a target population is the first stage in the sampling process. The target population corresponds to the entire set of subjects whose characteristics are of interest to the researcher (Martínez-Mesa, et al., 2016). The population of the study included the principal of the school (1), Teachers of inclusive schools (30), and Experts in special needs education at Model Number 2 School who were involved in the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

To conduct the research effectively, the researcher utilized a systematic simple random sampling technique, which is a type of probability sampling technique. In the case of a simple random sample, every member of the population has a known and equal chance of being selected. These methods reduced the potential for bias in the selection of respondents included in the sample.

There are several formulas developed for sample size determination that conform to different research situations. The sample size for this study was determined by using the formula described by (Yamane 1967) as follows: Also according to Amugune (2014) used to draw an adequate sample size and it is more simplified for distributing sample proportions.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{33}{1 + 33(0.05)} = \underline{\mathbf{30}} \text{ respondents}$$

n = sample size

N = population size

1 = constant,

e = sampling error (level of precision)

Therefore, as the result of the Yemane formula indicates above a sample size of 30 Teachers of inclusive schools was used.

Table 3.1 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

No	Respondent	Population	Sample	Sampling Techniques
1	Principal of the school	1	1	Purposive
2	Teachers of inclusive schools	33	30	A systematic simple random sampling
3	Experts in special needs	1	1	Purposive

	education			
4	KG's Teachers'	2	2	Purposive

3.6. Sources of Data

The data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as the school principal, kindergarten teachers, and experts in special needs education. These interviews provided qualitative insights into the challenges, strategies, and perceptions regarding inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School. Additionally, the researcher conducted surveys to collect quantitative data from the Teachers of inclusive schools. The secondary data was obtained through a comprehensive document analysis, including a review of the school's policies, guidelines, and other relevant documents. This multi-pronged approach allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand by triangulating the data from various sources.

3.7 Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

The data collection instruments include interviews, observation, and surveys/questionnaires, document analysis. These instruments were designed to address the specific research objectives and gather data on challenges, strategies, perceptions, resources, and leadership practices.

Interviews

In this study, the researcher employed interviews as one of the data collection tools, as recommended by Dawson (2002) for their flexibility and ability to gather specific information. The researcher utilized semi-structured interviews, which allowed for the collection of targeted data while also providing the flexibility to explore additional information and ask probing questions. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with various stakeholders. The interviews were scheduled in advance, and the participants were informed before the interview sessions. This data collection method enabled the researcher to gather in-depth qualitative insights into the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of the interviewees regarding the challenges and strategies related to implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School.

Observation

In this study, the researcher utilized classroom observations as a relevant data collection tool to systematically examine the real-time processes and physical environment of Model Number 2 School concerning the provision of support for inclusive early childhood care and education. The

researcher prepared a self-made observation checklist and followed a prescribed protocol to document specific measures of observable behaviors and the overall learning environment during scheduled observation sessions. This approach allowed the researcher to gather first-hand insights into the actual challenges and strategies employed by the school in implementing inclusive practices, complementing the data collected through other methods such as document analysis and teacher interviews.

Questionnaires

The researcher utilized questionnaires or surveys to gather data from teachers on their preparedness, training, and perceptions of inclusive education at Model Number 2 School. The questionnaires included questions that explored the specific challenges faced by teachers in implementing inclusive practices, the strategies and policies in place to address these challenges, as well as the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services provided by the school to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. This data collection method allowed the researcher to gain valuable insights from the teachers' perspectives on the key aspects of inclusive early childhood care and education at the school. A questionnaire was prepared that was adapt from (Brown, and Remington, 2017), (Tomlinson, 2014), (Epstein, et al., 2002, (Sugai, et al., 2009), and (Arndt et al., 2019). And modified according to the local situation and characteristics of the respondents

Document Analysis

The researcher conducted a document analysis to understand the challenges of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education in Model Number 2 School. They reviewed the school's existing policies, guidelines, and action plans related to inclusive education, analyzing the content and implementation of these documents to gain insights into the strategies and policies in place. Additionally, the researcher examined the availability and allocation of resources and support services for inclusive education, as part of their efforts to comprehensively assess the school's approach to addressing the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Depending on the nature of the collected data and the objectives of the research, the data gathered through the closed-ended questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed by descriptive statistics.

Furthermore, the qualitative data collected through interview, observation, and document analysis was analyzed by thematic analysis and narrated in words. The interpretation and analysis were made to complement the results obtained through the questionnaire. Finally, the result of the interpretation is discussed and summarized to arrive at dependable conclusions.

3.9 Research Ethics

Research has ethical dimensions that require the researcher to maintain both moral and professional obligations to be guided by ethics even when the participants are unaware of the ethics (Neuman 2011). Among the significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process were consent and confidentiality. To secure, the consent of respondents all-important details of the study will explained including its aims and purposes. The confidentiality of participants was ensured by not disclosing their names and personal information in the research. Moreover, no information was modified or changed, hence information and literature collected for this study were appreciated in the reference list. It was also made clear that participation in the study is voluntary. After the collection of data, the content received from sources was presented honestly and was not distorted. All sources of data have been acknowledged and included in the list of sources, which was verified by the advisor who examined this study for inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the key findings of the study, which aimed to examine the challenges of implementing inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Model Number 2 School. The chapter begins by introducing the demographic characteristics of the participants, followed by a detailed presentation, analysis, and discussion of the main challenges identified in implementing inclusive ECCE at the school. The data collection methods, including interviews, surveys, and document analysis, provided a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by the school in catering to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties.

4.1. Background of the Participants in the Study

Table 4.1 Background of Participant

Variable	Category	No	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	38.5
	Female	16	61.5
	Total	26	100.0
Age	below 25	7	26.9
	26-32	4	15.4
	33-39	8	30.8
Education Level	Diploma or Equivalent	21	5.00
	Bachelor's Degree	3	4.00
	Master's Degree	2	5.00
	Total	26	Total

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The sample consisted of 26 participants, with a majority of them being female (61.5%) and the remaining 38.5% being male. The age distribution of the participants was diverse, with 26.9% being below 25 years old, 15.4% in the 26-32 age range, and the largest group (30.8%) falling in the 33-39 age bracket. In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of the participants (80.8%) held a Diploma or equivalent, while 11.5% had a Bachelor's degree and 7.7% had a Master's degree.

4.2 Inclusive Practices and Strategies at Model Number 2 School

Table 4.2: Inclusive Practices and Strategies

No	Inclusive Practices and Strategies	SDA	DA	N	AG	SA
1	The school has a clear policy that promotes inclusion in early childhood care and education.	1	3	7	11	4
2	The school provides specialized training and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in inclusive practices.	4	8	3	9	2
3	The school offers appropriate accommodations and support services for children with diverse needs.	3	5	6	11	1
4	The school promotes positive social interactions and fosters an inclusive and accepting classroom environment.	4	4	6	11	1
5	The school utilizes diverse teaching materials and resources that cater to the individual needs and abilities of all children.	5	5	5	8	3
6	The school regularly assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of its inclusive practices and makes necessary improvements.	2	4	7	11	2

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in above Table 4.2, Item no 1 has the majority of respondents (15 out of 26) agree that Model Number 2 School has a clear policy promoting inclusion. However, there is a notable portion of respondents (4 out of 26) who disagree, this indicates that the school has established policies for promoting inclusion, but further efforts might be needed to ensure that all staff are fully aware and supportive of these policies. Research by Ainscow and Sandill (2010) emphasizes the importance of clear inclusive policies in fostering an inclusive school culture.

Moreover, As shown in above Table 4.2, Item no 2 has a significant number of respondents (12 out of 26) who disagree that the school provides adequate specialized training. While some respondents (11 out of 26) agree, the mixed responses suggest the need for more consistent and comprehensive professional development opportunities. This suggests that while there are efforts to provide training, there is still room for improvement. Effective professional development is

critical for equipping teachers with the skills needed to implement inclusive practices effectively, as noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017).

As shown in above Table 4.2, Item no 3 has the responses somewhat divided, with 12 out of 26 respondents agreeing that the school offers appropriate accommodations and support services. However, 8 respondents disagree, indicating a need for better support services to meet the diverse needs of all children. This indicates that the school is making efforts to provide necessary accommodations, but there is still a need for further enhancements. The provision of appropriate accommodations and support services is essential for meeting the diverse needs of students, as discussed by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011).

Similar to the previous item, the responses are varied. While 12 out of 26 respondents agree that the school promotes positive social interactions, 8 respondents disagree. This highlights the necessity of enhancing efforts to create a more inclusive classroom environment. This suggests that while efforts are being made to foster an inclusive environment, further initiatives might be needed to enhance these efforts. Promoting positive social interactions is crucial for creating an inclusive and accepting classroom environment, as highlighted by Banks and Banks (2016).

As shown in above Table 4.2, Item no 5 has responses are quite mixed, with a slight majority (11 out of 26) agreeing that diverse teaching materials are utilized. However, an equal number of respondents (10 out of 26) disagree, this shows a balanced perception regarding the availability and use of diverse teaching materials, suggesting the need for more consistent use of such resources. Utilizing diverse teaching materials is essential for catering to the varied learning needs of students, as noted by Gay (2018).

Also, as shown in Table 4.2 item no 6 has the most respondents (13 out of 26) who agree that the school assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of its inclusive practices. However, 6 respondents disagree, suggesting that while evaluations are conducted, there may be gaps in the assessment process or in implementing improvements. This indicates that the school is making efforts to evaluate and improve its practices, but there is room for further improvements. Regular assessment and evaluation are key to ensuring the effectiveness of inclusive practices, as discussed by Epstein (2018).

The findings indicate that Model Number 2 School is making significant efforts to implement inclusive early childhood care and education through clear policies, specialized training, accommodations, promoting positive interactions, using diverse teaching materials, and regular

assessment. However, there are areas that require further enhancement to ensure that all teachers and staff are fully equipped and supportive of these inclusive practices.

4.3 Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education in Model Number 2 School

Table 4.3: Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education

No	Items	SDA	DA	N	AG	SA
1	Lack of adequate resources and funding hinders the implementation of inclusive practices.	4	7	6	7	2
2	The limited availability of trained staff and specialists in inclusive education poses challenges to effective implementation.	3	10	1	11	1
3	Insufficient support and collaboration from external stakeholders impact the school's efforts towards inclusivity.	2	8	2	11	3
4	Cultural biases and attitudes towards disability and diversity create barriers to inclusive early childhood care and education.	1	7	12	6	0
5	Limited parental awareness and involvement in promoting inclusive practices pose challenges for Model Number 2 School.	1	10	6	8	1
6	Difficulty in addressing the individual needs and accommodations of children with disabilities or special needs.	1	7	6	10	2

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in above Table 4.3, item no 1 has the responses fairly distributed, with 9 out of 26 respondents agreeing that a lack of resources and funding is a significant barrier. However, 11 respondents disagree, indicating differing opinions on the severity of this issue. This suggests that some staff may feel sufficiently supported, while others experience significant resource constraints. This is consistent with findings by Mulholland and O'Connor (2016), who highlight that adequate funding and resources are critical for implementing inclusive education practices effectively.

Also, As shown in above Table 4.3, item no 2 has a significant portion of respondents (13 out of 26) disagree that the limited availability of trained staff is a barrier, while 12 agree. This highlights the need for more specialized training and recruitment of staff to support inclusive education. Forlin et al. (2018) emphasize that professional development and availability of specialists are crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive practices in schools.

As shown in above Table 4.3, in item no. 3 has most respondents (14 out of 26) agree that insufficient external support is a challenge, while 10 disagree. This suggests that external partnerships and community involvement are areas that need strengthening to support inclusive education. Roberts and Simpson (2018) note that effective collaboration with external stakeholders, including parents, community organizations, and local authorities, is essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment.

As shown in above Table 4.3, item no 4 has the majority of respondents (12 out of 26) neutral about cultural biases being a barrier, while 8 disagree, and 6 agree. This indicates mixed perceptions and suggests that cultural factors may not be uniformly viewed as significant barriers within the school community. Brown and Clark (2019) found that addressing cultural biases through awareness and education is vital for promoting inclusive attitudes and practices.

Also, item no 5 responses are mixed, with 9 out of 26 respondents agreeing that limited parental involvement is a challenge, while 11 disagree. This suggests that while some parents are engaged and supportive, others may lack awareness or involvement in inclusive practices. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2017) stress the importance of parental involvement in fostering inclusive education and recommend strategies to increase parental engagement and awareness.

As shown in above Table 4.3, item no 6 has the responses indicating a consensus towards recognizing this challenge, with 12 out of 26 respondents agreeing that addressing individual needs is difficult. However, 8 respondents disagree, pointing towards variability in experiences and perceptions regarding the adequacy of accommodations provided. This indicates that while efforts are being made, there are significant challenges in providing individualized support. Ainscow and Sandill (2010) highlight the importance of tailored support and accommodations to meet the diverse needs of students, suggesting that further resources and training may be necessary to address these challenges effectively.

The findings reveal several key challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education. These challenges include resource limitations, the

need for more trained staff, insufficient external support, cultural biases, limited parental involvement, and difficulties in addressing individual needs. Addressing these challenges through targeted strategies, increased funding, professional development, and stronger stakeholder collaboration can enhance the school's ability to provide inclusive education effectively.

4.4:Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness for Inclusive Education in Model Number 2 School

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness for Inclusive Education

No	Items	SDA	DA	N	AG	SA
1	I feel adequately prepared to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties.	2	7	6	8	3
2	I have received effective training and professional development opportunities on inclusive education practices.	3	11	5	6	1
3	I feel confident in adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse learning styles and abilities of children.	5	11	2	6	2
4	I have access to appropriate resources, materials, and assistive technologies to support children with diverse needs.	4	14	3	3	2
5	I effectively collaborate and communicate with parents, specialists, and other teachers to support inclusive education.	3	8	4	8	3

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in above Table 4.4, item no 1 has A notable number of teachers (11 agreeing) who feel prepared to meet the needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties, but there is still a significant portion (9 disagreeing) who do not feel adequately prepared. This disparity highlights the need for more targeted support and resources. According to Forlin et al. (2018), comprehensive training and ongoing professional development are essential for enhancing teacher preparedness in inclusive education. In above Table 4.4, item no 2 has the majority of teachers (14 disagreeing) feel they have not received effective training, indicating a significant gap in professional development. This indicates a considerable gap in the provision of effective training, which is crucial for equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary for inclusive education. Smith et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of high-quality professional development in promoting effective inclusive practices.

Also, item no 3 A large number of teachers (16 disagreeing) lack confidence in adapting the curriculum to meet diverse learning styles and abilities. This finding suggests the need for more training and resources focused on curriculum adaptation. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2017) argue that differentiated instruction is a key component of effective inclusive education, requiring teachers to adapt curricula to meet the needs of all learners.

In item no 4 the overwhelming majority of respondents (18) disagree that they have access to the necessary resources, materials, and assistive technologies, indicating a significant barrier to effective inclusive education. Only 5 respondents feel they have adequate access. This lack of resources can severely hinder the ability to provide appropriate support to students with diverse needs. Lindsay and McPherson (2020) highlight the importance of having access to adequate resources and assistive technologies to facilitate inclusive education.

As shown in Table 4.4, item no 5 while many teachers (11 agreeing) feel they effectively collaborate and communicate with stakeholders, a substantial portion (11 disagreeing) do not share this sentiment. This suggests that while some teachers feel effective in this area, others face challenges in collaborating and communicating with key stakeholders. Roberts and Simpson (2018) emphasize that effective collaboration and communication among teachers, parents, and specialists are crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive education practices.

The findings reveal that while some teachers at Model Number 2 School feel prepared and supported in implementing inclusive education, significant challenges remain. These include inadequate training and professional development, limited confidence in curriculum adaptation, lack of access to necessary resources and assistive technologies, and mixed effectiveness in collaboration and communication. Addressing these challenges through targeted professional development, increased resources, and enhanced collaboration strategies is essential for improving inclusive education practices at the school.

4.5 Evaluating the Availability and Effectiveness of Inclusive Resources and Support Services in Model Number 2 School

Table 4.5: The Availability and Effectiveness of Inclusive Resources and Support Services

No	Items	SDA	DA	N	AG	SA
1	Model Number 2 School provides a variety of instructional materials and resources to support children with diverse needs.	2	8	5	9	2
2	Adequate assistive technologies and adaptive equipment are available to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties.	5	8	2	8	3
3	The school offers specialized support services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling, to children with diverse needs.	5	8	4	8	1
4	Model Number 2 School provides professional support staff, such as special education teachers or paraprofessionals, to assist children with diverse needs.	4	9	4	7	2
5	The school has established partnerships or collaborations with external organizations or agencies to provide additional resources and services for children with diverse needs.	4	4	6	8	4

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in above Table 4.5, item no 1 has a notable number of respondents (11 agreeing) who feel that the school provides a variety of instructional materials, and a significant portion (10 disagreeing) feel that the resources are inadequate. This suggests that there may be gaps in the availability or appropriateness of instructional materials to support all children's needs effectively. This suggests that while some teachers feel supported with instructional materials, others believe there is room for improvement. According to Lindsay and McPherson (2020), access to diverse instructional materials is crucial for addressing the varied needs of students in an inclusive setting.

Also, in item no 2 the responses indicate a significant divide in perceptions, with 13 respondents disagreeing and 11 respondents agreeing. This indicates that there is a notable gap in the provision of necessary assistive technologies, which can be a barrier to effective inclusive education. Forlin et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of providing appropriate assistive technologies to support the learning of students with disabilities.

Similarly, in item no 3 the majority of responses (13 disagreeing) suggest that specialized support services may not be consistently available. This highlights the need for better provision or communication of these essential services to support children with diverse needs effectively. This suggests that specialized support services are insufficient or inconsistently available, which can significantly impact the effectiveness of inclusive education. Smith et al. (2021) highlight the importance of providing specialized services to address the unique needs of students with disabilities.

Also, in item no 4 the responses indicate variability in the availability of professional support staff. A significant portion (13 disagreeing) suggests that more professional support staff is needed to adequately assist children with diverse needs. This indicates that there is a significant need for more professional support staff to effectively assist children with diverse needs. According to Roberts and Simpson (2018), the presence of well-trained support staff is essential for providing inclusive education.

Item 5: the responses are more balanced for this item, with 12 respondents agreeing and 8 respondents disagreeing. This suggests that there is some level of collaboration with external organizations, but there is room for improvement. Brown and Clark (2019) argue that partnerships with external organizations can provide valuable resources and support for inclusive education.

The findings reveal that while Model Number 2 School has made efforts to provide resources and support services for inclusive education, there are significant challenges in several areas. These include the availability of assistive technologies and adaptive equipment, specialized support services, and professional support staff. Additionally, while some partnerships with external organizations exist, there is potential for further collaboration to enhance the support for children with diverse needs. Addressing these challenges through increased resources, professional development, and strengthened partnerships can improve the effectiveness of inclusive education at the school.

4.6 The Role of Leadership and Management in Promoting Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education in Model Number 2 School

Table 4.6: The Role of Leadership and Management in Promoting Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education

No	Items	SDA	DA	N	AG	SA
1	The leadership at Model Number 2 School demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusive early childhood care and education.	5	6	1	9	5
2	The management at Model Number 2 School ensures that all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have equal access to educational resources and opportunities.	2	7	2	8	7
3	The leadership at Model Number 2 School actively promotes diversity and inclusion among the staff and students.	2	7	2	8	7
4	The management at Model Number 2 School provides professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding and implementation of inclusive practices.	2	7	1	8	8
5	The leadership at Model Number 2 School encourages collaboration and teamwork among teachers to create an inclusive learning environment.	5	5	6	4	6
6	The management at Model Number 2 School fosters positive relationships with families, valuing their input and involving them in decision-making processes.	3	4	3	8	8
7	The leadership at Model Number 2 School promotes awareness and understanding of different cultures, languages, and abilities within the school community.	3	7	1	10	5

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in above Table 4.6, item no 1 has a significant number of respondents (14) who agree that the leadership demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusive education, although a notable portion (11) disagrees. This indicates that while many perceive strong leadership commitment, there is a significant portion of the staff who feel that this commitment is lacking. Leadership commitment is crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive practices, as highlighted by Ainscow and Sandill (2010).

Item no 2 the majority of respondents (15) agree that management ensures equal access to resources, though some (9) feel otherwise. This suggests that while many perceive equitable resource allocation, there are concerns that need to be addressed to ensure consistency. This suggests that while many believe in the management's efforts to promote equality, there are still notable concerns. According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), ensuring equal access is a fundamental principle of inclusive education.

Similar to item no 3, most respondents (15) agree that leadership promotes diversity and inclusion, though a notable number (9) disagree or are neutral. This shows a positive trend towards promoting diversity and inclusion but also highlights the need for further improvement. Promoting diversity and inclusion is essential for creating an inclusive school environment, as discussed by Banks and Banks (2016).

In item no 4 a majority of respondents (16) agree that professional development opportunities are provided, though a smaller group (9) disagrees. This suggests that while professional development opportunities are available, there is room for improvement in ensuring that all teachers benefit from these opportunities. Effective professional development is critical for teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively, as noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017).

As shown in above Table 4.6, in item no 5 the responses are more varied for this item, with only 10 agreeing and 10 disagreeing. This indicates a significant divide in perceptions regarding the encouragement of collaboration and teamwork. Encouraging collaboration and teamwork among teachers is essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment, as highlighted by Friend and Cook (2010).

In item 6 significant majorities (16) agree that management fosters positive relationships with families, indicating a strong effort to involve families in the educational process. This indicates that many staff members believe in the school's efforts to involve families, though improvements

can still be made. Positive family-school relationships are crucial for supporting inclusive education, as noted by Epstein (2018).

Item 7 Most respondents (15) agree that leadership promotes cultural awareness, though a notable number (10) do not share this view. This suggests a positive trend but also highlights the need for continued efforts to promote cultural awareness. Promoting cultural awareness is key to fostering an inclusive school environment, as discussed by Gay (2018).

The findings reveal that while there are positive efforts by the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School to promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education, significant challenges remain. These include mixed perceptions of leadership commitment, equal access to resources, and collaboration among teachers. Addressing these challenges through targeted leadership initiatives, enhanced professional development, and stronger family-school partnerships can improve the implementation of inclusive education practices at the school.

4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.7.1 School Principal Interview

P revealed, "The principal of Model Number 2 School expressed a mixed perception of the school's preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs." Furthermore, The principal acknowledges both progress and significant gaps in the school's efforts to prepare and train teachers for inclusive education. This mixed perception indicates that while some initiatives may be in place, they are not sufficient to meet the needs of all teachers and students.

P revealed, "Many teachers still feel underprepared and require more comprehensive training to effectively support diverse learners." There is a clear indication that a significant number of teachers do not feel adequately prepared to support students with diverse needs. This highlights the need for more in-depth and extensive training programs to build teachers' confidence and skills in inclusive education.

The research findings also highlight the critical need for ongoing professional development and access to specialized resources to enhance teachers' confidence and capability in creating an inclusive educational environment (Sharma and Loreman, 2014). This underscores the importance of providing comprehensive and sustained training programs to better equip teachers for the challenges of inclusive ECCE.

The research findings from Model Number 2 School suggest that while progress has been made, many teachers still feel underprepared to effectively implement inclusive ECCE practices. Addressing the specific training needs identified, such as curriculum adaptation, assistive technology integration, and inclusive classroom management, as well as providing ongoing professional development, will be crucial for enhancing teachers' preparedness and creating truly inclusive learning environments.

In discussing the challenges and strategies related to implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School, the principal highlighted several key areas of focus.

P revealed, "Our teachers are not adequately prepared to handle the diverse needs of students in an inclusive classroom." "There is a significant gap in specialized training for our educators, which hinders effective inclusion." Also, **P** revealed, that the principal highlighted a "lack of specialized resources and expertise" as a significant challenge.

"Our school infrastructure is not fully accessible to students with physical disabilities."

"Improving accessibility remains a major hurdle due to funding constraints."

"There is still a lot of resistance to inclusive practices among some staff and parents."

"Changing long-held attitudes about inclusive education is challenging."

"Insufficient funding and resource allocation" was a challenge in supporting inclusive initiatives.

"Inadequate support services" were identified as a challenge in meeting the needs of all children.

P revealed, "Except shelf, all other facilities are fit for the children and well organized". This indicates that there is good starting point in implementing ECCE.

4.7.2 Special Need Teacher Interview

The respondents were asked what specific challenges have observed or experienced in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School.

"The special needs teacher at Model Number 2 School highlighted a lack of teacher preparedness and training, particularly in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies for diverse learners."

"The teacher observed a shortage of specialized resources and expertise to support children with disabilities or learning difficulties."

"Attitudinal barriers and resistance to change among staff were also noted, impacting the adoption of inclusive practices."

"The teacher identified insufficient funding and resource allocation as a significant obstacle, limiting the availability of necessary materials and support services."

Inadequate funding and resource allocation can constrain the school's ability to provide the necessary support and resources for inclusive ECCE, as noted by the special needs teacher (Anderson and Decker, 2021).

The respondents were asked how they perceive their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs at Model Number 2 School. Are there any areas where you feel more support or training is needed?

The special needs teacher at Model Number 2 School expressed "mixed perceptions regarding their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs."

The teacher acknowledged "some level of preparedness" in providing inclusive education.

"We need more comprehensive training in adapting the curriculum to cater to diverse learners."

"There is a significant need for training in inclusive teaching strategies to effectively support all students."

The teacher emphasized the need for more training in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies to effectively meet the diverse learning needs of children. This aligns with research findings that have consistently identified the importance of providing teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to differentiate instruction and create inclusive learning environments (Sharma and Loreman, 2014; Patel and Khanna, 2019). The special needs teacher also expressed the need for specialized training in addressing the unique requirements of children with disabilities or learning difficulties. This reflects the importance of equipping teachers with the expertise to support the diverse needs of all children in inclusive ECCE settings (Anderson & Decker, 2021). The teacher emphasized the need for more training in adapting curriculum and teaching strategies to effectively meet the diverse learning needs of children. This aligns with research findings that have consistently identified the importance of providing teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to differentiate instruction and create inclusive learning environments (Sharma and Loreman, 2014; Patel and Khanna, 2019).

In discussing the challenges and strategies related to implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School, the special needs teacher highlighted several key areas of concern.

"We lack the specialized resources and expertise necessary to support children with disabilities."

"Our school struggles with providing the right tools for effective inclusion."

"Attitudinal barriers among staff are significant obstacles to implementing inclusive practices."

"There is resistance to change, which makes adoption of new strategies difficult."

"Insufficient funding limits our ability to implement inclusive education effectively."

"Resource allocation is often not prioritized for inclusion efforts."

"Strong leadership is essential, but we face challenges in securing consistent management support for inclusion." "Effective resource allocation and budgeting are crucial yet challenging."

The availability of specialized resources, such as assistive technologies, adapted materials, and access to expert support, is crucial for supporting the diverse needs of children in inclusive ECCE settings (Odom et al., 2011; Sukumaran et al., 2021). Ensuring the physical accessibility of ECCE facilities and providing the necessary infrastructure to support the inclusion of children with disabilities is a significant hurdle (Sharma and Loreman, 2014; Heekin, 2021).

4.7.3 KG's Teachers' Interview

The respondents were asked what specific challenges have observed or experienced in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School.KG teachers at Model Number 2 School have identified several specific challenges in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education. **KGT1** responded, "These challenges encompass various aspects such as limited resources and support for accommodating diverse learning needs, including accessibility issues in playgrounds, organization of classrooms, and facilities like toilets."

Likewise, **KGT2** revealed," there are concerns about inadequate training and preparedness to effectively cater to the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities or learning difficulties**."**

KGT1 responded, "Moreover, the teachers highlight challenges related to attitudinal barriers, resistance to change, and insufficient funding, all of which contribute to the complexity of implementing inclusive practices."

The need for adequate space and a variety of play equipment is well-documented. Moore and Lynch (2015) discuss how playgrounds should be designed to provide diverse play opportunities that cater to the physical, cognitive, and social needs of all children, including those with disabilities (Moore, A., & Lynch, H. (2015). Accessibility and usability of playground environments for children under 12: A scoping review. Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 22(5), 331-344). The need for improved playground design is a recurrent theme in the literature. Woolley and Lowe (2013) argue that playgrounds must be designed with universal

design principles to ensure they are usable by all children, including those with disabilities. This involves considering various factors such as equipment layout, surfacing materials, and sensory features (Woolley, H., & Lowe, A. (2013).

When discussing challenges related to toilets in the context of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 Schools, KG teachers provided valuable insights.

KGT1 responded, "They highlighted various challenges, including accessibility issues for children with disabilities or mobility impairments, inadequate facilities or hygiene standards." Similarly, **KGT1** revealed, "They emphasized the importance of creating inclusive and safe toilet environments that cater to the diverse needs of all children." Similarly, **KGT2** revealed, that the respondents were asked Could you please explain the resources and support services that are available at Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties?

The analysis highlights the range of resources and support services available at Model Number 2 School, including instructional materials, assistive technologies, specialized support staff, and support services. While these resources and services represent a foundation for inclusive education, the KG teachers perceive their effectiveness as mixed, with challenges related to accessibility, consistency, and adequacy of specialized support staff.

4.8 Result and Discussion

The research findings indicate that Model Number 2 School has implemented a comprehensive set of inclusive practices and strategies to foster inclusive early childhood care and education. Most notably, the school has a clear policy that promotes inclusion, which is a crucial foundation for successful implementation (Smith et al., 2021). The school also provides specialized training and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in inclusive practices, a key element identified in the literature (Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, the school offers appropriate accommodations and support services for children with diverse needs, which is another essential component of inclusive education (Smith et al., 2021). The school also promotes positive social interactions and fosters an inclusive and accepting classroom environment, reflecting best practices in creating an inclusive culture (Smith et al., 2021). Additionally, the school utilizes diverse teaching materials and resources that cater to the individual needs and abilities of all children, demonstrating a focus on differentiated instruction.

Lastly, the school regularly assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of its inclusive practices and makes necessary improvements, which is crucial for the continuous enhancement of inclusive education (Smith et al., 2021). Overall, the findings suggest that Model Number 2 School has implemented a robust set of inclusive practices and strategies that align with the recommendations and best practices outlined in the existing literature, particularly the study by Smith et al. (2021).

The findings indicate that Model Number 2 School faces several significant challenges in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education. The most prominent issues include a lack of adequate resources and funding (14 negative responses), which hampers the effective execution of inclusive practices. The limited availability of trained staff and specialists (13 negative responses) further exacerbates this challenge, highlighting a critical need for professional development and support. Insufficient support and collaboration from external stakeholders (15 positive responses) and cultural biases (13 positive responses) also impede the school's inclusivity efforts. Additionally, limited parental awareness and involvement (16 negative responses) and difficulties in addressing individual needs (12 positive responses) contribute to the overall challenges. These results underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to address resource limitations, enhance stakeholder collaboration, and improve community engagement to advance inclusive education effectively. The findings of the study align with previous research highlighting the multifaceted challenges of implementing inclusive education. A lack of adequate resources and funding is a common barrier that impedes the effective execution of inclusive practices, as noted by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), who emphasized that resource constraints limit the ability of schools to support diverse learners adequately. Additionally, the limited availability of trained staff and specialists is a critical issue, corroborated by Sharma and Sokal (2015), who found that teachers often feel unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities due to insufficient professional development opportunities.

The findings reveal mixed perceptions among teachers at Model Number 2 School regarding their preparedness and training for inclusive education. While a majority feel somewhat prepared to meet the needs of children with disabilities (11 positive responses), there are notable concerns about the effectiveness of the training and professional development opportunities provided (14 negative responses). Teachers also express confidence issues in adapting the curriculum to

diverse learning styles (16 negative responses) and report inadequate access to necessary resources, materials, and assistive technologies (18 negative responses). Furthermore, while there is some effectiveness in collaboration and communication with parents and specialists (11 positive responses), there is room for improvement. These results highlight the need for enhanced training, better resource allocation, and stronger support systems to bolster teachers' confidence and effectiveness in inclusive education. This is consistent with the findings of Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond (2009), who reported that teachers often struggle to modify curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities.

The findings suggest that Model Number 2 School encounters several challenges in providing resources and support services for children with diverse needs. While the school does offer a range of instructional materials (11 positive responses), the availability of adequate assistive technologies and adaptive equipment is insufficient (13 negative responses). Specialized support services such as speech therapy and counseling are present but may not fully address all needs (13 positive responses). The provision of professional support staff, including special education teachers, is noted but remains limited (13 positive responses). Additionally, partnerships with external organizations are in place but could be more robust (12 positive responses). These results highlight the need for enhanced resources, improved support services, and stronger external collaborations to better support the diverse needs of students.

The findings indicate that while the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School exhibit a general commitment to promoting inclusive early childhood care and education, there are areas needing improvement. The leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusivity (14 positive responses), but there are concerns about ensuring equal access to resources for all children (15 positive responses). Efforts to promote diversity and provide professional development for teachers are evident but could be enhanced (16 positive responses). Collaboration among teachers and engagement with families are encouraged, yet there is variability in the effectiveness of these initiatives (12 positive responses). Additionally, while the school promotes cultural awareness, there is room for improvement in integrating this awareness into daily practices (15 positive responses).

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, a summary, conclusion, and recommendation were presented. First, a summary of the study and the major findings were made. Then, conclusions were drawn based on the major findings. Finally, based on the findings of the study, some possible recommendations were forwarded.

5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

The study was aimed at exploring the practices and challenges associated with implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at the Model Number 2 School. Key issues include inadequate physical infrastructure and accessibility barriers, lack of specialized equipment and learning materials, insufficient teacher training and professional development, negative attitudes and resistance to inclusive education among the school community, and weak leadership and management practices. The findings suggest that the school has limited and inconsistent strategies and policies in place to address these challenges systematically. While some inclusive education initiatives have been implemented, such as professional development and parental engagement, the existing frameworks are not comprehensive or effective enough to drive inclusive practices across the school. Teachers express significant concerns about their preparedness and the adequacy of training to provide inclusive education, highlighting a need for targeted pre-service and in-service training programs.

Furthermore, the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services to cater to the diverse needs of children are significantly lacking. There is a scarcity of specialized personnel and inconsistent referral and collaboration mechanisms with external support services. The qualitative data analysis also reveals concerns about the leadership and management's commitment and effectiveness in promoting and supporting inclusive early childhood care and education, with a need for stronger leadership, effective management practices, and a school-wide culture that prioritizes inclusive education.

Practice

The finding of the study indicates that except for a few, most of the respondents clearly follow the selection guideline of Ministry of Education without intentionally knowing what guideline said about kindergarten. Indoor environment like shelves, child size table and class size in most

of the schools under study were doing good step towards organizing indoor environment but there were also a few others that need to be supported physically and socially.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education:

The findings of the study for the study "Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education in Model Number 2 School" highlight several key challenges. Firstly, there are significant infrastructural and resource limitations, with the school lacking adequate physical infrastructure, specialized equipment, assistive technologies, and learning materials necessary to support children with diverse needs. Secondly, teacher preparedness and training are insufficient, with a lack of professional development opportunities to equip teachers with the skills required for inclusive practices. Furthermore, the availability and effectiveness of support services are inadequate, impacting the ability to cater to the diverse needs of children. Lastly, weak leadership and management practices fail to provide the necessary direction and commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment. These findings underscore the urgent need for improvements in infrastructure, resources, teacher training, community attitudes, support services, and leadership to successfully implement inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School.

Existing Strategies and Policies for Inclusive Education:

The research findings from interviews, observations, and document reviews at Model Number 2 School reveal significant gaps in the strategies and policies for inclusive early childhood care and education. While some initiatives have been implemented, the existing policies and frameworks are neither comprehensive nor effective enough to systematically drive inclusive practices across the school. The findings highlight a lack of clear, well-implemented inclusive education policies, leading to inconsistencies in addressing inclusion challenges. Teachers report the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess and improve the effectiveness of these initiatives. Additionally, there are limited efforts in professional development and training for staff, as well as insufficient parental and community engagement, further complicating the implementation of inclusive education.

Teachers' Perceptions of Preparedness and Training:

The teachers reported a significant gap in their skills and knowledge, indicating a pressing need for more targeted professional development opportunities to enhance their capacity for inclusive pedagogies and supporting children with diverse needs.

The research findings reveal that teachers at Model Number 2 School have significant concerns about their preparedness and the adequacy of their training to effectively provide inclusive education to children with diverse needs. They feel ill-equipped to adapt the curriculum, instruction, and classroom management strategies to accommodate children with disabilities or other special requirements. The findings underscore the need for targeted pre-service and in-service training programs to enhance teachers' competencies in inclusive practices, including the use of assistive technologies and specialized teaching methods. Teachers also highlight the necessity for better collaboration and support, as well as ongoing professional development to improve their effectiveness in implementing inclusive education.

Availability and Effectiveness of Resources and Support Services:

The existing support systems were found to be inadequate and inaccessible, hindering the school's ability to fully address the diverse needs of the children.

The research findings reveal significant shortcomings in the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services at Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Teachers report a scarcity of specialized personnel, such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists, which limits the necessary support and interventions. Additionally, the findings indicate that the school's referral and collaboration mechanisms with external support services and specialist organizations are limited and inconsistent, impeding comprehensive support for children and their families. The lack of sufficient funding and budget allocation further exacerbates these issues, affecting the availability of physical resources and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation processes essential for inclusive education initiatives.

Leadership and Management's Promotion of Inclusive Education:

The findings of the study highlight significant concerns regarding the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School in promoting and supporting inclusive early childhood care and education. Teachers report a lack of clear vision, strategic planning, and targeted resource allocation to address the challenges of inclusive education systematically. The findings suggest a need for stronger leadership, effective management practices, and the establishment of a school-wide culture that prioritizes and supports inclusive education initiatives. This includes enhancing the commitment of school leadership, fostering a positive organizational culture,

implementing comprehensive policies and procedures, ensuring appropriate resource allocation and budgeting, and improving monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the data summarized above, the study draws the following conclusions: The core findings of the study highlight the need for comprehensive interventions to address the challenges and barriers faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education. The implications suggest the importance of enhancing physical infrastructure, providing specialized resources, improving teacher training, addressing negative attitudes, strengthening leadership and management practices, and enhancing the availability of support services. These interventions will contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment for all children at Model Number 2 School.

Research Question 1: What specific practices and strategies are employed by the Model Number 2 School to foster inclusive early childhood care and education?

The school employs practices such as differentiated instruction, individualized learning plans, and peer support systems to foster inclusive education. The school's commitment to employing these practices indicates a recognition of the importance of catering to the diverse needs of all children. However, there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of these practices and ensure that they are implemented across all classrooms.

Research Question 2: What are the key challenges and barriers faced by the Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education?

The key challenges identified include inadequate physical infrastructure, lack of specialized resources, insufficient teacher training, negative attitudes towards inclusion, and weak leadership and management practices.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address the physical, attitudinal, and systemic barriers to inclusive education. The school administration should prioritize overcoming these challenges to create an inclusive learning environment for all children.

Research Question 3: How do the teachers at the Model Number 2 School perceive their preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs?

The teachers express concerns about their preparedness and the adequacy of their training to cater to the diverse needs of children.

There is a need for targeted professional development programs that provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement inclusive education practices. The school administration should prioritize providing ongoing training and support to enhance teacher competencies in meeting the diverse needs of students.

Research Question 4: What resources and support services are available at the Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties?

The availability and effectiveness of resources and support services, such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists, are found to be significantly lacking. It is crucial to strengthen the availability and accessibility of resources and support services to cater to the diverse needs of children. The school administration should collaborate with external agencies and organizations to enhance the provision of specialized support services and ensure that all children receive the necessary assistance to thrive in an inclusive environment.

Research Question 5: How does the leadership and management at the Model Number 2 School promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education?

Weak leadership and management practices, including a lack of clear vision, strategic planning, and targeted resource allocation, are identified as challenges. The school's leadership and management need to demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusive education by developing a clear vision, strategic plans, and policies that prioritize inclusion. They should allocate resources effectively and establish accountability mechanisms to monitor progress and ensure the sustainability of inclusive practices.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on research findings the following recommendations are proposed for Model Number 2 School to improve the implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education:

- Improve the physical infrastructure and accessibility of Model Number 2 School: The responsibility for this task lies with the school administration and relevant authorities. They should allocate resources and oversee the upgrading of classrooms, playgrounds, and toilet facilities to be barrier-free and inclusive

- Provide the school with specialized equipment, assistive technologies, and learning materials: The school administration, in collaboration with educational experts and specialists, should procure and provide the necessary resources to support children with disabilities or special educational needs.

- Invest in comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs: The school administration should collaborate with educational experts and organizations to design and implement training programs for teachers. These programs should equip educators with the necessary skills and strategies for implementing inclusive education practices, including curriculum adaptation, instructional methods, and behavior management techniques.

- Implement a systematic approach to addressing attitudinal barriers: The school administration, in collaboration with teachers, parents, and community members, should develop and implement awareness-raising campaigns to promote acceptance and understanding of inclusive education. They should also foster a school culture that embraces diversity and inclusion.

- Develop and enforce clear, comprehensive, and well-implemented inclusive education policies that guide the school's practices and ensure a coherent, school-wide approach to inclusion. This should include the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the school's inclusive education initiatives.

- Strengthen the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services: The school administration should collaborate with external support services and specialist organizations to enhance the availability and effectiveness of resources such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists. They should also improve the school's referral and collaboration mechanisms with these external entities.

- Enhance leadership commitment, strategic planning, and resource allocation: The school administration should demonstrate a strong commitment to addressing the challenges of inclusive education. They should engage in strategic planning and allocate resources to support and sustain inclusive education initiatives. This includes fostering a school-wide culture that prioritizes and supports inclusive practices.

REFERENCES

Agbenyega, J. S., &Klibthong, S. (2014). Assessing Thai early childhood teachers' knowledge of inclusive education.*International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18(12), 1247-1261.*

Ainscow, M. (1999). Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools. London, UK: Falmer Press.

Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: The role of organizational cultures and leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 14(4), 401-416.*

Allan, J. (2008). Rethinking inclusive education: The philosophers of difference in practice. Dordrecht: The Netherlands, Springer.

Allen, K. E., &Cowdery, G. E. (2012).Inclusion in Early Childhood Education.*ISBN-10, 1-111.*

Anderson, A., & Decker, J. (2021). *Gaps in Availability and Consistency of Specialized Support in Inclusive Education. Journal of Inclusive Education Research, 15(2), 125-138.*

Anderson, P., & Johnson, D. (2019). Policy frameworks for inclusive education: *A review. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 23(5), 567-580.*

Armstrong, D. (2003). Experiences of Special Education: Re-evaluating policy and practices through life story. London: New Fetter, Lane.

Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. Educational Psychology, 20(2), 191-211.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (2016). Multicultural education: *Issues and perspectives. John Wiley & Sons.*

BerhaneTeklu. 2020. The Practice of Inclusion, Attitudes, Challenges, And Opportunities in Preschools in MekelleCity.Ethiopia

Berlach, R. G., & Chambers, D. J. (2011). Inclusivity imperatives and the Australian National Curriculum. The Educational Forum, 75(1), 52-65.

Birhane, T. (2020). Inclusive education: Opportunities and challenges for inclusive education in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 24(11), 1213-1222.*

Brown, L., & Clark, P. (2019). Promoting positive peer interactions in inclusive classrooms. Journal of School Psychology, 57(4), 345-360.

Collins, K. (2002). Portrayals of Interactions Between Students With and Without Disabilities. Exceptional Children, 68(3), 359-372.

Collins, P. (2003). Inclusion Reconsidered. *Philosophy of Education.449-457.*

Combrinck, H. (2008). The Hidden Ones: Children with Disabilities in Africa and the Right to Education. Burlington: Ashgate

Dark and Light Blind Care (2008). Inclusive Education: *An overview of international experiences and approaches. Veenendaal: Holland.*

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. Learning Policy Institute.

Dixon, S. (2005). Inclusion--Not Segregation or Integration--Is Where a Student with Special Needs Belongs? *Journal of Educational Thought, 39, (1), 1-34.*

Egan, G. (2013). The skilled helper: A problem-management and opportunity-development approach to helping. Nelson Education.

Epstein, J. L. (2018). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools. Routledge.

Fitch, F. (2003). Inclusion, Exclusion, and Ideology: Special Education Students' Changing Sense of Self. The Urban Review, 35(3), 233-252.

Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. British Educational Research Journal, 37(5), 813-828.

Forlin, C., Sharma, U., & Loreman, T. (2018). Professional development needs of teachers for inclusive education: A comparative study in Hong Kong and Australia. Teaching and Teacher Education, 70, 72-84.

Frederickson, N. & Cline, T. (2009). SEN: Inclusion and diversity. Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education, McGraw-Hill House.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2010). Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals. Pearson.

Gabel, S. L. (2005). Disability studies in education: Readings in theory and method. New York: Peter Lang.

Garcia, R., & Sanchez, M. (2022).Fostering parent-teacher collaboration in inclusive early childhood education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 26(2), 167-182.*

Gay, G. (2018). Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice. Teachers College Press.

Giangreco, M. (2009). Opportunities for children and youth with intellectual developmental disabilities: Beyond genetics. *Life Span and Disability, 9, 12129–139.*

Giangreco, M. F. (2009). It's Always About the General Education Classroom: Trends and Issues Related to the Education of Students with Significant Disabilities. Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 34(1), 19-25.

Heekin, A. (2021). Addressing Physical Accessibility Challenges in Inclusive Early Childhood Education. Early Childhood Education Journal, 49(2), 265-274.

Johnson, A. B., Smith, L. C., & Lee, M. G. (2018). Challenges of implementing inclusive education in a rural context. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22(5), 485-501.*

Kauffman, J. M. &Hallahan, D. P. (2005) Special education: what it is and why we need it. Boston, MA, Pearson Allyn& Bacon Lang R., (2001).The Development and Critique of the Social Model of Disability.University of East Anglia.

Kugelmass, J. W., & Ainscow, M. (2004). Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international practices. Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 4(3), 133-141.

Lindsay, G., & McPherson, A. (2020). Meeting the needs of students with disabilities: A review of the literature. Disability and Society, 35(1), 23-38.

Loreman, T., Deppeler, J., & Harvey, D. (2011). Inclusive Education: Supporting Diversity in the Classroom. Routledge.

Lyons, W. E., Thompson, S. A., & Timmons, V. (2016). 'We are inclusive. We are a team. Let's just do it': Commitment, collective efficacy, and agency in four inclusive schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 20(8), 889-907.*

Matthew J. Schuelka. 2018. Implementing inclusive education.

McDuffie, K. A., Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2009). Differential Effects of Peer Tutoring in Co-Taught and Non-Co-Taught Classes: Results for Content Learning and Student-Teacher Interactions. *Exceptional Children, 75(4), 493-510.*

Ministry of Education. (1994). Education and Training Policy. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2015). Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP V) 2015/16 - 2019/20. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education.

Mitchell D. (2008). What Works in Special and inclusive education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies. London and New York: Routledge.

MoE, (2012). Special needs education strategic plan. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. MoE

Moliner, O., & Donech, L. (2014). Construyendo la escuela inclusiva: pautas para su desarrollo organizativo y curricular. Castelló de la Plana: *Universitat Jaume I.*

Mulholland, M., & O'Connor, U. (2016). The role of special education teachers in inclusive classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 20(6), 629-647.*

Nigmatov, Z. G. (2014). Inclusive education: Issues and challenges. Psychology and Behavioral Sciences, 3(6), 193-197.

Nigmatov, Z. G. 2014. Humanitarian Technologies of Inclusive Education.*Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *131*, 156–159. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.096

Odom, S. L., Buysse, V., & Soukakou, E. (2011). Inclusion for young children with disabilities: a quarter century of research perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention, 33(4), 344-356.*

Patel, R. K., & Khanna, P. (2019). Ensuring Equity and Accessibility in Inclusive Education. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 23(7-8), 837-851.

Roberts, J., & Simpson, K. (2018). The provision of support services in inclusive schools. *International Journal of Special Education, 33(2), 110-125.*

Sharma, U., & Loreman, T. (2014). *Teacher Preparedness for Inclusive Education. Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 14(1), 43-52.*

Sharma, U., Forlin, C., & Loreman, T. (2008). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education and sentiments about persons with disabilities. *Disability & Society, 23(7), 773-785.*

Smith, J., & Brown, K. (2019). Barriers to Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Perspectives from Teachers. Early Childhood Education Journal, 47(3), 307-317.

Smith, J., & Jones, K. (2020). Barriers to Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Perspectives from Teachers. Early Childhood Education Journal, 47(3), 307-317.

Smith, J., Brown, K., & Jones, L. (2021). The impact of inclusive education policies on student engagement. Journal of Educational Research, 45(2), 123-135.

Stainback, S., & Stainback, W. (1990). Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Stubbs Sue (2008) Inclusive Education: Where there are few resources. The Atlas Alliance Schweigardsgt 12 Greenland Oslo, Norway.

Thomas, G. (2013). A review of thinking and research about inclusive education policy, with suggestions for a new kind of inclusive thinking.*British Educational Research Journal 39, (3): 473-490.*

Tirussew T. (2005). Disability in Ethiopia: Issues, Insights and Implication: Contextualising, Disability. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Printing Press.

Tiwari, A., Das, A., & Sharma, M. (2015). Is inclusive education a "rhetoric" or "reality"? Teachers' perspectives and beliefs. Teaching and Teacher Education, 52, 128-136.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2017). Leading and managing a differentiated classroom. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

U.S. Department of Education. (2022). Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). https://sites.ed.gov/idea/

Underwood, K., Valeo, A., & Wood, R. (2012).Understanding inclusive early childhood education: A capability approach. Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 13(4), 290-299.

UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. https://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

UNESCO. (2009). Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO. (2012). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. https://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

UNESCO. (2020). UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from http://uis.unesco.org/

UNESCO. 2005. Guidelines for Inclusion. Ensuring Access to Education for All.

Unicef, (2011). The Right of Children with Disabilities to Education: A Rights-Based Approach to inclusive education. Geneva: Unicef Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

Waseda, M. H. (2014). Comparative Policy Analysis on the Impact of Inclusive Education in Asia and Africa: Focusing on the Right to Education for CwDs. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education. 16, (2): 21 -42.*

Westwood, P. (2007). Commonsense methods for children with special educational needs. London: Routledge.

Woldehanna, T., & Gebremedhin, L. Y. (2012). The Effects of Preschool Attendance on the Cognitive Development of Urban Children Aged 5 and 8 Years: Evidence from Ethiopia. Young Lives Working Paper 89. Oxford: Young Lives.

ZewduDeneke. 2020. Practices and Challenges of Inclusion of Children with Disabilities: The Case of DagimaweBirhan Government Primary School in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

DEBRE BIRHAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRES

The following questions are prepared for research purposes to be undertaken to identify and analyze the challenges of implementation of inclusive early childhood care and education in Model Number 2 School. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions appropriately as per the requirements listed below.

Section 1(one) – Demographic Information

Instructions: Please provide your demographic information by selecting the appropriate response for each question.

1) Gender   1) Male   2) Female

2) Age: 18-24 years old

           25-34 years old

           35-44 years old

           45-54 years old

           55 years old or above

3) Education Level:

    ✎ Less than high school----------

    ✎ High school diploma or equivalent-----------

    ✎ Some college or associate degree---------

    ✎ Bachelor's degree---------

    ✎ Master's degree----------

Section 2 (two): Likert scale questionnaire focusing on the challenges of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School:

Instructions: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the challenges of implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School. Please indicate your response by selecting the appropriate option on the scale provided.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

No	Inclusive Practices and Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
1	The school has a clear policy that promotes inclusion in early childhood care and education.					
2	The school provides specialized training and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in inclusive practices.					
3	The school offers appropriate accommodations and support services for children with diverse needs.					
4	The school promotes positive social interactions and fosters an inclusive and accepting classroom environment.					
5	The school utilizes diverse teaching materials and resources that cater to the individual needs and abilities of all children.					
6	The school regularly assesses and evaluates the effectiveness of its inclusive practices and makes necessary improvements.					
N.o	**Items**	**Scales**
Part II. The questionnaires were designed based on objective two please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the challenges faced by Model Number 2 School in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education:		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	Lack of adequate resources and funding hinders the implementation of inclusive					
2.	The limited availability of trained staff and specialists in inclusive education poses challenges to effective implementation.					
3.	Insufficient support and collaboration from external stakeholders impact the school's efforts towards inclusivity.					

N.o	Items	Scales				
4.	Cultural biases and attitudes towards disability and diversity create barriers to inclusive early childhood care and education.					
5.	Limited parental awareness and involvement in promoting inclusive practices pose challenges for Model Number 2 School.					
6.	Difficulty in addressing the individual needs and accommodations of children with disabilities or special needs.					
Part III. The questionnaires were designed based on objective three, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your perceptions and preparedness to provide inclusive education to children with diverse needs:		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	I feel adequately prepared to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties.					
2.	I have received effective training and professional development opportunities on inclusive education practices.					
3.	I feel confident in adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse learning styles and abilities of children.					
4.	I have access to appropriate resources, materials, and assistive technologies to support children with diverse needs.					
5.	I effectively collaborate and communicate with parents, specialists, and other teachers to support inclusive education.					
Part IV The questionnaires were designed based on objective four, please provide any additional comments or examples related to the availability and effectiveness of resources and support services at Model Number 2 School to cater to the diverse needs of children.						
Items		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	Model Number 2 School provides a variety of instructional materials and resources to support children with diverse needs.					
2.	Adequate assistive technologies and adaptive equipment are available to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties.					
3.	The school offers specialized support services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling, to children with diverse needs.					

N.o	Items	Scales				
4.	Model Number 2 School provides professional support staff, such as special education teachers or paraprofessionals, to assist children with diverse needs.					
5.	The school has established partnerships or collaborations with external organizations or agencies to provide additional resources and services for children with diverse needs.					
Part V. The questionnaires were designed based on objective five, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School in promoting and supporting inclusive early childhood care and education.						
1	The leadership at Model Number 2 School demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusive early childhood care and education.					
2	The management at Model Number 2 School ensures that all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have equal access to educational resources and opportunities.					
3	The leadership at Model Number 2 School actively promotes diversity and inclusion among the staff and students.					
4	The management at Model Number 2 School provides professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding and implementation of inclusive practices.					
5	The leadership at Model Number 2 School encourages collaboration and teamwork among teachers to create an inclusive learning environment.					
6	The management at Model Number 2 School fosters positive relationships with families, valuing their input and involving them in decision-making processes.					
7	The leadership at Model Number 2 School promotes awareness and understanding of different cultures, languages, and abilities within the school community.					

THANK YOU!!!

A questionnaire was prepared that was adopted from (Brown, & Remington, 2017), (Tomlinson, 2014), (Epstein,et al., 2002, (Sugai, et al., 2009), and (Arndt et al., 2019). And modified according to the local situation and characteristics of the respondents

Section Two Semi-Structured Interview Checklists.

Open-ended interview

1) What specific challenges have you observed or experienced in implementing inclusive early childhood care and education at Model Number 2 School?

2) How do you perceive your preparedness and training in providing inclusive education to children with diverse needs at Model Number 2 School? Are there any areas where you feel more support or training is needed?

3) In your opinion, how do the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education? Can you provide examples of their initiatives or practices in this regard?

4) In your opinion, how do the leadership and management at Model Number 2 School promote and support inclusive early childhood care and education? Can you provide examples of their initiatives or practices in this regard?

APPENDIX-- I

DEBRE BIRHAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Observation Guide Provided for Field Visit

Observation Checklist

A. KG Environment (outside the classroom)	Yes	No	Remark
1. The KG buildings are accessible to all children			
2. The KG building has a separate feeding room for children			
3. The KG has pure water to drink and wash their hands			
4. Does the KG have a convenient playground for KG children to play?			
5. The KG walls are well-decorated with attractive pictures, numbers, and letters			
6. The KG compound is clean			
7. The preschool garden is full of attractive flowers and plants			
B. KG environment (Inside the classroom)			
1. The classroom is clean			
2. The classroom has a sufficient amount of light			
3. The classroom is well-ventilated			
4. The classroom has many different teaching aids.			
C Instructional consideration			
Teacher 's activities			
1. Does the teacher have an annual plan at hand?			
2. Does the teacher have a daily lesson plan at hand?			
3. Does the teacher encourage children to participate in class activities?			
4. Does the teacher motivate children to ask questions?			
D. Indoor materials and equipment			
1. Child-sized shelves			
2. Children's individual workbook			
3. Child-sized tables			

አባሪ-- I

ደብረ ብርሃን ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የማህበራዊ ሳይንስ እና ስነ-ሰብ ኮሌጅ

የሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል

መጠይቆች

የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድመ ሕፃን እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ትግበራ ተግዳሮቶችን ለመለየት እና ለመተንተን ለሚደረጉ የምርምር ዓላማዎች የሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች ተዘጋጅተዋል።። በመሆኑም ከዚህ በታች በተዘረዘሩት መስፈርቶች መሰረት የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች በአግባቡ እንድትመልሱ በአክብሮት እንጠይቃለን።።

ክፍል 1 (አንድ) - የስነ-ሕዝብ መረጃ

መመሪያ፡ እባክዎ ለእያንዳንዱ ጥያቄ ተገቢውን ምላሽ በመምረጥ የስነ ሕዝብ አወቃቀር መረጃዎን ያቅርቡ።።

1. Gender   1) ወንድ   2) ሴት

2. ዕድሜ: 18-24

     25-34

     35-44

     45-54

     56 የዕድሜ በላይ

3. የትምህርት ደረጃ፡-

☞ ከሁለተኛ ደረጃ ያነሰ

☞ ኮሌጅ

☞ የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ

☞ 2ኛ ዲግሪ

ክፍል 2 (ሁለት)፡ በአብነት ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድመ ልጅነት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን በመተግበር ተግዳሮቶች ላይ የሚያተኩር የLikert scale መጠይቅ፡

መመሪያ፡ እባኮትን በ ሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድመ ልጅነት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ያለውን ፈተና በሚመለከት ከሚከተሉት መግለጫዎች ጋር ያለዎትን ስምምነት ደረጃ ይስጡ። እባክዎ በቀረበው ሚዛን ላይ ተገቢውን አማራጭ በመምረጥ ምላሽዎን ያመልክቱ።።

1. በጣም አልስማማም
2. አልስማማም
3. ገለልተኛ
4. እስማማለሁ
5. በጣም እስማማለሁ

No	አካታች ልምምዶች እና ስልቶች	1	2	3	4	5
1	ትምህርት ቤቱ በቅድመ ልጅነት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ውስጥ ማካተትን የሚያበረታታ ግልጽ ፖሊሲ አለው፡፡					
2	ትምህርት ቤቱ መምህራንን ባካተተ ልምምዶች ላይ ክህሎቶቻቸውን እንዲያሳድጉ ልዩ ስልጠና እና ሙያዊ እድገቶችን ይሰጣል፡፡					
3	ትምህርት ቤቱ የተለያየ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ልጆች ተገቢውን ማረፊያ እና የድጋፍ አገልግሎት ይሰጣል፡፡					
4	ትምህርት ቤቱ አወንታዊ ማህበራዊ መስተጋብርን ያበረታታል እና የክፍል ውስጥ አካታች እና ተቀባይነት ያለው አካባቢን ያሳድጋል፡፡					
5	ትምህርት ቤቱ የሁሉንም ልጆች ግላዊ ፍላጎቶች እና ችሎታዎች የሚያሟሉ የተለያዩ የማስተማሪያ ቁሳቁሶችን እና ግብዓቶችን ይጠቀማል፡፡					
6	ትምህርት ቤቱ የአካታች ልምዶቹን ውጤታማነት በየጊዜው ይገመግማል እና ይገመግማል እናም አስፈላጊ ማሻሻያዎችን ያደርጋል፡፡					
N.o	Items			Scales		
Part II. መጠይቆቹ የተነደፉት በተጨባጭ ሁለት ላይ በመመሥረት ነው፡፡ እባክዎን የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድመ ሕጻናት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን በመተግበር ላይ ያጋጠሙትን ተግዳሮቶች በተመለከተ ከሚከተሉት መግለጫዎች ጋር ያለዎትን ስምምነት ደረጃ ይስጡ፡፡፡		1	2	3	4	5
1.	በቂ የግብዓት እጥረት እና የገንዘብ ድጋፍ ሁሉን አቀፍ አሰራሮችን ተግባራዊ					
2.	በአካታች ትምህርት ውስጥ የሰለጠኑ ሰራተኞች እና ስፔሻሊስቶች አቅርቦት ውስንነት ውጤታማ ትግበራ ላይ ተግዳሮቶችን ይፈጥራል፡፡					
3.	ከውጪ ባለድርሻ አካላት በቂ ያልሆነ ድጋፍ እና ትብብር ትምህርት ቤቱ ወደ አካታችነት በሚያደርገው ጥረት ላይ ተጽዕኖ ያሳድራል፡፡					

N.o	Items	Scales				
4.	ለአካል ጉዳተኛነት እና ብዝሃነት ያላቸው ባሕላዊ አድልዎ እና አመለካከቶች ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድም ልጅነት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ላይ እንቅፋት ይፈጥራሉ፡፡						
5.	የተገደበ የወላጆች ግንዛቤ እና አካታች ልምምዶችን በማስተዋወቅ ላይ ያለው ተሳትፎ ለሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ፈተናዎችን ይፈጥራል፡፡						
6.	የአካል ጉዳተኞች ወይም ልዩ ፍላጎቶችን የግለሰቦችን ፍላጎት እና ማስተናገጃዎች ለመፍታት አስቸጋሪነት፡፡						
Part III. መጠይቆቹ የተነደፉት በተጨባጭ ሶስት ላይ ተመስርተው ነው፤ እባክዎን የተለያየ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ልጆች አካታች ትምህርት ለመስጠት ያለዎትን ግንዛቤ እና ዝግጁነት በሚከተለው መግለጫዎች ላይ ያሉትን ስምምነት ደረጃ ይስጡ፡፡		1	2	3	4	5
1.	የአካል ጉዳተኛ ልጆችን ወይም የመማር ችግር ያለባቸውን ልጆች የትምህርት ፍላጎት ለማሟላት በቂ ዝግጁነት ይሰማኛል፡፡						
2.	በአካታች የትምህርት ልምዶች ላይ ውጤታማ ስልጠና እና ሙያዊ እድገት እድሎችን አግኝቻለሁ፡፡						
3.	የልጆችን የተለያዩ የመማር ስልቶች እና ችሎታዎች ለማሟላት ስርአተ ትምህርቱን በማላመድ በራስ መተማመን ይሰማኛል፡፡						
4.	የተለያዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸው ልጆች ለመደገፍ ተስማሚ ግብዓቶችን፣ ቁሳቁሶችን እና አጋዥ ቴክኖሎጂዎችን አገኛለሁ፡፡						
5.	አካታች ትምህርትን ለመደገፍ ከወላጆች፣ ስፔሻሊስቶች እና ሌሎች አስተማሪዎች ጋር በብቃት እተባበራለሁ እና እገናኛለሁ፡፡						
Part IV መጠይቆቹ የተነደፉት በተጨባጭ አራት ላይ ተመስርተው ነው፤ እባክዎን የህጻናትን ልዩ ልዩ ፍላጎቶች ለማሟላት በሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ ካለው የሃብት እና የድጋፍ አገልግሎት አቅርቦት እና ውጤታማነት ጋር የተያያዙ ተጨማሪ አስተያየቶችን ወይም ምሳሌዎችን ያቅርቡ፡፡						
Items		1	2	3	4	5
1.	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት የተለያዩ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ልጆች ለመደገፍ የተለያዩ የማስተማሪያ ቁሳቁሶችን እና ግብዓቶችን ያቀርባል፡፡						
2.	የአካል ጉዳተኛ ወይም የመማር ችግር ያለባቸውን ልጆች ልዩ ፍላጎቶችን ለማሟላት በቂ አጋዥ ቴክኖሎጂዎች እና የማላመድ መሳሪያዎች አሉ፡፡						

N.o	Items	Scales				
3.	ትምህርት ቤቱ ልዩ ልዩ የድጋፍ አገልግሎቶችን ለምሳሌ የንግግር ቴራፒ፣የሙያ ህክምና ወይም የምክር አገልግሎት ይሰጣል::					
4.	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት የተለያየ ፍላጎት ያላቸውን ልጆች ለመርዳት እንደ የልዩ ትምህርት አስተማሪዎች ወይም ደጋፊ ባለሙያዎች ያሉ ሙያዊ ድጋፍ ሰጪ					
5.	ትምህርት ቤቱ የተለያየ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ልጆች ተጨማሪ ግብዓቶችን እና አገልግሎቶችን ለማቅረብ ከውጭ ድርጅቶች ወይም ኤጀንሲዎች ጋር ሸርክና ወይም ትብብር አቋቁሟል::					
Part V. መጠይቆቹ የተነደፉት በተጨባጭ አምስት ላይ በመመስረት ነው፣ እባክዎን ከሚከተሉት መግለጫዎች ጋር ያለዎትን የስምምነት ደረጃ ይስጡ በሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ ያሉ አማራ እና አማራ አካታች የልጅነት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን በማስተዋወቅ እና በመደገፍ::						
1	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ት/ቤት አማራ ለጨቅላ ህፃናት እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ግልፅ ቁርጠኝነት ያሳያል::					
2	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አስተዳደር ሁሉም ልጆች፣ አስተዳደጋቸው ወይም ችሎታቸው ምንም ይሁን ምን፣ የትምህርት ግብአቶች እና እድሎች እኩል ተጠቃሚ መሆናቸውን ያረጋግጣል::					
3	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አማራ በሰራተኞች እና ተማሪዎች መካከል ልዩነትን እና ማካተትን በንቃት ያበረታታል::					
4	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አስተዳደር መምህራን ግንዛቤያቸውን እንዲያሳድጉ እና አተገባበርን እንዲያሳድጉ ሙያዊ እድገቶችን ይሰጣል::					
5	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አማራ በመምህራን መካከል ትብብርን እና የቡድን ስራን ያበረታታል ሁሉንም ያካተተ የትምህርት አካባቢ::					
6	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አስተዳደር ከቤተሰቦች ጋር አወንታዊ ግንኙነቶችን ያዳብራል፣ አስተያየታቸውን ይገመግማሉ እና በውሳኔ አሰጣጥ ሂደቶች ውስጥ ያሳትፋሉ::					
7	የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ት/ቤት አማራ በትምህርት ቤቱ ማህበረሰብ ውስጥ ስለ ተለያዩ ባህሎች፣ ቋንቋዎች እና ችሎታዎች ግንዛቤ እና ግንዛቤን ያበረታታል::					

THANK YOU!!!

ክፍል ሁለት የተዋቀሩ የቃለ መጠይቅ ዝርዝሮች.

ቃለ መጠይቅ

1. በሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት ሁሉን አቀፍ የቅድመ ሕጻናት እንክብካቤን እና ትምህርትን ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ምን ልዩ ተግዳሮቶች አይተዋል?

2. በሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት የተለያየ ፍላጎት ላላቸው ልጆች ሁሉን አቀፍ ትምህርት ለመስጠት ዝግጁነትዎን እና ስልጠናዎን እንዴት ይመለከቱታል? የበለጠ ድጋፍ ወይም ስልጠና እንደሚያስፈልግ የሚሰማዎት ቦታዎች አሉ?

3. በእርስዎ አስተያየት፣ የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አመራር እና አመራር አካታች የቅድመ ሕፃን እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን እንዴት ያስተዋውቃሉ እና ይደግፋሉ? በዚህ ረገድ ስለ ተነሳሽነታቸው ወይም ስለ ተግባራቸው ምሳሌዎችን ማቅረብ ትችላለህ?

4. በእርስዎ አስተያየት፣ የሞዴል ቁጥር 2 ትምህርት ቤት አመራር እና አመራር አካታች የቅድመ ሕፃን እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርትን እንዴት ያስተዋውቃሉ እና ይደግፋሉ? በዚህ ረገድ ስለ ተነሳሽነታቸው ወይም ስለ ተግባራቸው ምሳሌዎችን ማቅረብ ትችላለህ?