

# Perceived Importance of Inclusive Education Preparedness in Xinxiang Vocational and Technical College in Henan Province (China) Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored Xinxiang Vocational and Technical College's (XVTC) readiness for inclusive education across four domains before and during the pandemic. It aimed to identify nuanced variations in importance levels within these domains and assess any significant differences in perceived importance between the specified periods. Conducted through a postpositivist paradigm and an online survey on Weibo, the study involved students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and administrators from both XVTC campuses. Using the modified Inclusive Education Preparedness Questionnaire (IEPQ) with 100 items, half measured the "level of importance" through Likert scales. Descriptive and inferential analyses, including T-tests and Pearson r correlation tests, processed the data. Participants consistently rated inclusive education as extremely important across all domains during both periods. Increased importance during the pandemic was noted in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Individual Student Support, with no significant change in Administration and Scheduling. The study rejected the null hypothesis for certain domains, indicating significant differences in perceived importance between pre-pandemic and pandemic periods but accepted the null hypothesis for correlations. Insights highlight the need for targeted interventions in specific domains to enhance inclusive education preparedness amid dynamic circumstances. Future studies should explore these variables among a marginalized student cluster in XVTC for proper comparison.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education Preparedness; Vocational Education; Administration; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Individual Student Support; Scheduling; Pandemic

## INTRODUCTION

The 1994 Salamanca Statement (SS) and Framework for Action, a collaboration between Spain and UNESCO, emphasized prioritizing inclusive education globally (Educational Guruji, 2022). Built on principles like the right to education for every child, the SS advocated for diverse needs recognition, access to regular schools for learners with special needs, fostering inclusive environments, and efficient inclusive schools. In China, the 2017 Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities defined inclusive education as maximal integration into regular education. In today's context, inclusive education actively engages all children in designing schools, classrooms, programs, and lessons, promoting relationships and mutual respect.

While inclusive primary education brings benefits like community integration, challenges persist in developing countries due to limited knowledge, teacher training, and infrastructure. In China, efforts since 2017 have enhanced inclusive education, guided by Ministry of Education Guidelines and regulations facilitating accessibility. Xinxiang Vocational and Technical College (XVTC), crucial in vocational

education, plays a role in promoting inclusivity. The study advocates for inclusive practices at XVTC, aligning with the importance placed on inclusive education by stakeholders.

### **Vocational Education in China**

The OECD praised China's vocational training strengths, such as widespread participation and diverse specializations. However, Jintu's (2003) research reveals an elite-dominated system, challenging inclusive education goals. Elite education contradicts mass education objectives, hindering inclusive development. Vocational training faces issues like inadequate workplace training and employer coordination, identified by the OECD in 2010. Financial constraints in rural areas hinder inclusive education efforts, despite historical emphasis on caring for children with special needs in Chinese society (Chen, n.d.).

### **Inclusive Education in China**

Chinese inclusive education follows global trends, transitioning from isolated special education to integration into regular classrooms. Ancient China showed a compassionate approach to disabilities. Post-reform, a Chinese-style special education system emerged, yet vocational training faces challenges like variable employer support. Its development stages include family-based, school-based, and individual class-focused approaches. Integrating special education into compulsory and post-secondary education, including vocational training, is crucial for over 51 million people with disabilities. Addressing vocational education challenges involves teacher training initiatives, new institutions, recruiting teachers from regular education, providing specialized curricula, and offering in-service training programs (Chen, n.d.).

### **Perceptions and Attitudes on Inclusive Education**

Huang (2021) investigated in-service teachers' perspectives on inclusive education in Beijing, China, comparing them with British understanding. The study exposed challenges like limited awareness, inadequate support, restricted resources, inefficient regulation, and insufficient engagement with stakeholders. Influencing factors included the social environment, theoretical elaboration, practical outcomes, and personal experiences. Certain British Index indicators were deemed inapplicable to China, requiring modifications for practical use. Yongli (2019) revised the Chinese version of the teacher's inclusive education scale, testing its structure and characteristics with 1024 pre-service teachers. The study aimed to provide a tool for researching pre-service teachers' attitudes in China.

### **Inclusive Education beyond Special Education**

Inclusive education, originating in the 1800s for children with disabilities, initially operated in special schools catering to the wealthy. Over time, it expanded to include diverse backgrounds, emphasizing vocational skills. Discrimination led to the separation of special education, but the 1944 UK Education Act marked a shift, extending special education to all, irrespective of race, class, or gender. In the 21st century, inclusive education broadened to address socio-economic disparities, migrant children, and gifted individuals. In China, it extends to elderly learners in open universities, fostering a discrimination-free environment. Tong and Yongxin (2022) advocate for integrating education for extraordinary children into general education. Ainscow and Miles (2008) expanded inclusive education beyond disabilities, encompassing responses to disciplinary exclusions and promoting education for all.

### **Challenges to Inclusion during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The United Nations (2021) highlighted disparities exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially affecting marginalized populations in health, economics, and protection. Migrants, notably those of Chinese or Asian descent, emerged as disproportionately affected, facing discrimination and social exclusion.

Suspected COVID-19 cases among travelers led to denial of essential resources and humiliation. The pandemic increased dropout rates among students, creating educational inequalities for impoverished, ethnic, and racial minorities. Older adults, already vulnerable, faced challenges like social isolation and technological anxieties during the pandemic (Phillipson et al., 2021). Addressing these educational gaps is crucial for fostering an inclusive school environment.

### **‘School Administration’, ‘Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment’, ‘Individual Support’, and ‘Scheduling’**

Pre-pandemic, a study compared Portugal, the UK, the US, and China, emphasizing the role of an inclusive culture in educational administration, particularly in valuing diversity. Principals, pivotal as leaders, influence inclusive education, and awareness is crucial for creating inclusive schools. Amid the pandemic, school administration’s vital role in providing face-to-face education and fulfilling social functions is highlighted. Effective leadership, illustrated by differentiated instruction and co-teaching, is essential for successful inclusive education. Investigating institutional preparedness should encompass curriculum, instruction, and assessment, recognizing their role in fostering openness to learning.

In examining challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a disproportionate impact on students with disabilities, emphasizing the need for enhanced accessibility options. Administrative leaders play a crucial role in enabling inclusive education, emphasizing the intertwined nature of administration and instructional delivery. Institutional preparedness for inclusive education should cover curriculum, instruction, and assessment, recognizing their role in providing a framework for school work. Successful inclusive education depends on building an inclusive school culture, inclusive curriculum, and interpersonal communication. Challenges in diverse educational contexts include the cancellation of final exams during the pandemic, relying on individual teacher assessments for grading.

Inclusive scheduling, as defined by the Florida Inclusion Network (2023), involves collaborative processes to create a school-wide master schedule supporting students in inclusive classrooms and other general education settings. This approach emphasizes nondiscriminatory support for all students, accommodating individual learning periods. Creative scheduling can address challenges and diversify learning times. Challenges to inclusive scheduling during the COVID-19 pandemic include technical hurdles, lack of clarity on necessary applications, and accessibility concerns requiring additional support. Addressing technical issues, setting transparent expectations, accommodating accessibility requirements, and providing support for time management are crucial for effective inclusive scheduling in remote classes.

### **Inclusive Education Preparedness Questionnaire**

Shichen (2015) used the “Deaf College Student Adaptation Questionnaire” to assess challenges faced by deaf students at Tianjin University of Technology, emphasizing the need for inclusive schools. In contrast, Bombita (2015) highlighted the absence of a standard minimum requirement for inclusivity in higher education. He developed an inclusive education preparedness questionnaire, aligning with broader concepts and surpassing special education frameworks. Adapting Bombita’s questionnaire to incorporate Chinese government-recommended strategies, particularly for post-secondary institutions like Xinxiang Vocational Education and Training College (2023), will enhance its relevance to the context of a “full-time general higher vocational college.”

### **XVTC and Inclusive Education**

Established in 1883 and recognized as a full-time higher vocational college in 2009, Xinxiang Vocational and Technical College (XVTC) is sponsored by the Xinxiang Municipal People’s Government. Focused on cultivating high-end technical skills talents, it offers various science and engineering majors, emphasizing

mechanical design, automation, and computer technology. Despite technological advancement, XVTC faces typical challenges of vocational education schools in China, with declining enrollment and faculty. The researcher estimates 15% of the student population, including those with special needs, may experience exclusion. While emphasizing educational reform, XVTC lacks explicit mention of inclusive education, prompting the need for an assessment of its preparedness for inclusive practices and evaluating the effectiveness of its reform efforts in providing equal access, especially for marginalized groups.

### **Study Framework**

This study, rooted in Liu and Jacob's Theory of Inclusive Education (2012) and informed by Corbett (2001), Mittler (2000), and UNESCO (1994), focuses on inclusive education, originally associated with special education. Liu and Jacob's four-step integration model prioritizes quality education within public schools, particularly benefiting migrant children in urban China. XVTC, as a public institution, must ensure equal access, involving steps such as identifying learning needs. Bombita's (2015) four essential domains for quality inclusive education in higher institutions—administration, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, individual support, and scheduling—interact synergistically, requiring a contextual understanding within XVTC.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study assesses the perceived importance of inclusive education in XVTC across key domains during pre-pandemic and pandemic periods. It explores variations and significant differences in importance levels between these periods. The research also examines correlations between perceived importance levels in XVTC's preparedness during the two phases across the specified domains.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

The first null hypothesis posits no significant difference in inclusive education importance levels in XVTC's preparedness between pre-pandemic and pandemic periods. The alternate hypothesis suggests a significant difference. The second null hypothesis asserts no significant correlation between inclusive education importance levels in XVTC's preparedness during pre-pandemic and pandemic periods. Conversely, the alternate hypothesis proposes a significant correlation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research adopts a postpositivist paradigm, acknowledging the impact of researchers' ideas on observations and conclusions. Using researcher-generated data, the study aims to address biases influencing exclusion in education. Employing a polling approach, a survey questionnaire assesses stakeholder opinions on inclusive education practices at Xinxiang Vocational and Technical College (XVTC). The study involves the north and main campuses, utilizing an online survey via Weibo for diverse participation. Four groups—students, teachers, non-teaching employees, and administrators—participate in both pre-pandemic and online scenarios. The sample size ensures a 95% confidence level with a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error, employing quota sampling to prevent bias.

The survey method, common in social science research, quantifies social realities through questions focused on inclusive education preparedness. Using Bombita's (2015) questionnaire, modified with items from the Chinese Classroom Integration Project, participants include students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and administrators from XVTC's north and main campuses. Despite the existing questionnaire's lack of standardization, validated domains and indicators were employed based on Bombita's literature review, with

additional items aligned with Chinese recommendations. The modified Inclusive Education Preparedness Questionnaire (IEPQ) had 100 items, utilizing Likert scales for “level of importance.” A pre-survey validated the questionnaire, including screening items for participant classification and a fair representation matrix for research inclusiveness reporting, not analysis.

**Table 1**

Sample Size Comparisons

|   | North Campus<br>(Baseline-using online calculator with a confidence level of 95% and the real value is within ±5% margin of error) |   | Main Campus (Quota)          |   |  |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|---|--|
|   | Population (N <sub>1</sub> )   | Sample (n <sub>1</sub> )<br><sup>a</sup> Random Sampling<br><sup>b</sup> Convenience Sampling | Population (N <sub>2</sub> ) | Sample (n <sub>2</sub> = n <sub>1</sub> )<br>Quota Sampling based on n <sub>1</sub> | % vs (n <sub>2</sub> )                       |
| <b>Administrators</b>   | 29   | 28 <sup>a</sup>   | 172                          | 28  | (120) 23%                                    |
| <b>Teachers</b>   | 77   | 65 (+1 for even distribution) <sup>a</sup>  | 208                          | 65 (+1 for even distribution)   | (136) 49%                                    |
| <b>Staff</b>  | 18   | 18 <sup>a</sup>   | 105                          | 18  | (83) 22%                                     |
| <b>Students</b>   | 898  | 270 <sup>b</sup>  | 9746                         | 270   | (370) 73%                                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | 1,022  | <b>382</b>  | 10,231                       | <b>382</b>  | <b>(709) 54%</b>                             |
| <b>Sample Size based on Total Population (Slovin's Formula)</b> | <b>280</b>   | Actual sample size based on sub-group computations is higher.                                 | <b>371</b>                   | Actual sample size based on sub-group computations is higher.                       | Sample size without quota sampling is higher |
| <b>North Campus</b>   | <b>Pre-COVID-19</b>  | Online Ed   | <b>Main Campus</b>           | <b>Pre-COVID-19</b>   | Online Ed                                    |
| <b>Administrators</b>   | <b>14</b>  | 12  | <b>Administrators</b>        | <b>14</b>   | 12   |
| <b>Teachers</b>   | <b>33</b>  | 33  | <b>Teachers</b>              | <b>33</b>   | 33   |
| <b>Staff</b>  | <b>9</b>   | 9   | <b>Staff</b>                 | <b>9</b>  | 9  |
| <b>Students</b>   | <b>135</b>   | 135   | <b>Students</b>              | <b>135</b>  | 135  |
| <b>Total Sample</b>   | <b>382</b>   |   | <b>Total Sample</b>          | <b>382</b>  |  |

Note: Link of the sample size calculator – <https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html?type=1&cl=95&ci=5&pp=50&ps=10231&x=57&y=7>

**Table 2**

4-point Likert Scale Qualitative Descriptors (Level of Importance)

| Range       | Qualitative Descriptors |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1.00 – 1.75 | Not Important           |
| 1.76 – 2.50 | Not important enough    |
| 2.51 – 3.25 | More important than not |
| 3.36 – 4.00 | Extremely Important     |

Permissions were obtained to access stakeholders. The online survey via Weibo collected responses, which were quantitatively analyzed. Descriptive analysis examined importance levels, while T-tests assessed pre-pandemic and online differences. Similar tests applied to stakeholders determined significance. Pearson r correlation tested domain correlations before and during the pandemic.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented includes responses from students, administrators, teachers, and staff across two campuses, revealing the types of minority identities they associate with. Among students, more females (51%) than males did not identify as marginalized, while economically challenged and distance-challenged identities varied between genders. Administrators exhibited a higher percentage of females identifying as minorities, particularly economically challenged. Among teachers, more females identified as non-marginalized, while male part-time teachers were predominant. Staff responses showed more males identifying as marginalized, while work classification and being non-academic were prominent reasons for minority identification. These findings suggest that gender and specific identity categories, such as economic or work-related factors, play crucial roles in driving responses to inclusive education preparedness.

**Table 3**

Summary of ‘minority self-identification’ of respondents in XVTC

| Sectors        | Bases for identification as a minority in XVTC |                   |                       |                    |                       |
|----------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
|                | Sex  | Economic standing | Distance from XVTC    | Tenure             | Work Classification   |
| Students       | Males  | Females (Lower)   | Males (Far from XVTC) | x                  | x                     |
| Administrators | Females  | Females (Lower)   | x                     | x                  | x                     |
| Teachers       | Males  | x                 | x                     | Males (part-timer) | x                     |
| Staff          | Males  | x                 | x                     | x                  | Female (non-academic) |

### What is the perceived level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC during the pre-pandemic and pandemic period in the four domains?

The study investigated the importance of inclusive education in XVTC’s preparedness during the pre-pandemic and pandemic periods across four domains. Utilizing descriptive statistics, mean, and standard deviation, the participants consistently rated the importance of inclusive education as extremely high in all domains during both periods. Specifically, before the pandemic, the importance levels were extremely high in administration (M=3.38, SD=0.66), curriculum, instruction, and assessment (M=3.42, SD=0.64), individual student support (M=3.39, SD=0.65), and scheduling (M=3.41, SD=0.67). Similarly, during the pandemic, the importance levels remained extremely high in administration (M=3.43, SD=0.68),

curriculum, instruction, and assessment (M=3.51, SD=0.62), individual student support (M=3.49, SD=0.64), and scheduling (M=3.48, SD=0.67). These findings align with the established Long-Range Comprehensively Planned Education Reform and imply sustained recognition of the critical importance of inclusive education in XVTC.

Despite the Long-Range Curriculum (LRC) being implemented in China for over three decades, Yao et al. (2018) noted that students with disabilities encountered learning stagnation and deterioration before the pandemic. Consequently, the pre-pandemic preparedness level was deemed ‘Extremely Important.’ Jia & Santi (2021) presented data suggesting that inclusive education faced considerable challenges during the pandemic, aligning with the four aforementioned areas. The significance of inclusive education preparedness in China remained extremely important, driven by possibly similar or distinct reasons.

**Table 4**

Descriptive Statistics of the Perceived Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC Before and During the Pandemic Period

*Descriptive Statistics of the Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC Before and During the Pandemic Period*

| Level of Importance of Inclusive Education |   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation           |
|--|---|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Pre-Pandemic<br>(N= 382)                   | Administration                          | 3.38 | 0.66               | Extremely important (EI) |
|  | Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | 3.42 | 0.64               |                          |
|  | Individual Student Support              | 3.39 | 0.65               |                          |
|  | Scheduling                              | 3.41 | 0.67               |                          |
| Pandemic Period<br>(N= 326)                | Administration                          | 3.43 | 0.68               | (EI)                     |
|  | Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | 3.51 | 0.62               |                          |
|  | Individual Student Support              | 3.49 | 0.64               |                          |
|  | Scheduling                              | 3.48 | 0.67               |                          |

Legend: 1.00-1.75= Not important    1.76-2.50= Not important enough  
 2.54-3.25= More important than not    3.26-4.00= Extremely important

**What is the significant difference between the level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC during the pre-pandemic and pandemic period in the four domains?**

**The alternate hypothesis is accepted in two domains:** There is a significant difference between the level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC during the pre-pandemic and pandemic period in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment ( $t(325) = -2.059, p = .040$ ) and individual student support.

Paired samples t-test using SPSS version 26 (IBM, 2019) were again computed to assess the significant differences in the level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC between the pre- and pandemic period in various domains. The results show significant differences in the level of importance of inclusive education in the domains of curriculum, instruction, and assessment ( $t(325) = -2.059, p = .040$ ) and individual student support ( $t(325) = -2.196, p = .029$ ).

This can be interpreted to having the participants rated the inclusive education as more important during the pandemic than before it had started in terms of the curriculum, instruction, & assessment and the support provided to individual students. This could be explained further by Jia & Santi (2021), as they mentioned four key areas that were challenged during the pandemic in China.

Lee (2020) found in an exploratory mixed-method triangulated design involving 3,898 students and faculty

members that adjustments were made by teachers in teaching and learning designs, guided by institutional policy, because most students were challenged by Internet connectivity and, as a result, could not satisfy learning requirements. Flexible learning delivery, technology, the teaching and learning environment, and the prioritization of safety and security were identified as key areas that could directly impact curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and individual student support.

Lee (2020) concluded, “To ensure teaching and learning continuity, ... higher education institutions have to migrate to flexible teaching and learning modality recalibrate the curriculum, capacitate the faculty, upgrade the infrastructure, implement a strategic plan and assess all aspects of the plan” (para. 1). Since these are already necessary for students without disability or special needs, they are likely to be equally, if not more important for those with disabilities or special needs (Yakut, 2021). One must also look into the four key areas Jia and Santi (2021) identified, particularly, (1) an education policy that has no disability perspective, (2) inaccessible technology, (3) mainstream schools that take no responsibility to teach students with disabilities, and (4) parents’ unpreparedness for distance- and home-schooling to address Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Individual Student Support.

Furthermore, no significant difference was noted in the level of importance of inclusive education in the domains of administration ( $t(325) = -1.136, p = .257$ ) and scheduling ( $t(325) = -1.553, p = .121$ ). This reveals that the importance of inclusive education in the areas of administration and scheduling during pre-pandemic and pandemic period is almost at the same level and extent.

Hence, the level of importance of policy and scheduling will not change overnight since addressing those areas cannot happen overnight as stipulated by Huang and Zhang (2019). Administration is a system-wide structure that cannot undergo change as quickly as curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and individual student support that are directly impacted by a sudden shutdown of synchronous and face-to-face instruction. Some semblance of the pre-pandemic instruction such as pre-pandemic scheduling must be kept to attain some degree of normality in the lives of learners (Mills, 2020).

**Table 5**

*T-test Statistics of Difference Between the Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC During the Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic Period*

*T-test Statistics of Difference Between the Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC During the Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic Period*  
(N= 326)

| Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic Period        | df  | t      | p-value | Interpretation  |
|---|-----|--------|---------|-----------------|
| Administration                          | 325 | -1.136 | .257    | Not significant |
| Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | 325 | -2.059 | .040    | Significant     |
| Individual Student Support              | 325 | -2.196 | .029    | Significant     |
| Scheduling                              | 325 | -1.553 | .121    | Not significant |

**What is the significant correlation between the level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC during the pre-pandemic and pandemic period in the four domains?**

**The null hypothesis is accepted in all four domains.** There is no significant correlation between the level of importance of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC during the pre-pandemic and



pandemic period in the four domains.

The researcher used the same statistical treatment of Pearson Correlation analysis using SPSS version 26 (IBM, 2019) to understand the significant correlation in the level of importance of inclusive education between pre-pandemic and pandemic period. The same findings were observed as the statistical computation resulted to no correlation in the level of importance of inclusive education between the two periods across all the four domains. *P*-values greater than the significance level of 0.05 were again noted, which indicates that the perceived importance of inclusive education pre-pandemic is not connected to the importance during the pandemic period.

Greenfield et al (2021) investigated the shifts in ecology, behavior, values, and relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that “when survival concerns augment, and one’s social world narrows toward the family household. life shifts towards activities, values, relationships, and parenting expectations typical of small-scale rural subsistence environments with low life expectancy” (para. 1). This was expressed in terms of “intensified survival concerns (e.g., thinking about one’s own mortality); increased subsistence activities (e.g., growing food); augmented subsistence values (e.g., conserving resources); more interdependent family relationships (e.g., members helping each other obtain food); and parents expecting children to contribute more to family maintenance (e.g., by cooking for the family)” (para. 1). The shift in values as a result of radical shift in ecology corresponded to shifts in relationships and behavior. Hence, what seemed important before the pandemic was no longer as important during the pandemic. This shed light as to why no correlation surfaced across the domains of inclusive education preparedness before and during the pandemic.

**Table 6**

*Correlation (r) Analysis of the Relationship Between the Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC During the Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic Period*

| Pre-Pandemic                            | Pandemic Period          |   |                            |                         |
|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|
|   | Administration           | Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | Individual Student Support | Scheduling              |
| Administration                          | .007<br><i>p</i> = .900  | .043<br><i>p</i> = .441                 | .078<br><i>p</i> = .160    | .063<br><i>p</i> = .257 |
| Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | .011<br><i>p</i> = .850  | .044<br><i>p</i> = .430                 | .076<br><i>p</i> = .169    | .041<br><i>p</i> = .457 |
| Individual Student Support              | .022<br><i>p</i> = .692  | .055<br><i>p</i> = .321                 | .087<br><i>p</i> = .117    | .065<br><i>p</i> = .240 |
| Scheduling                              | -.026<br><i>p</i> = .636 | .051<br><i>p</i> = .362                 | .080<br><i>p</i> = .150    | .057<br><i>p</i> = .308 |
| Interpretation                          | None is significant      | None is significant                     | None is significant        | None is significant     |

The data above suggest that XVTC is ready to take the next step following inclusive education preparedness. The table below summarizes the findings that are critical in deciding what interventions must be recommended to further enhance the practice of inclusive education in the preparedness level in XVTC.

Table 7

*Correlation (r) Analysis of the Relationship Between the Level of Importance of Inclusive Education in the Preparedness Level in XVTC During the Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic Period*

| Statement of the Problem | Findings   | Recommended Actions   |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| 1                        | The results indicated that the respondents were able to practice well inclusive education before and during the pandemic   | Elevate practice to post-inclusive education preparedness – identification and addressing of specific inclusive education needs |
| 2                        | The level of importance of inclusive education before and after the pandemic was found to be extremely important   | Reinforce the importance of inclusive education through and information campaign targeting stakeholders                         |
| 3                        | Inclusive education was considered more important during the pandemic than before it had started in terms of the curriculum, instruction, & assessment and the support provided to individual students | Make (1) curriculum, instruction, and assessment and (2) the support provided to individual students disruption-ready           |
| 4                        | The perceived importance of inclusive education pre-pandemic is not connected to the importance during the pandemic period   | Identify and fill in the gaps in the practice of inclusive education preparedness before and during disruptions                 |

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present study, several recommendations for future research emerge. Firstly, it is advised to perceive vocational education as a complex system and initiate comprehensive systemic reforms. This involves not only instigating changes within XVTC but also considering external elements like policy alterations, economic shifts, and technological advancements that can significantly affect vocational education. Secondly, the scope of research should be broadened to encompass multiple vocational institutions spanning diverse regions in China. This approach aims to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the challenges and potential solutions within the vocational training system, considering any regional variations that may exist. Thirdly, it is recommended to establish dedicated support centers on campus, catering specifically to students with special needs. These centers could offer individualized assistance, including counseling services, tutoring, and access to assistive technologies. Lastly, future research should delve into the impact of cultural factors on the success of inclusive education programs in vocational training. This involves investigating how cultural norms and attitudes influence the implementation of inclusive practices within this educational context.

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