

# Review of: "A Systematic Review of Factors Associated with Special Education Teacher Recruitment"

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## The Title

Does the title make us think of an overview of factors associated with special education teacher recruitment or a review of the research on these factors? In general, the title should perfectly match the research aim and the research question. I would also consider adding the location of target populations and the studies qualified for the review of research. It is important because there are diverse educational systems concerning special educational needs of students in different countries across the globe. The analysis is based mainly on the data obtained from American studies and the readers should be aware of this fact. However, different cultures of education could yield different outcomes (e. g. rich versus poor countries; an individualistic versus a collectivist culture).

## The Conceptual Framework

It is a very interesting conceptualization which serves as a theoretical base for the research. It could be also inspiring for the researchers interested in teacher education, particularly in special, mainstream or inclusive education. Nevertheless, it goes beyond the scope of this article's topic. The paper's title refers solely to special education teacher recruitment, but the conceptual framework also includes teacher preparation programs, teacher shortage and so-called longevity emphasizing the importance of teacher competence and competencies levels which ensure retaining the job or staying in the workplace longer than expected. Therefore, it would be purposeful to explain why special education teacher recruitment is supposed to be a key element of the analysis. The author is trying to indicate the reasons but scientifically, the explanation seems to be unsatisfactory and requires scientific evidence. It is not obvious that the remaining two components are unimportant for the research query results which are available. Undoubtedly, teacher shortage and preparation are somehow connected with recruitment but at the same time those concepts can be distinguishable in terms of the qualitative and quantitative research on teacher education. In my opinion, the effects of these aspects and values (supply, quality, longevity) on teacher education research outcomes should be assessed separately in order to eliminate confounding factors. To sum up, it is all in the title which is slightly imprecise.

## The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

It is a fairly good practice to propose and discuss such criteria. However, all the pros and cons should be recognized and described.

### **The Recruitment Factors**

“Recruitment factors” is an unclear expression. Does the author mean “factors associated with” as it can be deduced from the title or “factors influencing special education teacher recruitment”? One could actually think about two different things because two variables can be just associated with each other (there is a correlation between them) but they can also be classified as effects of known or unknown controllable or uncontrollable independent variables which interfere with the results, and so on. Thus, it needs to be clarified because science language should be as precise as possible.

The research subject/target population diversity (preservice teachers, paraprofessionals, special education teachers) may be actually regarded as an uncontrollable, confounding variable. The role of preservice teacher (rather unemployed, usually undergraduate student majoring in special education, an inexperienced candidate for a teacher) differs from the role of special education teacher (employed, usually more experienced teacher but it also depends on teacher professional/vocational status, professional competence level, the credentials, certified instructional skills, work and life experience). The paraprofessionals’ involvement in special education classes, inclusive or mainstream schools is another story. It applies to slightly different values and perspectives. It can be considered an educational culture-based issue. To sum up, the author should be trying to resolve this issue but I have not noticed such notions or points of reference throughout the manuscript. In my opinion, it could be regarded as a limitation, as well.

To end with, the article’s quality is good but it does not mean that its content cannot be improved. However, it is worthy of note that the manuscript concerns both a complex and a controversial research area because of observable instability (e. g. constant change of school personnel, unstable societal values, parental expectations about educational quality, parental educational aspirations for their children with disabilities, teacher shortage) as well as the lack of universal and culture-free definitions, concepts and theories regarding teacher education and special education.