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FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract:

Family involvement is an essential element in the education concerning special needs students, and this systematic literature review is focused on investigating its significance and impact. It investigates the factors and elements that influence family involvement, its impact on student outcomes, and strategies for bolstering collaboration between families and educational institutions. While the importance of family involvement is widely recognized, challenges and knowledge gaps remain regarding its best practices and effects. The study utilized the PRISMA approach, conducting a systematic review by scouring academic databases and journals for pertinent articles published within the last five years. The systematic search employed academic databases like Scopus and Web Of Science. After rigorous searching, the final dataset comprised (n=24) studies. Three core themes emerged from this approach: Teacher-Parent Collaboration, Barriers and Challenges, and Effects on the Achievement of Students. The review underscores essential components of family involvement, including communication, collaboration, shared decision-making, and parent-teacher partnerships. It provides an in-depth exploration of how family engagement positively affects students' academic and socio-emotional development while also shedding light on the obstacles and hindrances that can disrupt productive family-school collaborations. In conclusion, family involvement plays a pivotal role in the education of special needs students, significantly contributing to their holistic development. This review offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers to further fortify family involvement in special education.

Keywords:

Family Involvement, Education, Special Needs, Student

Introduction

Family involvement maintains a central role within the realm of special education, recognizing the critical part families play in molding the achievements of children (Hornby & Witte, 2010; Prater, 2009; Wilt & Morningstar, 2018). Special education is a multifaceted discipline that caters to the unique needs of students having disabilities, which include but are not limited to learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, physical impairments, and emotional and behavioral disorders (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014). The term "family involvement" will be employed to signify the participation of guardians, parents, or even families in a child's activities as explored in the study.

Family involvement refers to various family behaviors that will affect children's cognitive, emotional, and physical development and achievement at school (Halim & Yunus, n.d.). This transformation is grounded in the recognition that parents possess valuable insights into their children, encompassing their strengths, difficulties, and unique requirements. (Otero-Mayer et al., 2021). Practical practices that can be applied by guardian parents start from home. Parents need to give their children better space and opportunities for home interactions (Ahmad Asmawi & Khairul Farhah, 2020; Prater, 2009). Family involvement in education contributes to psychological development and the sharing of learning experiences and provides support and acknowledgment for the efforts of teachers. Family involvement in the education concerning special needs students resembles a critical component of their educational journey, serving as a bridge between home and school environments (Hannon & O'Donnell, 2022; McLeod, 2022). Consequently, their active involvement can significantly enhance the effectiveness of educational interventions and foster a supportive learning environment for special needs students (Lai & Vadeboncoeur, 2013; Schmid & Garrels, 2021).

The main goal of this article is to provide an extensive examination of family involvement in the education of students with special needs. By synthesizing a wide range of research studies, we seek to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of family involvement and its impact on various aspects of a special needs student's educational journey. Key objectives of this review include 1) Understanding the Concept of Family Involvement, 2) Impact on Academic Outcomes, 3) Social and Emotional Development, 4) Teacher-Parent Collaboration, and 5) Barriers and Challenges. As special education continues to evolve, understanding the significance of family involvement is crucial for educators, policymakers, and parents).

Literature Review

Parental educational involvement predicts success for students, which includes those having disabilities, both during their school years and post-school. However, it points out that traditional models of parental involvement often emphasize academic success. In contrast, transition models focus more on post-school outcomes while having restricted roles for parents (Hirano & Rowe, 2016). Recognizing parent involvement as a vital element in the education of special needs students, it's important to note that the prevailing discussion on this topic often constrains the concept of parent involvement. This restricts the extent to which parents can

participate in their children's education and the level of encouragement for family involvement. Both legislation and research recognize family involvement as a crucial element in student growth and academic success (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014).

Within the students with disabilities context, who have historically encountered reduced rates of employment and postsecondary education compared to their peers without disabilities, studies indicate that greater family involvement in education acts as a forecaster of favorable post-school results. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize that the approach to family involvement research may diverge when comparing general education to special education, with the role of parents being notably influential in enhancing the future prospects of students with disabilities in the latter case (Tenerife et al., 2023). It also examines the diverse effects of parental involvement, motivations driving such involvement, methods used, and the obstacles hindering successful involvement in these distinct educational settings (Abín et al., 2021; Spann et al., 2003). Over 40 years following the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), certain special education teacher training programs provide minimal instruction on advocacy, family involvement, or homeschool collaboration (Blok et al., 2007; Goldman & Burke, 2017). Pre-service special education teachers, when working with students with disabilities and their families in practical settings, often find that prior coursework on family involvement enhances their knowledge and skills in offering resources, advocacy support, and valuable insights (Floyd & Vernon-Dotson, 2009; Strassfeld, 2019).

The EFA (Education for All) proposed three key factors to enhance participation activities: agency/school-based involvement, home-based involvement, and future planning. These factors include family expectations for the future, overall school engagement, role establishment, time and energy perceptions, expertise, capabilities, self-confidence, and distinct invitations from children and teachers. These elements are considered motivators for parental involvement (Harvey & Wennerstrom, 2023; Hirano & Rowe, 2016; Prater, 2010).

Material and Methods

Identification

The process of conducting a systematic review to select pertinent papers for this report includes three main stages. Firstly, it encompasses the identification of keywords and associated terms by utilizing resources such as thesauri, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and prior research. After determining the relevant keywords, search strings were formulated for the Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases (see Table 1). In the initial phase of the systematic review, a combined total of 4,841 papers was successfully retrieved from both databases, showcasing the depth of family involvement in the research.

Screening

The initial screening process should exclude duplicate papers. 4678 papers were excluded in the first phase, and 181 publications were examined in the second phase using a variety of inclusion as well as exclusion criteria formed by the researchers. The first criterion was literature, or research publications, as they are the main source of useful knowledge. It also involves the omission of articles, reviews, meta-analyses, syntheses, and systematic reviews from the current study. Moreover, the review focused solely on English-language papers. It is imperative to highlight that the schedule was selected with a six-year timeframe in mind (2016–2023). Thirteen publications were eliminated overall based on particular criteria.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	Web of Science (WoS)
TITLE-ABS-KEY ((family OR parent) AND involvement AND education AND "special education" OR "special needs") TITLE-ABS-KEY ((family OR parent) AND involvement AND education AND "special education" OR "special needs") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACT KEYWORD, "Special Education") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACT KEYWORD, "Parent Involvement") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACT KEYWORD, "Education"))	(family OR parent) AND involvement AND education AND "special education" OR "special needs" (Title) and Preprint Citation Index (Exclude – Database) Results for (family OR parent) AND involvement AND education AND "special education" OR "special needs" (Title) and Preprint Citation Index (Exclude – Database) and Open Access and 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 (Publication Years) and Article (Document Types) and Education Educational Research (Research Areas) and English (Languages)

Eligibility

One hundred and eighty-six articles have been prepared for the eligibility step, which is the third stage. Currently, every article's title and significant content underwent meticulous scrutiny to confirm that they adhered to the inclusion criteria and aligned with the objectives of the present study, involving family involvement. One hundred forty-four reports were excluded since empirical data did not support them. Lastly, Table 2 indicates that 24 articles are accessible for examination.

Table 2: The Selection Criteria is Searching

CRITERIA	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
LANGUAGE	English	Non-English
TIMELINE	2016 – 2023	< 2016
LITERATURE TYPE	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
SUBJECT AREA	Social science	Besides Computer and Engineering / Others

Data Abstraction and Analysis

In this research, a comprehensive analysis was conducted. Experienced researchers concentrated on pinpointing pertinent subjects and subtopics. The first phase encompassed gathering data, with the authors diligently scrutinizing 24 papers for statements or data pertaining to the research queries. In the subsequent phase, the authors and experts jointly assessed family involvement in special education transition programs, grouping and organizing

them in a meaningful manner in line with their discoveries. Three themes that emerged from the approach are Teacher-Parent Collaboration, Barriers and Challenges, and Effects on the Achievement of Students. The authors consolidated the various themes and ideas they had developed in the study, ensuring they were interconnected and related to each other. They identified these themes through their research findings, maintaining a log to record the analytical process, viewpoints, and pertinent concepts. The authors collaborated to compare their findings and address any disparities in the theme-generation process. Subsequently, they fine-tuned the established themes to guarantee their logical flow and uniformity. An expert, Ts. Dr. Rozniza Zaharudin from USM conducted examinations to validate the issues. The expert review phase played a pivotal role in ensuring the clarity, significance, and sufficiency of each sub-theme, thereby establishing domain validity. Adjustments were implemented by the author based on feedback and input from experts.

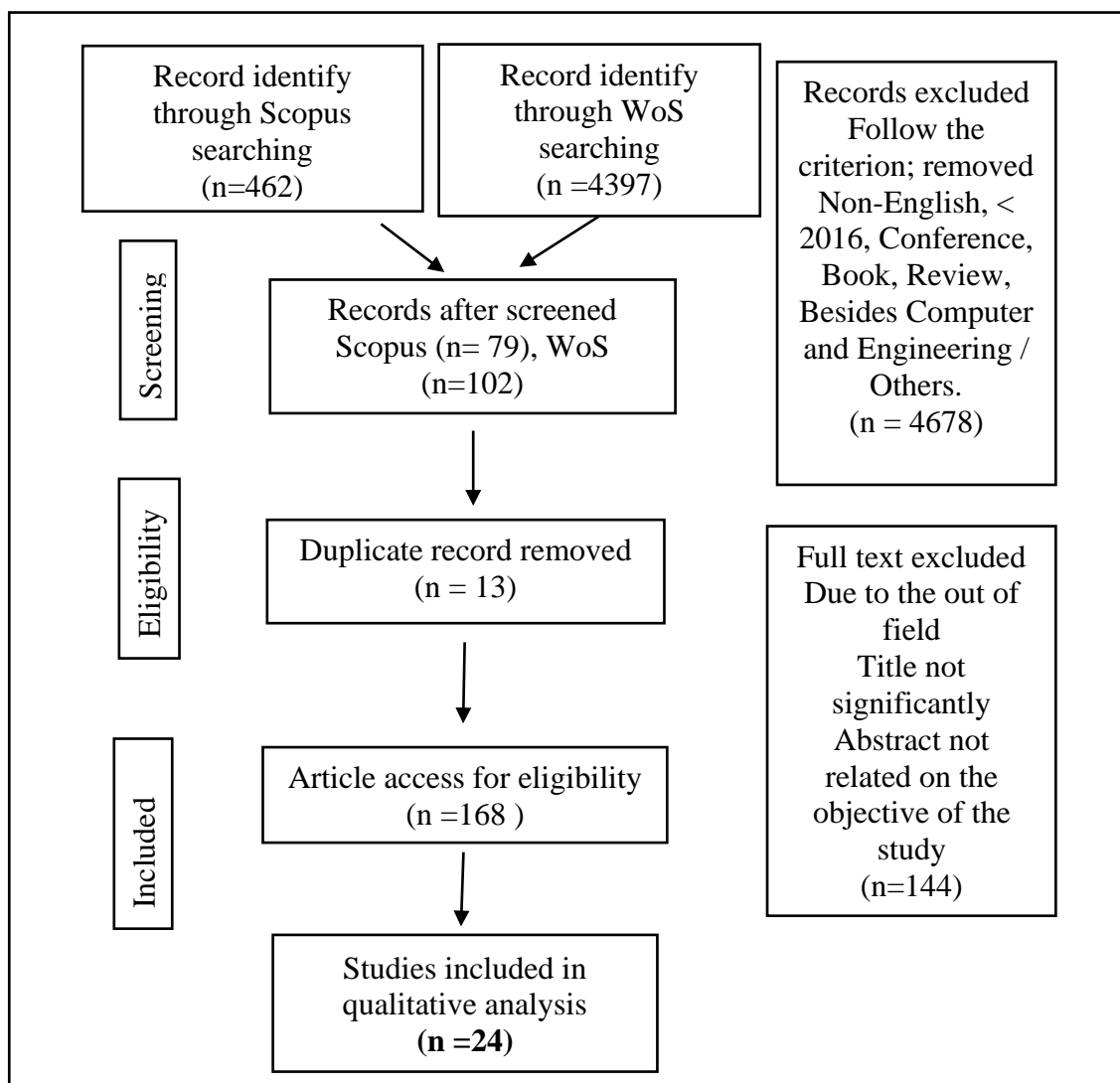


Figure 1: PRISMA

Result and Findings

The research demonstrates that 24 articles were retrieved and subject to analysis through thorough advanced search procedures with family involvement. Three themes have been identified: Teacher-Parent Collaboration, Barriers and Challenges, and Effects on the Achievement of Students.

Teacher-Parent Collaboration

AUTHORS	TITLE	AIM	FINDING
(Alnoaim & alharbi, 2023)	The Involvement of Parents of Special Needs Students in Schools in Saudi Arabia	Teachers' perspectives regarding parents' involvement in their child's education.	Correlation between teachers' success in communication and their understanding of the parents' level of education.
(Owino et al., 2023)	Family and teacher roles in family engagements in special education in Kenya	Teachers' and families' contributions to family involvement in special education.	Effective engagement and positive communication between families and schools.
(Marsh et al., 2023)	Improving Engagement in the Virtual Environment Through Culturally Relevant Expectations and Parent Collaboration for Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	Provide methods that educators can use to help parents collaborate with their children.	Optimize virtual learning outcomes for children having Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD).
(Abín et al., 2021)	Family and teacher involvement in diversity and special needs in the school context	The importance of family involvement at home and at school.	Family communication and the quality of involvement are important variables.
(Paccaud et al., 2021)	Satisfaction With the Collaboration Between Families and Schools – The Parent's View	Parent's experiences needs as well as expectations regarding collaboration with schools.	Efficiency not only improves students' academic abilities but also enhances their emotional well-being.
(Lee & park, 2020)	Analysis of experiences of secondary educators on interagency collaboration in transition education	Strengthen the cooperation to support the education as well as well-being of students with disabilities.	Collaboration to individual student needs, enhancing teachers' skills, collaborative efforts, management organization, providing support, focusing (IEP)

(Connor & Cavendish, 2018)	Sharing Power With Parents: Improving Educational Decision Making for Students With Learning Disabilities	Parental involvement in the decision-making, specifically in negotiating Individualized Education Programs.	Responsibility of school professionals to understand parental perspectives, cultural awareness, and competence.
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Barriers and Challenges

AUTHORS	TITLE	AIM	FINDING
(Lambert et al., 2023)	Perspectives on the implementation of pre-ETS services: Identification of barriers and facilitators to early career planning for youth with disabilities	Challenges hindering family involvement in Pre-ETS for students with substantial disabilities.	Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students having significant disabilities at an earlier stage in their career planning process.
(Oke et al., 2021)	Identifying Barriers and Solutions to Increase Parent-Practitioner Communication in Early Childhood Care and Educational Services: The Development of an Online Communication Application	Family involvement practices in ECEC services.	These barriers encompass a range of challenges that hinder effective family-school partnerships.
(Sirirak et al., 2019)	A Study on Problems, Needs and Collaborative Model of Parents and Special Education Teachers	The needs of parents' interactions with special education teachers.	PEER: Personnel (P), Education (E), Environment (E), and the relationship between school and parents (R).
(Alnahdi & elhadi, 2019)	Outcomes of special education programs for students with intellectual disabilities: Family members' perspectives	Results of special education programs for students with intellectual disabilities and family involvement.	Shaping educational future, along with a stronger emphasis on enhancing students' life skills.
(Hirano et al., 2018)	Systemic Barriers to Family Involvement in Transition Planning for Youth with	Family views of the obstacles and their participation in the	The active participation of families plays a crucial role in the

(Odongo, 2018)	Disabilities: A Qualitative Meta-synthesis	transition planning procedure.	achievements of young individuals with disabilities.
(Odongo, 2018)	Barriers to parental/family participation in the education of a child with disabilities in Kenya	Barriers to parental/family in the education of children with disabilities .	Empower non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups.
(Pretorius & steadman, 2018)	Barriers and Facilitators to Caring for a Child with Cerebral Palsy in Rural Communities of the Western Cape, South Africa	Barriers and opportunities they encountered when treating cerebral palsy (CP) students.	Social support, family involvement, public awareness of the causes of disability, financial support, as well as disability-friendly services.
(Sedibe & fourie, 2018)	Exploring Opportunities and Challenges in Parent-School Partnerships in Special Needs Schools in the Gauteng Province, South Africa	Parent-school partnerships in special needs schools.	The difficulties identified were associated with family involvement, including emotional well-being, socio-economic limitations, and social perception.

Effects on the Achievement of Students

AUTHORS	TITLE	AIM	FINDING
(Romano et al., 2023)	Triad Transition Planning for Students Receiving Special Education and English Learner Services, Families, and Teachers	In the transition planning process, effective cooperation occurs among "triad" families and educators.	More effective strategies for supporting students who have multiple identifications, such as those with special needs.
(Saeed et al., 2023)	How social support predicts academic achievement among secondary students with special needs: the mediating role of self-esteem	Exploring the impact of social support on academic success, with a focus on the potential mediating function of self-esteem in the relationship between social support and	The effect of friends and family on students' achievement was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) in the SEM results, while the significant other was not found to be statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

(Abdullah & Ibrahim, 2021)	Parents Involvement in the Implementation of Career Transition for Students with Learning Disabilities from a Teacher's Perspective in Malaysia	academic achievement. Family involvement and challenges encountered when facilitating career transitions for students with learning disabilities (SLD).	Parents engage in activities such as facilitating, offering support, contributing to, promoting work readiness, and assisting in the pursuit of job opportunities after their child completes their schooling.
(Almalky & Alqahtani, 2021)	Special education teachers' reflections on school transition practices that support partnerships with businesses to prepare students with disabilities for employment in Saudi Arabia	The connections between schools and businesses in terms of practices aimed at readying students with disabilities for employment, with family involvement.	This conviction is based on the successful implementation of comprehensive transition practices, covering planning, assessment, skill development, and collaborative efforts to facilitate the transition to employment.
(Mora-figueroa et al., 2016)	Effects of Family Involvement with Students at Risk for Reading Disability	Parents' involvement in their children's reading	Substantial difference in reading performance between those children who followed the program and the group who did not.
(Hirano & Rowe, 2016)	A Conceptual Model for Parent Involvement in Secondary Special Education	Model of parent involvement	Parental involvement supports students not only in their academic pursuits but also in the crucial transition to post-school life.
(Morse & Bell, 2018)	Homeschooling: A Growing School Choice Option for Meeting Special Educational Needs	Parental involvement, special educational needs, and homeschooling as an alternative option.	The decision to homeschool was primarily influenced by the aspiration to take a more active role in their children's education, as it was considered the most important factor.
(Wahyuni, 2022)	Parental Involvement and the Achievement of Students With Special Education Needs in Indonesia	Both parental engagement and the academic performance of children may be impacted by the demographic characteristics of	Parental involvement is significantly related to how parents perceive the academic achievement of their children with special educational needs (SEN).

(Trimmer & Dixon, 2018)	The Impact of Public Policy on Support Services for Indigenous Families with Children with Special Education Needs	parents and their offspring. Effects of global policy changes and related finance methods.	The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), a new national policy that was adopted in 2013, has an impact on how disability services are provided to children and their families.
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Discussion and Conclusion

The families of these children have specific needs. These needs can be categorized into four main areas, represented by the acronym PEER: Personnel (P), Education (E), Environment (E), as well as the Relationship between school and parents (R) (Sirirak et al., 2019). These areas encapsulate the essential requirements of family in their engagement with the special education system. A collaborative model is required to tackle these challenges and effectively cater to the requirements of both students and parents (Burke, 2013). The model aims to create a holistic framework for family involvement that supports students in their academic pursuits and the crucial transition to post-school life (Abín et al., 2021, Weiss & Theadore, 2011). Special education teachers are essential components of this model, playing a crucial role in the success of students with special needs. This collaboration model aims to bridge the gaps, enhance communication, and provide the necessary support to ensure the development and success of children with special needs in the education system.

Key factors for supporting family include: 1) Social Support: benefit from social support networks, which can include family, friends, support groups, and counselors (Saeed et al., 2023). These networks offer emotional assistance, respite care, and a sense of community. 2) Raising Public Awareness: Raising awareness about the causes of disabilities can help reduce stigma and increase understanding. This, in turn, can lead to more inclusive and supportive communities (Pretorius & Steadman, 2018). 3) Government Financial Support: Government programs and financial assistance, such as disability benefits, can ease the financial burden on caregivers. 4) Accessible Disability-Friendly Services: Access to disability-friendly services is essential. These services may include respite care, special education programs, transportation services, and medical facilities designed to cater to individuals with disabilities. By attending to these critical elements, families can access the assistance and resources required to offer improved care and elevate the quality of life for individuals with disabilities (Abdullah & Ibrahim, 2021).

In summary, the academic success of students is the fundamental goal of any successful education system. This achievement involves equipping students to overcome academic challenges. Moreover, social support and self-esteem are recognized as crucial factors in nurturing academic success (Wahyuni, 2022). The study's findings shed light on various aspects, including school preparations for employment, engagement in community activities, and daily life skills (Almalky & Alqahtani, 2021). It also explores the roles of parents and students in setting transition goals and examines the outcomes for young adults and their families after leaving school (Hirano & Rowe, 2016). Family-school communication and the

quality of involvement are important factors, given their impact on student's academic performance and overall well-being.

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