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Increasing Interest in Inclusive Education in the Context of Action Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Special Education during the Fourteenth Five-Year Period in China: An Analysis of Baidu Index Data

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Abstract

Objective: Current evidence shows that public interest in inclusive education has been rising since the implementation of Action Plan for the development and enhancement of special education during the Fourteenth Five-Year period in China. The aim of this study was to quantify recent trends in public interest and related online search behavior for inclusive education in the context of this Action Plan.

Methods: Baidu Index, a database of search engines with massive information, was employed. By searching for the keyword inclusive education, and using content analysis to understand the data information related to inclusive education. This study also extracted the search trend data of Chinese netizens on the related terms "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities " and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" from January 1, 2022 to October 27, 2022. Finally, it compares the search trend of public search interests of inclusive education with related terms.

Results: The public's interest in "inclusive education" and the related terms "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities " and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" has been on the rise since the implementation of the Action Plan. The search trend reached its peak in February and May 2022, the valley in January 2022, and the search volume in other time periods tended to be stable.

Conclusion: Baidu Index can understand the public's interest in inclusive education. The study shows that the rising search trend of inclusive education is closely related to the implementation of the Action Plan. The search volume of the "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities " and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" is basically the same as that of "inclusive education", but the average search volume daily of "inclusive education" is slightly higher than that of "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities".

Keywords: search engine, Baidu index, inclusive education, Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities of China, Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities of China

1. Introduction

Inclusive education has caused wide public concern. Most European countries have acknowledged inclusive education to secure equal educational rights for all persons. Inclusive education is an important premise to secure equal educational rights for all persons with varied special educational needs [1]. In Africa, Ghana has recognized the value of inclusive education and began implementing some form of inclusive education since the 1990s [2]. A series of international agreements were published to develop inclusion these years, and some of the important international agreements above signed since 1989 which have promoted inclusive education in the global context [3]. The selected international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child [4], World Conference on Education for All [5], Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities [6], Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action [7], Dakar Framework for Action [8], the Millennium Development Goals [9], Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [10], and Incheon Declaration [11] are related to inclusive education and closely linked to this study. However, it does not mean that inclusive education only began in 1989, but it highlights the fact that the right to education for all children became a more prominent international issue [3].

In China, inclusive education also occupies an important position. The launch of the Action Plan for the development and enhancement of special education during the Fourteenth Five-Year period in China aims to promote the high-quality development of education, effectively guarantee the right of children and adolescents with disabilities to equal access to education, and let them and regular students understand and respect each other, grow and progress together in an inclusive environment [12]. It also proposed the main goal of initially establishing a high-quality special education system by 2025 [4]. Therefore, this study uses Baidu Index to understand the public's search trend for inclusive education in the context of the Action Plan.

2. Methods

Similar to Google Trends, Baidu Index is a popular tool to understand online interests. Recently, Baidu

Index has attracted the attention of researchers and has been applied to knowledge management, mental health, disease prevention and control and other fields [13-16]. This research is the first exploration of the trend search of Chinese netizens' behavior of inclusive education, which truly reflects the public's online interest in inclusive education. The geospatial scope covered by the data analyzed in this study mainly includes 31 provinces (municipalities and autonomous regions) in China (excluding relevant data from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan). This study utilizes the Baidu index as a research tool to evaluate the search trend, using inclusive education as the search keyword to study the public interest of inclusive education from January 1, 2021, to October 27, 2022.

3. Results

Since the promulgation of the Action Plan for the development and enhancement of special education during the Fourteenth Five-Year period in China, the search volume of Internet users for inclusive education has generally increased (Figure A). By comparing the search volume of inclusive education with the related words "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities", it is found that the change trend of search volume of "inclusive education" and "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" is similar (Figure B and Figure C). However, the daily average search volume of "inclusive education" is slightly higher than that of "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" (Figure C). The data results show that Internet users' search interest in "inclusive education", "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" reached the peak in February and May. The lowest value occurs during the Chinese Spring Festival, around January.

4. Discussion

The study found that the public's interest in "inclusive education" is rising due to the launch and implementation of the Action Plan in January 2022. For the two related words of "inclusive education", namely, "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities", the public's search interest has also increased to varying degrees. It is worth noting that the public's search volume for "inclusive education" reached a peak from the end of February to the beginning of March. This is the beginning of the 2022 spring semester, and primary and secondary school students are about to start school. During this period, the Ministry of Education also held the 2022 Education Key Work Conference, and proposed to implement the Action Plan, promote inclusive education, and continuously promote the compulsory education enrollment of disabled children, promote the integration of general education, vocational education, medical rehabilitation, information technology and special education, and improve the quality of special education [17]. Therefore, netizens' interest in inclusive education has increased significantly.

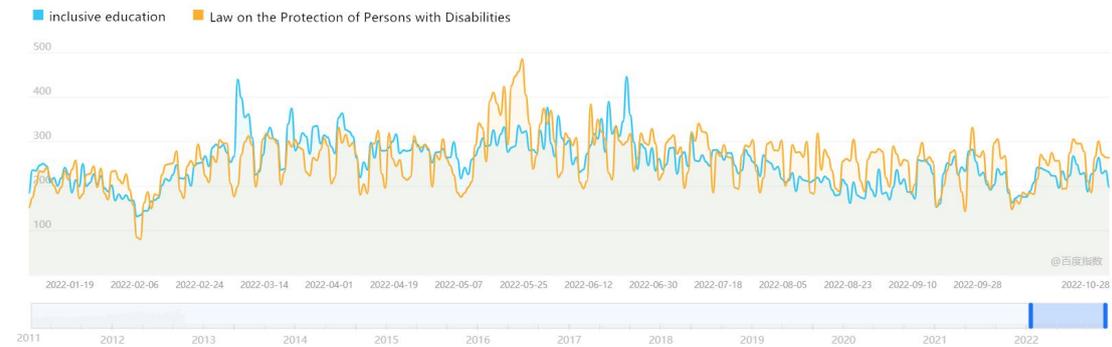
Inclusive education is not only a culture and practice, but also a policy (Tan, 2021). The promulgation and implementation of a series of policies have promoted the development of inclusive education in China. In 2014, the Chinese government released the Special Education Promotion Plan (2014-2016), which emphasized in the overall goal "comprehensively promote inclusive education so that all children with disabilities can receive appropriate education" [18]. The Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities was revised and implemented in May 2017, effectively promoting the development of inclusive education [19]. Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities is China's first special regulation on the education of the disabled, which also further legally guarantees the right of the persons with disabilities to education [20-21]. In fact, both the "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" provide institutional support and legal protection for the development of inclusive education, and promote the development of inclusive education. Therefore, the search trend of inclusive education is like that of its related terms "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities". In addition, China's National Day for Helping the Disabled is in May, "The third Sunday in May is National Day for Helping the Disabled" [22], so the public's search for the "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" has reached a peak. The Spring Festival is the most solemn traditional festival in China around January. During holidays, Chinese residents usually gather with their families, relatives and friends or go out to play. Therefore, the search volume of "inclusive education", "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" in this period is the lowest.

This study analyzes the public interest about inclusive education and its related terms "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities " and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities", which is conducive to analyzing the public's search behavior and psychology, and can effectively promote the development of inclusive education in China. However, it also has some limitations. The data of Baidu Index comes from Baidu Search. In addition, this study did not evaluate the data obtained by other search engines. In fact, Baidu Index collects data by keyword input, but it does not show the motivation behind the search crowd's search behavior. Although Baidu Index only provides data of Baidu search engine, in general, Baidu users account for 78.2% of Chinese netizens [16]. Therefore, Baidu Index can represent the views and ideas of most Chinese netizens.

A



B



C

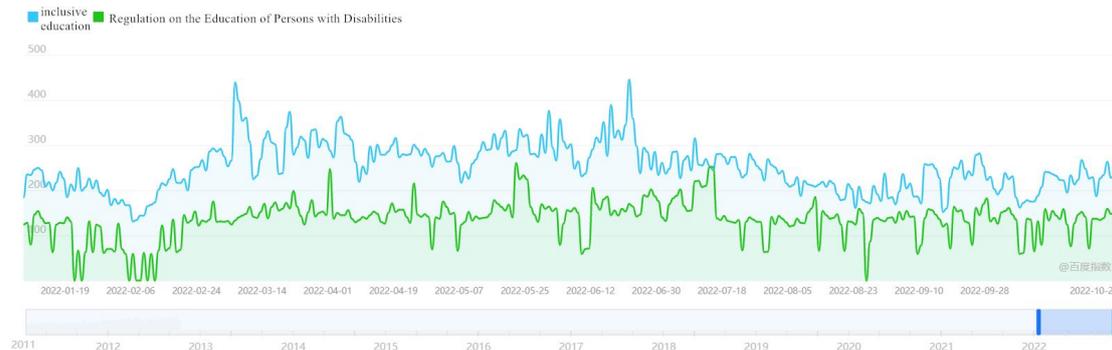


Figure 1 Baidu Search Trend in China for inclusive education

A. Baidu search volume index for “inclusive education”.

B. Baidu search volume index for “inclusive education” (blue) and “Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities” (orange).

C. Baidu search volume index for “inclusive education” (blue) and “Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities” (green).

5. Conclusion

The research results show that the public interest to "inclusive education" and related words "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities " and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" has been on the rise since the implementation of Action Plan for the development and

enhancement of special education during the Fourteenth Five-Year period. Due to the implementation of the Action Plan, inclusive education will reach its peak in February 2022. The "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" reached their peak in May, and the search volume in other periods tended to be stable. "Law on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities" and "Regulation on the Education of Persons with Disabilities" provide institutional and legal guarantees for the development of inclusive education, and promote the further implementation of inclusive education.

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