

INVESTIGATING THE ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Prof. Dr. Tariq Mahmood Khan,

Professor in Education, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore Pakistan. Email: tariqmahmood.ier@pu.edu.pk

Kanwar Muhammad Abid Razzaqi,

Lecturer, in Higher Education department Punjab, Pakistan. Email: kanwarabidrazzaqi@gmail.com

Shaista Naheed, Lecturer, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore Pakistan Email: Shaistaali@gmail.com

Abstract

Globally, it is acknowledged that learners with diverse needs are socially more motivated in getting interacted with normal students. They get the opportunity of social inclusion through the way of inclusive education. The purpose of the current research was to investigate the principals' attitudes for inclusive education in Lahore, Pakistan.. This study was of a qualitative survey research method in its nature. All principals of the public girls' and boys' secondary schools of the city were the population of the study. The sample of 197 principals' secondary school was selected through multistage sampling for the qualitative study. Further, one questionnaire and one interview protocol were devised to conduct in- depth interviews. The qualitative collected data was further analyzed through thematic analysis. The results of the study showed that principals' have low perception about the attitude. It is suggested that the principals need to be professionally trained in inclusive education. Besides, the government would have to change the infrastructure, technology facilities, monitor the progress system and retrain the principals' for the 21st century skills in general schools in order to induct inclusive education.

Keywords: inclusive education, attitude, leadership, interview protocol

Introduction

Attitude of the educational professional towards inclusive education is very crucial to be emphasized. A diverse range of children are excluded or discriminated in regular schools. They are not admitted even in the schools due to their low range achievements which are due to their disabilities. Inclusive education is much advocated due to obvious significant advantages in attaining social skills necessary for societal inclusion.

Special needs children are to face many challenges in diverse areas of their lives involving people's attitudes. There have always positive and negative attitudes of the teachers about inclusive education. The teachers of general education often have negative opinion about the inclusion which has many times discussed in literature. Thus, the encouraging attitude of teachers for inclusion of children having disabilities is quite essential. This study also primarily focuses on the attitudes not only of the principals but also of the teachers to have a deep insight. The successful inclusive education is designated to the most critical role of principals. The active participation of the principals is very important and significant predictor of success in service improvement and implementing change. The principal is a leading figure to be play assistive role in adopting new attitude and practices. Principals are to create the positive leaning environment, academic thoroughness and disseminate the empowerment to the entire faculty. Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004).

No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) Act of 2001 has been put into practice during years of 2002 to 2015. It was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, due to its delimitation, but it kept

some parts of NCLB and replaced others. ESSA (2015) highlighted the features by maintaining necessary and important shields, has advanced the equity required for the high needs and disadvantaged American students, in a way all such students will be educated as per higher standards of academics while making them ready for prosperous upcoming life in college. This was also made sure that provision of necessary information to students, communities and families with the help of assessments taken at national level will be of high standards with supporting the growth of local innovations by local leaders and educators on the basis of evidence. Furthermore, it highlighted to sustain and expand the access to high quality preschool with maintaining the expectations for). Cross-check along with action for bringing up the affirmative transformation in the 'schools with low performance'. (US Department of Education, 2018). It has drawn the attention on the important role of educational leadership for upholding the standards of education, for the disadvantaged students by communicating school goals, monitoring, supervising and providing feedback to reassess the process.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2002, reports that the children with disabilities are neglected in Pakistan due to some reasons such as; deficiency of information, guidelines and rules, rehabilitation" (p. 2). The notions of "individual rights" that is vivid in a western society seems clumsy and non-natural in Pakistan (Miles, 2004). Khan, Hashmi and Khanum (2017) contend that the promotion of inclusive education cannot be promoted in Pakistani public schools without the role of head teachers or educational leadership. Pasha (2012), indicated that the head teachers are reluctant to adopt inclusive notion of education in Pakistan. To reduce this reluctance, she proposed that the school management should be provided incentives, knowledge about inclusiveness and inclusive training.

Leaders are prudently trustworthy for determining the shared vision and mission for the school; boosting a learning climate and expedite the culture; stipulate features of instructional leadership for professional development. To monitor the progress of students for placement; supervising and evaluating the instructional system (Cobb, 2015; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2015; Nicolas, 2015). Leadership for inclusive education involves challenging decisions. It is multidimensional act that requires precise eternal effort, perpetuating tendencies of leading qualities. It is consistent and frequently articulated practices of vision sharing. (Carter & Abawi, 2018).

It is always believed here to teach these children separately, which are having disabilities. Several institutions are also working already regarding special education of children having disabilities, however; the case of inclusive education is understood in an odd way in common classrooms or schools, as per widely accepted assumptions, somewhat it is treated in contemptuous way and this concept is existed almost everywhere in Pakistan.

Hence, the successful inclusion might turn into unsuccessful one. The main objective of the study was to compare the attitude of the principals towards inclusive education.

Methodology

All public sector girls' and boys' secondary schools of Lahore City, their principals were the population of the study. There were total 333 public secondary schools in the Lahore city. Out of which 153 schools were for boys and 180 schools for girls.

Multistage sampling technique was used in this study. Cluster random sampling technique was used to sample (Gray, 2014). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) size of the sample was decided from the population. At the first stage, 197 public schools out of 333 were selected by using cluster sampling. All the schools of the total population were enlisted considering each school as a cluster. Sample for the principals was selected from these clusters. At second stage, 92 boys and 105 girls were selected from public schools for the collection of data. At first stage, schools were selected by using cluster sampling. At the second stage, simple random sample technique was performed as Gay (2010) described the procedures for the selection of a simple random sample of elements without replacement from a finite population of elements. As sample was taken from a table of random digits with equal probability n different selection numbers, corresponding to n of the listing numbers of the population elements. All the sample selected were given qualitative open ended questions. These two questions were responded by 147 participants. The responses were analysed by thematic and frequency analysis methods in table 1 and 2.

All the 197 schools of the total 333 population were enlisted considering each school as a cluster. Sample for the three principals was selected from these clusters to conduct the interviews. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the size of the sample was taken from the population, The researcher as the main instrument of this study, in the field for obtaining understanding and perceptions of principals about inclusive education had obtained earlier consent to audiotape for interview from principals. Thus, in this way the interview clarified, by the researcher what had been observed. To talk about their experiences, feelings, opinions and knowledge, the in-depth interviews were employed in this research study (Patton, 1990). The researcher was able to obtain as much as possible about the assessment of needs for the development of attitude of principals for inclusive education. Interviewing with principals confirmed some aspects and triangulated the data which obtained through observations.

Two phases of interviews were used. In the first session, which was a formal session, topic of investigation was described by the researcher. Next, in the second phase, the reliability of the collected data from participants was checked earlier. The session with participants was audio-taped and was transcribed later. The duration of interviews for each participant was almost 45 minutes. The transcriptions of their interviews were given to the participants and asked them to see if there was a misinterpretation on the part of the researcher who took about three to four days to transcribe the interview for each participant. In addition to this, each participant was given one week to read the transcriptions. The interview guide helped the researcher to ask questions specifically about the barriers that hinder in better communication for principals. However, mostly questions which were asked from the principals were open ended questions. The responses of the interview protocol indicators were thematically analyzed in tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. In order to gain the benefit of more reliable data and avoiding to be distracted to get notes and information from interviews, the researcher recorded all interviews by a voice recorder.

Findings

Open-ended questions responses of principals about the attitude towards Inclusive education are given in the tables 1-2.

Table 1

Responses of Q1-What is your opinion to establish inclusive education in classroom principals' attitude towards inclusive education? (N=147)

Sr.No	Responses	f	%
1	school buildings do not support this system	91	61.9
2	Low educational benefits for disabled students	65	44.2
3	infrastructural mismatched	70	47.6
4	decision making at government level	17	11.6
5	emergent situations are difficult to handle	67	45.6
6	teachers are already burdened	107	72.8
7	inferiority complex of the children with disabilities	42	28.6
8	special teachers must be appointed	14	9.5
9	psychologists are needed	52	35.4
10	teachers must be given incentives	69	47.0
11	disturbance of regular routines	103	70.0
12	more time is required for inclusive education system in schools	63	42.8
13	social adjustment of the disabled students	13	8.8
14	helpful in their disabilities	21	14.2
15	demotivated regular students	26	17.7

The majority of the principals do not seem in the favor of inclusive education in classrooms. They describe a number of reasons for this like thinking it additional activity, wastage of time, burden for teachers, low benefits for students, high learning challenges, and disturbance of regular routines. Further, they feel an extreme need for teachers' training if the government wants to impose inclusive education.

Table 2

Responses of Q2-What is your opinion to establish inclusive education in school? about the principals' attitude towards inclusive education? (N=147)

Sr.No	Responses	f	%
1	It is an additional activity	86	58.5
2	Low educational benefits in classroom	56	38.1
3	Low educational benefits in classroom for regular students	61	41.4
4	special attention is required for policy making	9	6.1
5	teachers' training is extremely necessary	101	68.7.
6	motivation of the teachers is very essential	41	27.9
7	demoralization of the children with disabilities	76	51.7
8	special teachers must be appointed	33	22.4
9	psychologists are needed	12	8.2
10	learning challenges are very high for special children	116	78.9
11	disturbance of regular routines	127	86.4
12	peer tutoring	22	15.0
13	active participation of the students of both categories	14	9.5
14	it is additional work load for teachers	132	89.7
15	wastage of time	66	44.8
16	social adjustment of the disabled students	21	14.2

17	helpful in their disabilities	17	11.6
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The majority of the principals once again do not agree with the inclusive education system due to various reasons like disturbance of routines, low incentive for teachers, inappropriate building designs, teachers' work load, and low educational benefits, chances of mismanagement in handling emergent situation and unfitness of infrastructure.

The interview protocol responses of principals about the attitude towards inclusive education are given in the table 3-8

Table 3

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.1 what do think about the work load and classroom management of the teachers towards inclusive education? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education

Respondents	Responses
I.	Definitely, teachers have to work little hard to manage the class. Helper should be given to teachers as in Nursery class (givers are working).
II.	In the Present Situation work load of the regular teachers, if considered truly, is already more than the workload should be. Explaining the situation is that teachers are teaching huge classes (average 60 students per class), checking their homework, collecting fees from the students, conducting parent teacher meetings, managing co-curricular activities and unexpected duties like Polio duty, Census duties, election duties etc.
III.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. needs and expectations of the students b. nurturing classroom climate c. democratically setting the rules and norms of the classroom

Table 4

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.2 What is your opinion about the educational benefits of inclusion to the students? Measuring Attitude towards inclusive education

Respondents	Responses
I.	Educator benefits the students in all the circumstances, but it should be according to the interest of students.
II.	Lower level of disability may be more beneficial at the same time severe kind of disability can be given benefit of mainstreaming of the personality. General schooling gives the students to understand and be accustomed to general discipline of societ
III.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Development of provoking thoughts b. Understanding the nature of others c. Social inclusion

Table 5

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.3 What do you opine for the learning challenges of the students with disabilities? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education"

Respondents	Responses
I.	Teachers can reduce the problems if the work according to the level of the students.
II.	Challenge is developing their Positive response towards sociality.
III.	there are huge number of challenges the teachers as well as students would have to face in inclusive setting

Table 6

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.4 What do you say about delinquent (delinquent or undisciplined) students? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education"

Respondents	Responses
I.	If they are not handled properly, they will become bad citizen /personality.
II.	They need psychological treatment.
III.	they must be handled appropriately, with polite behavior, and through breaking their pride with different techniques

Table 7

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.5 What is your suggestion about the professional training of the teachers towards inclusive education? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education"

Respondents	Responses
I.	- Professional training towards inclusive education is very important often regular internal. After training feedback is also important. In regular education there must be a partial training for the minor as well as major disabilities but at the same time if special students are to be treated in the regular Schools there must be teachers bearing
II.	License and Degree for the treatment/teaching of Special children. Four kinds of disabilities mean at least four Post of Special education students
III.	a. part and parcel for the inclusive education b. Knowledge of the contents and methodologies c. Leadership qualities

Table 8

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.6 What is your opinion for the establishment of inclusive education in classrooms? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education"

Respondents1	Responses
I.	Inclusive education in classroom is a best way to teach the students of both categories. But our buildings, our overall system of education including all its facilities does not seem in the position of adopting inclusive education system

- II.** Theoretically it feels and looks soothing, rational and justified but practically question arises if this can be successful in Pakistan or will flop like Higher Secondary Schools which are not running as good as were considered. In general schools we are not achieving required goals and are under continuous criticism as compared to private sector. For the reason institutions already under criticisms are not a good option for inclusive education.
- a. I it is too difficult but not impossible
 - b. Teachers must be trained and professional
 - c. Teachers must be sensitized about it
- III.** d. But again, there will be managerial problems in class as well as in school to handle the students with disabilities.
- Moreover, when teachers are not ready for this, how can it be successful.

Table 9

Interview responses of principals' about "Q.7 What do you think about the establishment of inclusive education in school? measuring Attitude towards inclusive education"

Respondents	Responses
IV.	In school learning is not important. Marks in board exams are important. So system should be change to start inclusive education. Pilot projects should be conducted before taking the decision. I do not think the multitask will be fruitful. Yet there may be an option for running a separate unit for special children in the same building of a general School.
V.	It will flourish the extra burden of the teachers as well as of the principals. It does not mean this system is impossible, but the education system of Pakistan is not as proper as is required for the inclusive setting. But if the state imposes this system, it would have to train and sensitize the teachers to such an extent that would be according to the international expectations.
VI.	

Conclusions

It was concluded on the bases of open-ended questions' responses of principals about the attitude towards inclusive education that responses of Q1-What is your opinion to establish inclusive education in classroom principals' attitude towards inclusive education? (N=147). The majority of the principals do not seem in the favor of inclusive education in classrooms. They describe a number of reasons for this like thinking it additional activity, wastage of time, burden for teachers, low benefits for students, high learning challenges, and disturbance of regular routines. Further, they feel an extreme need for teachers' training if the government wants to impose inclusive education. The responses of Q2-What is your opinion to establish inclusive education in school? about the principals' attitude towards inclusive education? (N=147)

The majority of the principals once again do not agree with the inclusive education system due to various reasons like disturbance of routines, low incentive for teachers, inappropriate

building designs, teachers' work load, and low educational benefits, chances of mismanagement in handling emergent situation and unfitness of infrastructure. The principals' attitude on qualitative analysis opines for the needs and expectations of the students, nurturing classroom climate, and democratically setting the rules and norms of the classroom. The respondents give three aspects of educational benefits for the students with disabilities such as development of provoking thoughts, understanding the nature of others and social inclusion. The integration in inclusion (Cole & Pazey, 2013), has led the concerns for social inclusion (Goodley, 2016). But here, it seems the respondents put the educational benefits directly on the shoulders of the students with disability. They are of the opinion that if the students were interested in learning, definitely they would get educational benefits. If they are not, they would not. The principals, in addition to this, say that students with minor disabilities might get more educational benefits than that of the students with high disabilities. However, The Nation's Report Card (2007) investigated that the children with disabilities learn very slowly and as a result, they lag behind their peers in normal classroom setting. The principals seem sure here about the teachers that they can reduce the learning challenges of the students with disabilities. If we talk about the classroom managerial qualities of the teachers (Jones, (2004), the principals believe in the teachers' abilities. But at the same time, the majority of the principals claimed at the conditions of the teachers by saying that they are already burdened more than their capacities. So, they cannot manage the workload of the inclusive classrooms. They are further of the view that in general education classrooms, there is huge strength of the students that has become already a cause of disturbance in the classrooms to manage properly. One thing looks very clear that principals are somehow doubtful or inexperienced about the educational benefits and levels of the disabilities in inclusive classroom setting. The respondents are also fearful from the delinquent students giving the opinion that lest such students should not become bad citizens. If we talk about the professionalism, almost all the respondents are strongly in the favor of professional training of the teachers. According to Lewis (2001), the personal and professional experience of teachers is required for this dimension. In the same way, the principals recommend it very honestly for them in order to make the inclusive education successful. Some are of the view that simply conducting trainings would not be sufficiently enough, these trainings need proper feedback from the trainees for the acknowledgement of the real reflection of the training. Professional development might be presented in the both ways; as traditional and reform model as well (Garet, et al, 2011). Many researchers are of the view that there is dearth of sufficient knowledge about teaching the diverse students (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Therefore, the training must include leadership qualities, content knowledge, methodologies and activity-based learning. However, some of them advise to hold training for the teachers in order to make them professionally skilled, sensitize them to adopt such children in their classrooms, and to train them in special kind of activities, tactics, strategies, techniques for the harmonization of the both types of students. The attitudes of the teachers need to be molded accordingly.

In addition, the principals are in the favor of provision some helpers to the inclusive classrooms teachers if this system is thought to be quite necessary. However, one important thing has been pointed out for the inclusive education in general schools. That is a need for hiring special education teachers who must have license and proper degrees to teach the students with disabilities. They look a bit confused about their concept of inclusive education in general

education. If special teachers should teach special children, only building of specific architect is left to be built along with its special facilities. This means the students with disabilities must be separated from the normal students. From this, the real meaning or cause of inclusive education where the special students are to sit or include in the general classroom reflecting the major concept of social inclusion probably becomes baseless. The respondents seem against the inclusive education in current scenario of our education system due to building insufficiency, building designs, lack in facilities, untrained teachers, unfavorable learning atmosphere. One thing they might be thinking is that inclusive classroom setting would probably exacerbate the running general education system. The current running system focuses on only marks gaining activities from where the real achievement and progress of the students is assessed and evaluated. They further say that in such kind of system, inclusive education program cannot be run properly. Therefore, the state must change in preexisted education system by adopting innovative methods of assessment and evaluation, must not revolve just around the marks gaining activities rather they must include all the necessary aspects of the education in real meanings. One thing more has been narrated very openly that if the government persistently wants to run this inclusive education system in general schools, the separated units should be made for this. Some respondents suggest hiring special teachers in general schools to teach the students with disabilities, and some expressed their best ideas of making the special units in the same schools to run special education program irrespective of inclusive education.

The overall condition of the whole education system seems miserable, which needs to be reformed according to the innovative and modern demands. The following suggestions have been proposed to the government in relation with the obtained results according to the set objectives of the study.

According to principals' perceptions and their Attitude differences, it is suggested that according to the principals' perceptions, their attitude is earnestly needed to be boosted for the inclusive education by conducting a big campaign triggered by government level. More teachers must be appointed because the teachers feel much burden even in general classes, which creates more issues in running academic sessions and other co-curricular activities in schools. Thus, for inclusive education, it needs to hire new teachers. Special teachers have been suggested by the principals in order to make the system of inclusive education successful because the respondents feel the general teachers unable to entirely control and run an inclusive classroom.

An extensive and intensive professional training of the principals is inevitable to cater their need to make them in the favor of inclusive education in classrooms. So that they could be acquainted with the privileges to be bestowed to the children with the diverse disabilities without thinking it additional activity, wastage of time, burden for teachers, low benefits for students, high learning challenges, and disturbance of regular routines. Further, they are required to make them developed with feeling so they could sensitize an extreme needs and expectations of the students, nurturing classroom climate, and democratically setting the rules and norms of the classroom. The principals are desired to get accustomed the three aspects of educational benefits for the students with disabilities such as development of provoking thoughts, understanding the nature of others and social inclusion.

It is the dire need of principals to get facilitation of psychologists in the schools in order to develop education for all culture to bring a change in attitude of the principals, staff, teachers and students to take care of disabled children as such students need special attention. There must a

continuous observation to bring a change in attitude of the principals by the intervention of departments of special education by holding the task of frequent trainings and workshops for teachers working in inclusive schools.

It is unavoidable to sensitize the need of the principals to nourish their awareness about the additional/marginal cost to transform mainstream schools to inclusive ones is minimal and affordable for the government. The attitudinal change in the mindfulness of principals is supportive for developing and setting out the agenda in education policy of the government for finding the most practical, cost-effective ways of meeting the needs of all children in ordinary schools without the discrimination of gender.

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