

Investigating the Classroom Problems faced by Special Education Teachers at Secondary School Level in District Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Teaching has been remained a challenging job and this even become more challenging when teaching to students with special needs. Education and training programmers for special children with special needs have been a focus of attention for government, organizations, schools and institution in Pakistan. The main aim and objectives of the study were to highlight current challenges faced by teachers while teaching special children in classroom and also their possible solution for the betterment of special child education in district Peshawar at secondary school level. The study is based on quantitative as well as qualitative analyses of the challenges faced by teachers. The population of the study was being comprised of 10 secondary schools in district Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Sample of the study was 132 secondary school teachers working in special education schools using universe sampling technique. For data collation, Questionnaire was used for teachers in the research. So, the recommendation was given according to the special needs of secondary school teachers. The collected data was entered in SPSS 16 which was according to the type and distribution of the data.

Key words: special education, teacher's problems, secondary school level, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Introduction

According to John Dewey (1944), Education is achieving the learning in a wise manner with the hope to share the experience gained by all mankind for the benefit and development. It should not be confused with philosophy as education is something derived from personal observation and experience. According to McAlister (2014), Education is a derivative of Latin terms Educare, Educatum or Educere with a literal meaning of training, nourishment or leading out the internal capabilities. Education is a process of living through a continuous reconstruction of daily experiences.

Similarly, according to Aziz et al (2014), Education is the social way through which can help one to guide his destiny. Every nation of the world strongly stress that everyone should get educated. Education is needed for social improvement. In fact, human beings have two forms: biological and social, the later need education as a

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prime source of development requires attention on priority basis, which needs education at every foot step.

Level of education

The education system in Pakistan comprise of two levels in general:

- a) Normal education
- b) Special education

Normal/ General Education

According to Anastasiou et al (2009), that component for a living successful life of an individual such as a solid base for knowledge, skills and attitude in any of the profession is considered as the hard core or general education. Normal education in general context refers the mode of education for a normal healthy developing child. The curriculum designed for these children shares common state standards and adopted by almost all the educational institutions across the board. The states design the curriculum for general education and are responsible to set the standards, conduct an examination and test the ability of the students in achieving the standards.

Special Education

Thomas (2000), stated that specialized sort of education where focus is made on to support students with known disability are taught in a specialized way to fulfill the deficiencies in their learning. This type of education is different from normal education as here the educational policies are adopted on individual bases and goals and standards are set according to the individual needs.

Special Education Teachers

Special education teachers carry a significant job challenge as to work with a substantial variety of students with different disabilities including physical, psychological, developmental, and cognitive and learning disabilities. Such teachers face the challenges of being engaging in individual student teachers interactions which require more focus of classroom strategies Nancy Mamlin (2012), pp1-3.

Special Students

Special students refer to the students with mild to severe physical, emotional, mental or psychological impairment which significantly decreases the daily activities of an individual. Showing low academic achievements. Special Children may vary in their disability including health, mental and physical conditions that need special care. Dealing a child with special needs can be obviously challenging and more complicated for teachers (Damer, 2001). Obviously teachers of special education face a lot of challenges

because there are many different types' disabilities Nancy Mamlin (2012).

Statement of the problem

Problems and challenges of teachers in special education are a very crucial phenomenon at all educational institutes, schools, colleges, and universities throughout the country. A special child is faced with unique challenges frequently that require more efforts than normal teaching. Not only special needs must be fulfilled, but the parent-teacher communication also needs serious consideration. That's why the researcher has selected the problem titled, "To investigate the problems faced by classroom teacher in special education at secondary school level in district Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa". It was also investigated, whether instructional strategies were used in classroom for the betterment of special students, and teachers have management skill.

Rational of the Study

Pakistan is a country with low literacy rate and education awareness and facilities for normal students are insufficient. Majority of the parents does not bother to send their normal offspring to educate them. In such the available facilities for specialized children will be hypothetically compromised. A through literature search yields that little are known about the class rooms problems of special students and their teachers. Therefore, it is timely to investigate these areas which will definitely en-lights the unknown facts and figures related to the problems faced by special students in classrooms and their teachers.

Objectives of study

The chief objectives of this study are

- a) To evaluate the instructional strategies used by special education teachers.
- b) To identify the classroom problems faced by special education teachers.
- c) To assess classroom management skills of the special education teachers.
- d) To appraise parental involvement in extending their help to special education teachers.

Research Questions

Following are key questions are

- a) What are the instructional strategies used by special education teachers?
- b) What are the problems faced by special education teacher when teaching special children?
- c) How classroom management skills can be assessed by special education teachers?

d) Does parental involvement help special education teachers?

Hypothesis

H¹ Special students have different class room problems which require special instruments and tools to deal with.

H² The class room problems of special education teachers are different and require specialized expertise.

Literature review

Those people who are disabled are often not eligible for public education. Such children were initially given educations by specialist physicians who laid the foundation of modern day special education concept. The initial idea was to focus on the instruction and skills pertained to a disability and were on individual bases. In its initial such education was provided to people with severe disabilities but with advances in medical research such education is now provided to all the people experiencing difficulty in learning (Watson et al 2007).

Due to the importance of Special education for disabled students are a very important aspect of our society and if they are being neglected this will be a very cruel act on behalf of administration. Special education is the field of studies specially designed to meet with the educational needs of disabled children, hearing impaired, visually handicapped, mentally retarded and physically disabled. Environmental factor may also put the special children at risk at times and this domain may also include gifted students who needs special attention to polish their skills according to the potentials they carry (Berry et al 2013).

Rainforth Discusses that Special education is a tool that enhances the shortcomings of the special students. It is unique in a way as the needs of the special students have a great intrapersonal variability and the special education needs to be more focused. The process of teaching, arrangements and tools are more sophisticated and the designed interventions should be goal oriented in terms of fulfilling the shortcomings and enhancing the existing skills of special students. Such education is aimed to help learners in achieving the acceptable self-dependency life and living a productive life, which is not possible with ordinary classroom education. (Rainforth, et al 1992).

Teachers of special education face more problems than most other professions. The burnout rate is the result of a number of issues that often disappoint these teachers as a result they leaving their jobs,

estimated after ten years of their services. This creates shortage of such teachers and the quality of programs designed for special children. The hardships faced by a special-education teacher may include dealing these students. The widespread misperception that teaching is easy, many people cannot recognize the teacher's role, it is obviously a very difficult job, one that comes with a set of various responsibilities; however. The disabilities of these students multiply the job's difficulty. (Oliver et al, 2010).

Research Methodology

The study is of descriptive nature that examined the idea of school teachers about the problems faced by special education teachers at secondary school level. Quantitative design was followed using 5-point likert scale questionnaire. The population of this research included 132 special education teachers in district Peshawar and all were included in this study through universal sampling technique. The main task of this study was to choose the sample circle which represents its overall population. The study was carried out in district Peshawar. 132 teachers and 10 schools of district Peshawar constitutes the population. The research design is quantitative which involved the gathering of factual information from respondents about the problems faced by special education teachers. The data were collected through questionnaire having 25 items constructed by the researcher items which asked about the problems faced by special education teachers from the sample population.

Sampling Technique

(10) Teachers of three (3) schools of the district Peshawar were selected for pilot study. The purpose of pilot study and modification of the questionnaires was to check the reliability and validity of data and if found any confusion might be removed (Sax, 1979, p258). Pilot testing is done in order to be ready for any type of criticisms from users and further recommendations from experts (Borg and Gall, 1983, p.425). Reliability of the items was measured through Cronbach's alpha which was 0.8. Data from all the respondents were gathered and analyzed through SPSS-21.

Results

The data obtained for all the selected possible class room problems were checked through Chi square statistics to check the association between difficulty of teachers for special students and other factors and are given below in table 1.

No	Problem identified	Value	Likelihood ratio	P value
1	Difficulty in class and students discipline	14.61 ^a	16.43	.102
2	Difficulties in class and special students health and hygiene	8.35 ^a	7.424	.499
3	Difficulties in class and special students attending the washroom	13.98 ^a	13.83	.123
4	Difficulties in class and special students eating and clean surrounding	25.51 ^a	21.037	.013
5	Difficulties in communication with their students	54.75 ^a	41.281	<.001
6	Difficulties of sensitivity and reactivity of special students.	33.736 ^a	18.999	<.001
7	Difficulties of classroom management is very challenging for their teachers	17.094 ^a	15.136	.009
8	Controlling behavioral problems of special students is a difficult task	43.75 ^a	36.28	<.001
9	Difficulty of keep student's discipline in class	11.09 ^a	9.13	.23
10	problems of Learning disability of special students	35.65 ^a	33.34	<.001
12	Teachers of special education use translation method for instruction in the classroom	14.09 ^a	12.13	0.34
13	Teachers of special education used direct method for instruction in the classroom	27.65 ^a	24.34	<.001
14	Teachers of special education use	7.09 ^a	06.13	0.85

	collaborative strategies for instruction in the classroom			
15	teachers of special education use cooperative strategies in the classroom	12.17 ^a	10.73	0.34
16	Teachers of special education cannot easily manage the classroom of special students	35.65 ^a	33.34	<.001
17	There is no organization in the classroom of special students	9.11 ^a	8.45	0.52
18	Special students don't follow the classroom rules	10.07 ^a	11.7	0.64
19	difficulty in managing the troublesome behavior	14.06 ^a	12.33	0.73
20	Teachers of special education need professional development in classroom management skills	7.08 ^a	11.41	0.44
21	Parent's involvement place a key role in learning of Special students.	12.05 ^a	8.13	0.33
22	Parents of special students frequently visit the school	10.10 ^a	11.43	0.84

23	Parents of special students regularly attend the parent teacher meetings	12.07 ^a	13.55	0.42
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Summary

It was observed that after running the statistical tool on the data which was gathered through questionnaire from 132 secondary school teachers of District Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was seen that there is some main classroom challenges faced by special education teachers. Classroom problems affect learning process which reflects in academic performance and the whole development of students with learning disabilities. Research show that special students are more sensitive and reactive, as a result teachers of special education face troublesome behavior of their students and also facing communication problems in class. Special students are constantly struggling with learning and tasted for one of the many tips of learning disabilities. This study further revealed that to minimize the classroom problems faced by special education different strategies i.e. co-operative strategy of instruction, collaborative strategy for instruction etc. are provided by the teachers in classroom for the betterment of learning environment.

Discussion

This study reveals that classrooms problems have a major impact on special student's learning behavior, special education teachers as well as on teacher's performance. Based on the said objective, the researcher recognized that special education teachers face a lot of challenges in the classroom of special students. School administrations often do not understand the demands of special education and fails to support teachers. However, On the basis of data analysis it is revealed that the major problems for special education teachers are communication with students, instructional strategies used by teachers in classroom, student's behavior, classroom management, lack of support from parents and lack of professional development skills. The study also reveal that different instructional strategies are used by special education teachers in order to achieve their objectives for example, Translation method for instruction, Direct method for instruction, Collaborative strategies for instruction, Cooperative strategies for instruction.

Reed, P (2014), stated that during facing communication problems, it is important to keep in view all the different ways that we communicate effectively throughout our day. Therefore, they should apply the same idea when thinking about the students and their communication needs. (Reed, P et al, 2014). Watson (2007), realizes that special education classes are needed more severely attention. It is a unique way of provision of education to students who are mentally or physically challenged. The ideal special education classroom provides extremely good learning opportunities to students and need based learning structure for optimum results.

Among these instructional strategies the collaborative and cooperative strategies are mostly used by teachers to provide quality instruction to all students with learning disabilities. The study also explain that classroom management skill such as, Organization of special students in classroom, Rules and regulation of students and Professional development of teachers with reference to special education depends on the presence of teacher in classroom. The study points out that parent know their children more than any one and that they are the best advocate for them. Parents are so important when a child need special education.

Parents participation cannot be underrated, as it effects children Rockwell (2017), found that pupils whose close relative take interest in their education show developed academic achievement; better appearance, higher ambitions for-secondary education afterwards and career growth; improved social capability and lower rates of teenage high-risk performance.

Conclusion

In the light of findings and discussion it was concluded that teachers for special education face challenging problems such as difficulty in communication with students, instructional strategies used by teachers in classroom, student's behavior and attitudes with developmental impairment, classroom management, lack of support from parents and lack of professional development skills. Tutors in this study stated the requirement for less classroom complications, modern training materials, stimuli to teachers, and added care facilities from the government. Most trainers usually are untrained and Government should look into facilitating these teachers.

The main theme of the study was to investigate the classroom problems faced by special education teachers in district Peshawar, KP. For this purpose 10 schools were visited and 132 questionnaires were distributed among the 132 teachers of secondary school level to get the idea of how to minimize the classroom problems as well as bringing some fruitful result that classroom problems were major causes of Students achievement.

This study revealed that the classrooms for children with developmental disability in Peshawar are scanty in resources for providing quality modern education and a supportive environment in place is extremely required in near future if the intentions of stepping with the world are in the goals of the government.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were provided on the basis of the findings.

1. From the findings of the study it was found that teachers of special education face communication problem. So, it is recommended that education department and training institutes arrange capacity building workshops focused on enhancing communication skill of the teachers in reference to special education.
2. From the findings of the study it was found that students of special education are sensitive and reactive. Therefore, it is recommended to arrange special teachers' training programs on catharsis, pro activity and how to handle sensitive students.
3. The researcher found that controlling behavioral problems of special students is a difficult task for special education teachers so corner library is recommended to establish in each special education classroom where books based on troublesome behaviors should be catalogued.
4. From the findings of the study it was found that learning disability are the main problems in the classroom of special students so, it is recommended that DCT, Pite and Rite must prepare direct Manual for managing classroom of special education & main focus should be on learning disabilities.
5. From the findings of the study it was found that teachers of special education don't use direct method for instruction in the classroom so, it is recommended that using only direct method for instruction in classroom is not an effective strategy which must be strongly discouraged and Successful and different strategies for instruction for students with learning disabilities may be used which may be according to the needs and demand of the society
6. From the findings of the study it was found that teachers for special education face difficulty in managing the classroom and was also identified that teachers need professional development in classroom management skill so, it recommended that teachers may be given continuous long term in-service teacher training

to update their knowledge, skills in regarding classroom management skill.

7. From the findings of the study it was found that parents some time are taking special children as burden and their behavior are not acceptable so, it is recommended that Success meetings may be shared with parents for a positive parent-teacher relation by inviting parents to participate in making some discussion.

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