

**ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL HEADS TOWARDS INCLUSION
OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN SCHOOLS**



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Abstract

Inclusive education is indispensable for achieving Education for All. This study highlights the attitudes of public school head towards inclusive education in Punjab. The attitude of school heads plays a vital role for an effective inclusive education process as well as for overall educational progress of students. The present study is descriptive in its nature. All the heads of the schools of both sexes in public schools of Punjab province are the populations of this study. A questionnaire was used as an instrument to measure attitudes of school heads towards inclusion of students with disabilities in schools and how these school heads conceptualize inclusive education. Reflecting on data carried out from 200 schools of ten districts of Punjab. This research gives a valuable indication of the attitudes and awareness of school heads towards inclusion. The study found that school heads of rural area have more positive attitude towards inclusion and there is no significant difference between male and female heads towards inclusion of students with disabilities. This research will reveal the difficulties in implementing inclusive education and will also contribute in the field of educational leadership.

Keywords: Attitude, inclusive education, children with disabilities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

The Almighty Allah, with his infinite love for mankind has bestowed upon us numerous blessings. But there are people who are less fortunate than physically and

mentally sound people. Everyday person are seen limping, carrying white cane, deaf and dumb, or unintelligible words or perform abnormal action, they are either physically handicapped, hearing impaired, mentally retarded or visually impaired children. It is our religious, social, moral and humanitarian obligation to reduce their sufferings, so that they become the useful part of society and lead a very reputable life.

Inclusive education has become a significant element of the progressive attempt to enhance the delivery of services to special children and focus on their placement in the normal education setup for the last two decades. This innovative deal for given services has produced challenges for several educational professionals as well as the school heads. The responsibility of the school heads has been radically changed to comprise extra tasks, paperwork and personnel. School heads are currently expected to plan, guide, manage, and implement programs for all learners including disabled students (Sage & Burrello, 1994).

1.2 Contextual Background

Inclusive education was an agenda point in 1994 at Salamanca Conference. In the area of special education The Salamanca Statement issued on inclusive education was one of the most remarkable International documents (McRae, 1996). United Nations Education of Scientific and Cultural Organization (1994) uphold the inclusive education was the elimination of all barriers to learning. It involved all the learners who may otherwise have been vulnerable to elimination and marginalization. Inclusive education is a strategic approach, designed to facilitate learning achievement for all learners. United Nations Education of Scientific and Cultural Organization (1994) suggested that

inclusion as being the most useful approach of combating discriminatory attitudes. Education for All (EFA) has been an aim for UNESCO for more than sixty years. (Hughes, 2009). Inclusion is considered as the most efficient approach of attaining education for all, by providing an effective education for the majority of students (Dempsey, 2005). As inclusion falls into the paradigm of equal opportunity and normalization it is important to understand these primary fundamentals that support inclusion.

Pakistan has just developed the policy of “Education for All” (EFA) to achieve the developmental commonly known as Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) by 2015. These goals are to be achieved till 2015 by all countries. Out of the 8 Millennium Developmental goals, 2 goals are mainly linked with the education; first one is “universal primary education” (all students male and female), and the second one is linked with 'equality' between male and female students as well as women's empowerment. United Nations and other organizations will give priority to education and inclusion is one of the perceptions included in the strategy as an approach to accomplish the goal of 'Education for ALL'.

1.3 Purpose

This study investigated the attitudes of school heads toward inclusion and perception about inclusion of disabled students into the general education setup and how these school heads conceptualize inclusive education.

1.4 Statement of the Problem:

Knowledge and attitudes can affect the success of the implementation of inclusive education. To include students with disabilities in the normal schools the attitudes of the school head is highly important for an effective inclusive education process. The implementation of inclusive education depends on the attitudes and knowledge of school heads. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the attitudes of school heads towards inclusion of students with disabilities. In the present study, the “Attitudes of School Heads towards Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Schools” and is being explored.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study is to identify attitudes of school heads towards inclusion of students with disabilities in schools and how these school heads conceptualize inclusive education.

1.6 Questions of the Study:

The study was intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of school heads toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setup?
2. What is the level of understating about inclusive education of school heads?
3. Is the attitudes of male school heads is differ from female school heads?
4. Is the attitudes of school heads of rural areas is differ from school heads of urban areas?
5. Is there any significant difference between the attitudes of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their age?
6. Is there any significant difference between the attitudes of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their qualification?

7. Is there any significant difference between the understating of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their age?
8. Is there any significant difference between the understating of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their qualification?

1.7 Null Hypothesis

To further explore the questions of the study the following null hypothesis have been made:-

1. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female school heads.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of school heads of rural and urban areas.
3. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their age.
4. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their qualification.
5. There is no significant difference between the understating of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their age.
6. There is no significant difference between the understating of school heads towards inclusion with reference to their qualification.

1.8 Significance

Pakistan is a developing country in which inclusive education is a new trend. School heads play a vital role in the implementation of inclusive education and this implementation depends on their attitudes and knowledge. To include children with

disabilities in the regular schools the attitude of the school heads is highly important for an effective inclusive education process. This study highlights the attitudes of public school heads towards inclusive education in Punjab. This study also focuses on the identification of characteristics which may influence school heads in relation to their attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities. The characteristics that are addressed are the school heads age, gender and their educational and professional qualification, years of experience as a teacher and administrator, and knowledge of special education terminology and law. The results of this study may provide more insight into the leadership characteristics which are essential for the creation of an effective and efficient inclusive school environment. This research will develop a mode of training for the school heads to be capable of creating an inclusive learning environment in schools.

1.9 Limitations

Sample was only public schools and was limited to school heads.

1.10 Delimitation

Following are the delimitations of the present study:

1. Random sampling is not used for the selection of the school heads due to limited time and resources.
2. School heads of public school both male & female are the targeted population.
3. The sample is delimited to two hundred school heads
4. The study is delimited to Punjab province.

1.11 Methods and Procedures

1.11.1 Instrumentation

In this study a questionnaire used as instrument for data collection that was separated into three parts. First part of the questionnaire was used to acquire professional and demographic information of the participants and second part is about understanding of inclusion containing 15 items. The third part of the questionnaire containing 16 items was Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) which was develop by Wilczenski (1992).

1.11.2 Sample Population

All the heads of the schools of both sexes in public schools of government of the Punjab constitute the population of this study. In order to control biases, the researcher used purposeful sampling techniques

1.11.3 Data Collection

Data were collected via the questionnaire from 200 public school heads of ten districts of Punjab both from male and female including urban and rural areas.

1.11.4 Pilot study

A pilot testing carried out to measure the quality of the questionnaires before collecting the main data. Twenty school heads (ten male, ten female) from public school were selected for the pilot study.

1.11.5 Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, statistical analysis software Version was used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using a T-Test. A second statistical

procedure known as the Pearson Correlation was used to cross-tabulate scores indicating the respondents' attitudes toward inclusion. Additional analysis regarding demographics was also conducted.

1.12 Key Terms Definition

1.12.1 Attitude

According to Masters and Wallace (2010, p.41) "Attitude is your outlook on life how you respond to people and events."

According to Blankson (2005, p.3) "Attitude is a complex state involving your beliefs, your feelings, and your dispositions to act in a certain way. Feelings, beliefs, values, and dispositions are the four attributes of attitude". (p.3)

1.12.2 Public Schools:

Government funded schools that follow the national curriculum.

1.12.3 Inclusive Education

Skrtic (1996) has defined inclusive education as:

"Inclusive education refers to a unified education system that sees students' diversity as a source of enrichment and challenge, school resources must be realigned to provide maximum support for teachers so that they can help all students develop as fully as possible".

Sandkull has described Inclusive Education as:

"The process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all students and also to improving the quality of education". (Sandkull 2004, p.11)

1.12.4 Special Education:

Special education is an education which is particularly designed to fulfill the different needs of special children in which special equipment, suggestions, teaching techniques and other facilities are used.

1.12.5 Student with Disability:

Special students are those whose physically attributes or learning differ from the more either above or below to such and extant that individualized program of special education is indicated.

According to Kirk, “the students who have different with their normal peers in mental, sexual, expression abilities, social attitude and physical abilities, should be clear in this extent that the children should feel special services or facilities in their education so that they may grow according to their needs”