A Needs Analysis of Principals' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education at the Secondary School Level

Tariq Mahmood Khan[a], Yahya Don[b], [a]Associate Professor, Institute of Education & Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, [b]Awing Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University Utara Malaysia, Email: [a]tariqmahmood.ier@pu.edu.pk, [b]d.yahya@uum.edu.my

Although there is widespread support for inclusion at a philosophical level, there are some concerns that the policy of inclusion is difficult to implement. Inclusion requires the positive attitude of leaders to accept the responsibility for building schools, in which all children can learn and feel they belong. The present study was a survey in nature. It was performed while applying a survey method consisting of two tools for the comparison of principles' attitude for education as the independent variable, while another tool was used for measuring the principles' attitude for inclusive education as the dependent variable. There were a total 197 public secondary schools in Lahore, out of which 92 schools for boys, and 105 schools for girls were included in the sample. The factor loading for all the factors of the attitude scales were in the acceptable range (0.56–0.90). The reliability of the factors of the tools were in the acceptable range (0.63–0.9). The total reliability of tools was in the acceptable range (0.84–0.094). There was a significant difference between the attitude of principals towards education and inclusive education through the paired sample t-test. Overall, the attitudes of the principals on all the factors they were asked to opine on were very low for inclusive education when compared to regular education. However, through proper training and guidelines, they must be able to utilise their professional services in the relevant institutions, particularly in the inclusive education setting.

Keywords: *Attitudes of the principals, Inclusive education, Learning challenges, Disabled Students, Professional training.*

Introduction

All around the world, it is considered that when children with disabilities are included in the general classroom with mainstream students, they receive an opportunity to interact with others. Furthermore, they can compete with normal students, their sense of aesthetic may be upgraded, and they may be more motivated. In addition, they have the chance to obtain valuable knowledge for their social inclusion and social adjustment. To date, internationally, countless research studies have been conducted on this topic, and a majority of teachers not only supported this system, but also showed their positive emotions for these disabled students. It is a vitally important and effective approach, and its implementation can cope with a vast range of students and with diverse identities. Moreover, it can break the barriers restricting the educational and developmental process of the students within the context of a normal classroom. Similarly, language problems may be resolved through this, as well as dealing with the learning abilities of the children. In a diverse identical system, family structure, social class, race, gender, religion, culture, and trends are highly significant (Glass, Meyer, & Rose, 2013). The classroom, with multicultural and diverse identities, may be difficult to handle in a normal routine. The inclusion of all types of children, particularly children with severe disabilities, is a challenging target for teachers in Pakistan.

In the perspective of Pakistan, when the topic of inclusive education is under consideration, it is difficult to elaborate it with respect to its real implementation across the country. In Pakistan, it is believed that the children with disabilities are to be taught separately. Already, various institutions are working for the special education of children with disabilities. However, the matter of inclusive education in general classrooms or schools, according to general assumptions, is comprehended in a strange manner, and rather, it is treated contemptuously almost everywhere in Pakistan. The principals and teachers possess a low attitude towards inclusive education. The Government remains unsuccessful in implementing inclusive education across the whole country and for the betterment of the students with various kinds of disabilities. In this regard, the current research is being conducted in order to observe and assess the attitudes of principals towards inclusive education. Presently, in Pakistan, there is a lack and gap in authentic research studies on this issue. This research aims to serve the Government to take suitable steps for the implementation of inclusive education across the country, after reforming the detected weaknesses and limitations suggested by the researcher.

Although there is widespread support for inclusion at a philosophical level, there are some concerns that the policy of inclusion is difficult to implement because the teachers and the head teachers are not sufficiently prepared and supported to work in inclusive ways. Inclusion requires the positive attitude of leaders to accept the responsibility for creating schools in which all children can learn and feel they belong. It is the coalescence of quantitative

research strategies to assess the attitude of leaders in inclusive education. The purpose of this study was to assess the attitude of school principals pertaining to inclusive classroom practices in Pakistan. However, internationally, inclusive education is seen as a system which caters for the needs of a diverse range of learners and supports diversity, effectively eliminating all forms of discrimination (UNESCO, 2009).

This study provided a comparison for the attitude of the principals towards mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom. This study tested the following hypotheses:

H1: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes about teacher workload and management in mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

H2: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes regarding the benefits of education towards mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

H3: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes regarding the learning challenges in mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

H4: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes regarding students with a disability in mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

H5: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes regarding professional training in mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

H6: There was no significant difference between the principals' attitudes towards mainstream education, and inclusive education in the classroom.

Whitworth and Chiu, (2015) opine that full inclusion and policies about full inclusion depend largely on the attitudes of principals. They found that a mix type of support was suggested for achieving complete inclusion in schools. The National Association of Elementary School Principals shows that 75 per cent of principals were not in favour of a full inclusion program in the normal school system (NAESP Communicator, 1995), and exhibited an extremely negative attitude towards it.

In fact, the role of the principal is not to only oversee teachers with a specific set of duties. Rather, the leader is required to assess the prior knowledge of the teachers and update it accordingly through the innovative learning needs of both mainstream and special education students (Ainscow & Southworth, 1996). In each teaching learning culture, the educational context is extremely necessary for the teachers to develop in the classroom. This is possible only when the leaders take part in mentoring the teachers in their classes, in collaboration with them, especially in inclusive classrooms (Ainscow, 2015; Ainscow, Beresford, Harris, Hopkins, Southworth, & West, 2013).

A project to improve teaching was launched in London, in eight schools and in the design of inclusion (Ainscow & Brown, 1999), which proved that the inclusive education model is a complex and controversial process. In this respect, the American Federation of Teachers voted against this type of full inclusive education, whereas the National Education Association was in favour of appropriate inclusion (Gillet, 1994). However, Garet et al., (2011) were of the opinion that the complication of the full inclusive education model can variously be resolved in schools. On the other hand, Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) are not in support of full inclusion, but Blackman (1993) provides evidence for improved full inclusion in schools. Wisniewski and Alper (1994) found that the students without disabilities have a more negative attitude towards the students with disabilities, and in accordance with the severity of their disability. The greater the severity of the disability, the more negative the attitude of the mainstream students will be. It is here that principals are thought to be performing their roles in the best way possible. The leaders can mould such ridiculous behaviour of the students towards disabled or special needs students according to the requirements, as the children can be moulded in any way. The self and autonomous behaviour of the students can, however, be transformed into the much-needed positive behaviour by the principals of the schools (Gameros, 1994). Gameros (1994) further appreciated the positive role and attitude of the principals towards inclusive education. Likewise, Whitworth and Chiu (2015) are of the view that the leaders or school principals should have the ability to counsel in different aspects regarding the curriculum, instructions, contexts, and the entire environment of the classroom, which is an inclusive one. According to their views, the vision and mission of the school principals regarding inclusive education must be clear and solid in its nature.

Garet et al. (2011) reported that principals do not have sufficient knowledge about leadership in terms of inclusive education. Furthermore, this could serve as the main reason behind their negative attitude. Possessing limited knowledge about special education turns their attitudes into negations. According to several researchers, leadership plays an important role in the education of a deaf children's school (Powers, Gregory, Lynas, McCracken, Watson, Boulton & Harris, 1999). The leaders with managerial abilities are updated with the passage of time (Gleeson & Gunter, 2001). Managerial abilities are in the sense of classroom management, in which they guide their teachers to work as efficiently as is helpful in meeting the required targets for special education (Jones, 2004).

The integration in inclusion (Cole, 1989) has led the concerns for the social inclusion (Goodley, 2016). A number of issues have emerged in inclusion, such as equity (Gerschel, 2002), integration or segregation (Ainscow, 2015), inclusion and exclusion (Anderson, Gerrish, Layton, Morgan, Tilstone, & Williams, 2013), generalism or specialism (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 1998), alternative curricula or common curricula (Rose, 1998), and diversity or individualism (Baylis, 1998). Even in using the term 'special education', there

have been countless debates as special education refers to the individuality of the pupils in a school and that may lead them towards complexes (Rix, 2015). Robinson and colleagues (2012) advocate that within inclusive education that there is a great need to develop the types of indicators that can differentiate students' performance.

The leaders of schools should be aware of the innovative methods to manage students with disabilities. As the students belong to different socio-economic backgrounds, they have a variety of behaviours, and habits that a teacher must manage and mould accordingly. This is considered a prime duty of the leaders, to guide their teachers and keep them motivated in this respect. They should guide their teachers about all the possible issues related to social justice, democracy, and learning in the teaching process in the inclusive classroom (Madsen, & Mabokela, 2002).

Methodology

The present research was performed while applying a survey method, which consisted of two tools for measuring the principles' attitudes towards mainstream education as the independent variable, and for measuring the principles' attitudes towards inclusive education as the dependent variable.

Population and Sample of the Study

All public sector girls', and boys' secondary schools of the Lahore District, and their principals comprised the population of the study. There is a total of 332 public secondary schools in Lahore, of which 153 schools are for boys, and 179 schools are for girls. Included in the study sample were a total of 197 public secondary schools in Lahore, out of which 92 were schools for boys, and 105 were schools for girls.

Table 1: Population and sample of public secondary schools in Lahore

Categories	Number of Public Schools	Sample of Principals
Boys	153	92
Girls	179	105
Total	332	197

Source: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Lahore, 2018.
Source: School Education Department, 2018.

The Development of Scales for the Principals' Attitudes towards Mainstream, and Inclusive Education

The 'principals' attitudes towards inclusive education' (PATIE) instrument developed by Baily (2004) was implemented to assess both principals' and assistant principals' feelings associated with the inclusion of students with disabilities in common learning study rooms. The scale for principals' attitudes towards education (SPATE) consisted of a quantitative part comprised of the following four factors, including 22 statements, distributed with each of the factors, as given below:

1. Teacher workload and management (1–5)
2. Benefits of education (6–9)
3. Learning challenges in education (10–14)
4. Disabled Students (15–18)
5. Professional training (19–22)

Cronbach's coefficient alpha test was conducted to assess the reliability of the tool. The reliability estimate was 0.94. This finding suggested that the tool was acceptable to assess the attitudes of principals towards education.

The scale for principals' attitudes towards inclusive education (SPATIE) consisted of quantitative questions, and was based on the following four factors, including 26 statements, distributed with each of the factors, as given below:

1. Teacher workload and management (1–5)
2. Inclusion benefits (6–11)
3. Learning challenges in inclusive education (12–18)
4. Disabled students (19–22)
5. Professional training (23–26)

Cronbach's coefficient alpha test was conducted to assess the reliability of the tool. The reliability estimate was 0.881. This finding suggested that the tool was acceptable to assess the attitudes of principals towards inclusive education.

Table 2: Factor loadings based on a principal components analysis with varimax rotation for 14 items from the School Principals' Attitudes Toward Education (SPATE) (N = 197) and reliability coefficient with Cronbach' s α

Factors	Items	Factor Loading	*Cronbach' s α*
Teacher Workload and Management (F1)			0.74
	Pd1	0.82	
	Pd2	0.81	
	Pd3	0.75	
	Pd4	0.62	
	Pd5	0.6	
Benefits of Inclusion & Level of Disability (F2)			0.8
	Pd6	0.61	
	Pd7	0.78	
	Pd8	0.88	
	Pd9	0.89	
Learning Challenges in Inclusive Education (F3)			0.87
	Pd10	0.89	
	Pd11	0.69	
	Pd12	0.88	
	Pd13	0.81	
	Pd14	0.75	
Disabled Students (F4)			0.89
	Pd15	0.83	
	Pd16	0.89	
	Pd17	0.89	
	Pd18	0.84	
Professional Training (F5)			0.89
	Pd19	0.85	
	Pd20	0.9	
	Pd21	0.9	
	Pd22	0.81	
Tool 1 Total Reliability	22		0.94

The factor loading for all factors were in the acceptable range (0.60–0.90). The reliability of the factors of the tool were in the acceptable range (0.80–0.89). The total reliability of the tool was 0.94, which is highly acceptable.

Table 3: Factor loadings based on a principal components analysis with varimax rotation for 14 items from the School Principals' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (SPATIE) (N = 197) and reliability coefficient with Cronbach' s α

Factors	Items	Factor Loading	*Cronbach' s α*
Teacher Workload and Management (F1)			0.71
	Pn1	0.75	
	Pn2	0.81	
	Pn3	0.68	
	Pn4	0.78	
	Pn5	0.6	
Benefits of Inclusion (F2)			0.81
	Pn6	0.6	
	Pn7	0.77	
	Pn8	0.75	
	Pn9	0.7	
	Pn10	0.82	
	Pn11	0.66	
Learning Challenges in Inclusive Education (F3)			0.9
	Pn12	0.74	
	Pn13	0.69	
	Pn14	0.8	
	Pn15	0.86	
	Pn16	0.83	
	Pn17	0.88	
	Pn18	0.77	
Disabled Students (F4)			0.63
	Pn19	0.76	
	Pn20	0.78	
	Pn21	0.58	
	Pn22	0.61	
Professional Training (F5)			0.75
	Pn23	0.56	
	Pn24	0.86	
	Pn25	0.9	
	Pn26	0.71	
Tool 2 Total Reliability			0.84

The factor loading for all factors were in the acceptable range (0.56–0.90). The reliability of the factors of the tool were in the acceptable range (0.63–0.9). The total reliability of the tool was 0.84, which is highly acceptable.

Data Analysis

A paired sample t-test was applied to compare the independent and dependent variables for the needs analysis of principals' attitudes towards mainstream, and inclusive education. The normality of the data was not affirmed in all factors and the whole of data to meet the assumption of the paired sample t-test. The sample size sufficiently meets the requirements to apply the paired sample t-test. A Wilcoxon test was also applied to avow the results.

Table 4: Paired sample t-test to compare the attitudes of principals towards mainstream, and inclusive education (N=197)

Factor	Pair	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Wilcoxon test
Teachers' Workload and Management	Inclusive education	2.38	0.88	-10.22	196	0.00	0.00
	Mainstream education	3.2	0.86				
Benefits and Level of Disability	Inclusive education	3.02	0.87	-2.43	196	0.016	0.016
	Mainstream education	3.2	1.02				
Learning Challenges	Inclusive education	3.2	1.08	0.026	196	0.979	0.979
	Mainstream education	3.2	1.10				
Disabled Students	Inclusive education	2.46	1.08	-7.14	196	0.000	0.000
	Mainstream education	3.18	1.10				
Professional Training	Inclusive education	2.54	0.81	-7.91	196	0.000	0.000
	Mainstream education	3.36	1.14				
Principals' Attitude Total Score	Inclusive education	2.66	0.55	-8.94	196	0.00	0.00
	Mainstream education	3.19	0.855				

Results

There was a significant difference in the scores for the attitudes of principals towards teachers' workload and management in inclusive education (M=2.38, SD=0.88), and mainstream education (M=3.2, SD=0.86) conditions; t(196)=-10.22, p = 0.00. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference.

It was concluded that the attitudes of principals towards teachers' workload and management in inclusive education is fewer than the mainstream education for regular students. This means that teachers do not want students with disabilities included in their general classroom setting because they feel a greater burden of workload and management.

There was a significant difference in the scores for the attitudes of principals regarding the benefits in inclusive education (M=3.02, SD=0.87), and mainstream education (M=3.2, SD=0.87) conditions; t(196)=-2.13, p = 0.016. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference. It was concluded that the attitudes of principals towards the benefits in inclusive education was less than the mainstream education for regular students.

There was no significant difference in the scores for the attitudes of principals towards the learning challenges in inclusive education (M=3.2, SD=1.08), and mainstream education (M=3.2, SD=1.10) conditions; t(196)=-7.14, p = 0.979. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference. It was concluded that the attitudes of principals towards learning challenges are equally difficult to handle in both inclusive education, and mainstream education.

There was a significant difference in the scores for the attitudes of principals towards excluded students in inclusive education (M=2.46, SD=1.08), and mainstream education (M=3.18, SD=1.10) conditions; t(196)=-7.14, p = 0.00. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference. It was concluded that attitudes of principals towards excluded students in inclusive education is less than mainstream education. The school principals are of the view that the excluded children must not be in inclusive classroom settings. In addition, they believe in keeping the excluded students away from even the general classroom setting.

There was a significant difference in the principals' attitudes towards teachers' professional training in inclusive education (M=2.54, SD=0.81), and mainstream education (M=3.36, SD=1.14) conditions; t(196)=-7.91, p = 0.00. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference. It was concluded that the attitudes of principals' towards teachers' professional training in inclusive education is less than in mainstream education.

Furthermore, the principals expressed their views about the professional development of teachers by stating that teachers need more training in terms of inclusive education rather than in general education. These are their own feelings regarding the teachers' professional training in general education, but the teachers must be trained professionally.

There was a significant difference in the total scores of the scale for principals' attitudes towards inclusive education (M=2.66, SD=0.55), and mainstream education (M=3.19, SD=0.85) conditions; t(196)=-8.94, p = 0.00. The Wilcoxon test also indicated a significant difference. It was concluded the total scores of the scale for principals' attitudes towards inclusive education was less than mainstream education.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the principals' views, teachers do not want students with disabilities to be included in their general classroom setting because they feel a greater burden of workload and management. The principals were very clear about their teachers in this regard, noting that the teachers are reluctant towards inclusive education. Furthermore, there is a dire need for the training of the teachers, so that they may feel fewer burdens pertaining to workload and management. In addition, the principals consider that students with and without disabilities might not receive the same educational benefits while sitting in the same inclusive setting. Moreover, the level of disability among disabled students does matter greatly in this respect. Therefore, the students without disabilities in a general setting are believed to obtain the educational benefits. Furthermore, the principals show that the learning challenges for general education are similar to inclusive education, meaning that the learning challenges hold the same position for the both educational streams. It shows the clear-cut evidence for the need of teachers' professional training, not only in inclusive education but also in general education. The teachers equally face difficulty when managing the learning challenges of the students. Additionally, the school principals are of the view that the excluded children must not be included in inclusive classrooms. In addition, they believe in keeping the excluded students away from even the general classroom setting. Moreover, the principals express their views about the professional development of the teachers, noting that teachers need more training in terms of inclusive education rather than in general education. These are their own opinions about the teachers' professional training in general education, but here the teachers must be trained professionally in both educational streams.

Overall, the attitudes of the principals were very low towards inclusive education when compared to mainstream education. They seem less enthusiastic and willing to adopt the children with disabilities in the general classroom setting due to the teachers' workload and management, benefits, learning challenges, disabled students, and teachers' professional training. The principals, sometimes, must face a number of challenges and problems when

they start to run programs related to special education (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Therefore, there is a dire need for the professional training of teachers to improve their attitudes about inclusive education. In addition, brainwashing and motivational strategies are required for the teachers in order to eradicate their reluctance and hesitation. On the other hand, principals' leadership qualities are equal for both categories. In addition, the principals need guidelines in communicating school goals, and supervision and evaluation. According to McLaughlin (2009), the school leaders need to improve their institution while they are enrolling the special students. They must produce such a culture in the school, as would prove favourable and supportive for the children with or without disabilities. This is possible only when the leaders take part in mentoring the teachers in their classes, in collaboration with them, especially in inclusive classrooms (Ainscow, 2015; Ainscow, Beresford, Harris, Hopkins, Southworth, & West, 2013).

Though the principals show equal leadership traits for general and inclusive education with no or few differences, they themselves are placed in the category of being professionally trained. Moreover, less interest and motivation have been conferred through their expressions. However, through proper training and guidelines, they must be able to utilise their professional services in the relevant institutions, particularly in an inclusive education setting.

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