

University Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusion, Efficacy and Intentions to Teach in Inclusive Classrooms in Higher Education

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Abstract

Major objectives of this study were to assess university teachers' attitude towards inclusion, their efficacy in implementing inclusive practices and their intentions to teach in inclusive classroom and to find correlation among the aforementioned study variables. The sample comprised of 180 teachers from a multidisciplinary public sector university in Faisalabad. The instruments used for data collection were (1) SACIE-R to assess the university teachers' sentiments, attitude and concerns about inclusive education, (2) TEIP to measure the teachers' self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices and (3) TITIC to assess the teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classroom. The results show teachers' positive attitudes, self-efficacy and intentions towards inclusion. There is a moderate positive significant correlation between teachers' attitude and their efficacy ($r = 0.42$) comparatively weak between attitude and intention ($r = 0.32$) and strong between efficacy and intention ($r = 0.75$). Findings may support understanding and implementation of inclusive education at the university level in Pakistan..

Key Words

Self-Efficacy,
Inclusive Education,
Intentions, Attitude

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) refers to the process of responding to a wide range of learners and involves the students from different backgrounds and aptitudes who learn in the company of their peers in general education schools that adapt their way of working with the intention to accommodate the requirements of all learners (Loreman, 1999). Inclusion is a model as well as philosophy whose primary objective is based on the concept of social justice as it advocates equal educational opportunity and provides access to all educational prospects; hence, facilitating all the learners irrespective of the presence of difference (Freire, 2009; Marschark et al., 2002).

The main agenda of inclusive education is EFA which has become a global incentive. Mainly, this task was again started in Jomtien by United UNESCO (1990). Later on, a mandate was provided to UNESCO regarding the frame of action at the new world forum in Dakar (2000); thus, the movement as well as organization of EFA accelerated. According to UNESCO (1993; 2011) more than 69 million students with special educational needs (SEN) were prone to abuse, suppression, and exclusion as they were not provided with education facilities at school and confronted humiliation as well as degradation from birth.

In order to include learners with SEN in mainstream system of education, the Dakar Framework of Action put special effort for more wide-ranging approaches to address their needs. Moreover, a World Conference regarding SEN was held in Salamanca in 1994, which encompassed 92 countries comprising Pakistan and declared inclusive education to become the norm (Booth et al., 2001). A framework for Action was approved in this conference in order to provide appropriate guidelines to normal schools so that they may arrange accommodation to all the children without any discrimination of their physical as well as mental conditions. Pakistan is also among those countries who committed to this agenda as to serve educational facilities to the students with SEN and to safeguard their rights.

According to Jordan et al., (2009) the practices for effective IE are markedly dependent on the sentiments as well as attitude of the teachers regarding the type of disability and their apparent supportive roles for the students with SEN. Therefore, Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) believe that teachers' attitude and concern about inclusion is an obvious interpreter of its success or failure. In line with them, it is mandatory in Pakistan to assess the current status of theoretical, affective and practical situation regarding inclusive education.

Review of the Literature

Agbenyega (2007) studied the similar teacher attitudes and concerns and concluded that lack of skill

as well as resources to teach the students with SEN is likely to affect the potential inclusion's implementation.

Attitude is an outlook of a person for a particular entity (Gall et al., 1996), which has three important constituents i.e. cognitive, affective as well as behavioral component (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Triandis, 1971). Among these three components, cognitive one reflects the beliefs regarding teaching children with SEN in inclusive educational set up. On the other hand, affective and behavioral components express the tutors' feelings as well as opinions about how to behave with pupils with SEN, respectively. Agbenyega (2007) studied the similar teacher attitudes and concerns and concluded that lack of skills as well as resources to teach students with SEN is likely to affect the potential inclusion implementation.

A person's future-looking belief on his capabilities and skills to execute behavior in a successful manner in order to achieve productive goals is named as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Researchers have explained the teacher's efficacy as conviction or faith that can affect students' behavior towards learning (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). It has been investigated that a teachers' self-efficacy towards IE plays a pivotal role in shaping his attitude and impeccably outlines professional management skills; thus, promising the pupil's success and achievement (Ahsan et al., 2012), (Moran & Hoy, 2001). According to Lamorey and Wilcox (2005), teachers with low teaching efficacy sense, work with slight effort and eagerness as they consider that they lack skills as well resources to effectively treat the students with SEN and to make difference in their attitude. On the contrary, the teachers who perceive high efficacy work with appreciable keenness and put persistent efforts in their work.

Teachers' intentions are another important key factor which affects inclusionary practices to teach students with SEN. Intention is a combination of aspects regarding standards and attitude; thus, leading to a person's intention to execute his sense of behavior. It is the direct factor for determining actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), because a person's execution of behavior is significantly based upon his intention. Therefore, performing behavior is perhaps an act on person's intention to do so.

As far as legislation is concerned, some developed countries such as the USA and UK have passed the law in order to promote inclusive approaches and to encourage inclusion of pupils, with SEN, in normal schools. Consequently, such kind of legislation has also made influence on the inclusive educational system as well as policies in developing countries like Pakistan (Hameed, 2003), Hong Kong, Philippines (Sharma et al., 2008) and India (Sharma & Deppeler, 2005). However, the progress towards adopting inclusive practices in Pakistan is low as compared to Western nations.

As per the constitution of Pakistan, every native has the right to get education. According to article 25-A of constitution, also known as Right to Education (RTE), all children of the age of 5 to 16 years will be provided free education by the state. Hence, this article depicts effort of state to adopt inclusive approach and to fulfill the agenda of EFA conference.

Regarding education policy of Pakistan, the budget allocation for special education was made for the first time in 1972. The era of 1980-1990 was significant in this aspect, because numerous special education policies were made. However, these policies were not implemented properly due to lack of funds and competent as well as skilled teachers. Furthermore, till the end of 1990s, special education in Pakistan was only provided in special schools. In 2002, the state formulated a policy to encourage inclusive schooling for SEN students; but, its implementation in schools persisted as a challenging task (Khan, 1998; Shahzadi, 2000). According to Shahzadi (2000) it is estimated that only up to 2% of children with SEN were having access to special education till the year 2000. This lack of adoption of inclusive education policies is due to insufficient teacher training programs and lack of resources (Hameed, 2003; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Sultana, 1993).

Unquestionably, inclusive education is a topic of interest for researchers but somehow Pakistan is not much active in this field. Only in a one recent study in Pakistan, pre-service teachers' such an attitude and efficacy were surveyed to check if these two variables had an impact on their capability to teach disable students in including classrooms (Sharma et al., 2014).

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the Study are:

1. To measure university teachers' attitude towards inclusion.
2. To assess university teachers' self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices.
3. To evaluate university teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classroom.
4. To explore the relationship among university teachers' attitude, self-efficacy and intentions to teach in inclusive classroom.

Methodology

Keeping in view the aims of the current research work, correlational research is the most suitable design which falls in positivism paradigm. According to positivists, research is quantitative in nature which helps quantify the study variables.

Population

The population of the current study consists of all the teachers from Government College University, Faisalabad. There are total 708 teachers, belonging to six (6) different faculties in Government College University, Faisalabad. Information related to the number of the teachers was collected from the web site of mentioned university which may differ from authentic statistics.

Sample and Sampling

In present study, from total 708 teachers the researcher selected/ used the sample of 180 (26%) approximately. Proportionate stratified sampling technique allowed researcher to draw representative sample. The distribution or selection of sample from each faculty/ stratum is given below in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution or Selection of Sample from each Faculty/ Stratum

Strata/ Faculty	Number of Teachers in Each Stratum/ Faculty	Strata Sample size
Life Sciences	172	49
Engineering	100	28
Arts and Social Sciences	152	43
Islamic and Oriental Learning	54	15
Physical Sciences	126	36
Economics and Management sciences	104	29
Total	708	180

Instruments of the Study

According to the nature of the Study, researcher used three different standardized instruments after reviewing the literature. Moreover, research also developed a questionnaire to get information about teachers' demographic characteristics. The detailed information of the questionnaires is given below:

Demographic Sheet (DS)

DS included information regarding teachers' demographic features for instance, gender, age, faculty, designation, teaching experience, significant interaction with a disable person, awareness of indigenous legislature for disable youngsters, level of experience and confidence of working with them.

SACIE-R (Forlin et al., 2011) comprises 15 items to report about one-self on 4-point Likert-type scale scored in ascending order. It has three sections. The SACIE-R model applies best to educational venue. In this study, its reliability is 0.84. The scale also has 10 negative items, i.e., item number 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 which were reverse coded before statistical analyses. Depiction of Sub-Sections of SACIE-R is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Explanation of Sub-Sections of SACIE-R

Sub-Sections	Scope	Sr. No. in Scale	No. of Items
Sentiments	how faculty think about attached with people having disabilities	2,5,9,11,13	5
Attitude	how faculty accept students with different learning needs	3,6,8,12,15	5
Concerns	the concerns that faculty may have about inclusive education	1,4,7,10,14	5

The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP)

TEIP (Sharma et al., 2012) determine teachers' self-efficacy in executing inclusive practices. It comprises 18 items to report about one-self on 6-point Likert-type scale scored in ascending order. It has three sections (1) Efficacy to use inclusive instructions, (2) Efficacy in collaboration and (3) Efficacy in managing behavior. This model also applies best to educational venue. In present study, its reliability is 0.94. The Depiction of Sub-Sections of TEIP is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Explanation of Sub-Sections of TEIP

Sub-Sections	Scope	Sr. No. in Scale	No. of Items
EUII	Teachers' efficacy to use inclusive instructions	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	6
EMB	Teachers' efficacy in managing behavior during the inclusion of special students	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6
EC	Teachers' efficacy in collaboration for inclusive practices	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	6

Teachers' Intentions to Teach in Inclusive Classroom (TITIC)

TITIC (Ramli, 2017) comprises 8 items to report about one-self on 5-point Likert-type scale scored in ascending order. It is a uni-dimensional scale to assess the teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classroom. In present study, its reliability is 0.87.

Data Collection

The researcher himself visited the different departments of the university to collect the data. Firstly, researcher guaranteed the teachers, that the collected information will be dealt confidentially and used only for research purpose. Consent was sort from university teachers through a consent letter. Data were collected from university teachers on SACIE-R, TEIP, TITIC at the same time. The research questionnaire was distributed to almost 220 teachers across the 30 departments. 185 teachers returned the forms back. Returning rate was 93% and it was ensured that the teachers have filled the required demographic information and all the statements in questionnaire clearly. Incomplete forms in any respect were discarded.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis of SACIE-R, TEIP and TITIC was conducted to assess the current position of teachers on thrice of study variables. Pearson r allowed discovering the relationship among them.

Results

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis of SACIE-R and its Sub-Sections

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Sentiments	180	1	4	2.64	0.59
Concerns	180	1	4	2.64	0.61
Attitude	180	1	4	2.79	0.61
Overall SACIE	180	2	4	2.69	0.50

Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis of SACIE-R and its sub-factors. The teachers got lowest score (M=2.64, SD=0.59) on "sentiments" and highest score (M=2.79, SD=0.61) on "attitude". Their overall score on SACIE (M=2.69, SD=0.50) shows that teachers have positive sentiments, attitude and concerns towards the inclusion of special students as their mean score is more than 2.5.

Table 5. Descriptive Analysis of TEIP and its Sub-Sections

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
EUII	180	1.33	6.00	4.21	1.03
EC	180	1.17	6.00	4.27	0.95
EMB	180	1.17	6.00	4.29	0.98
TEIP	180	1.33	5.83	4.26	0.91

Table 5 shows the descriptive analysis of TEIP and its sub-factors. The teachers got lowest score (M=4.21, SD=1.03) on "efficacy to use inclusive instructions" and highest score (M=4.26, SD=0.91) on "efficacy in managing behavior". Their overall score on TEIP (M=4.26, SD=0.91) shows that teachers reflect positive efficacy for inclusive practices as their mean score is more than 3.5.

Table 6. Descriptive Analysis of TITIC

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
TITIC	180	1	5	3.64	0.77

Table 6 shows the descriptive analysis of TITIC. According to analysis, teachers' overall score on "intentions" (M=3.64, SD=0.77) shows that they have positive intentions towards inclusion of special students as their mean score is more than 3.0.

Table 7. Correlation among SACIE-R, TEIP and TITIC

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Sentiments									
2 Attitude	0.40**								
3 Concerns	0.71**	0.52**							
4 SACIE	0.84**	0.77**	0.89**						
5 EUII	0.33**	0.32**	0.43**	0.43**					
6 EMB	0.26**	0.27**	0.28**	0.33**	0.83**				
7 EC	0.37**	0.31**	0.31**	0.39**	0.71**	0.75**			
8 TEIP	0.35**	0.33**	0.37**	0.42**	0.92**	0.93**	0.89**		
9 TITIC	0.29**	0.25**	0.26**	0.32**	0.67**	0.71**	0.71**	0.75**	

Pearson Correlation was applied to observe the relationship among SACIE-R, TEIP and TITIC. According to table 7, there is a positive moderate significant relationship between SACIE-R and TEIP which ranges from 0.26 for Sentiments and EMB to 0.43 for Concerns and SACIE and for EUII. On the other hand, there is a weak to moderate positive significant correlation between SACIE-R and TITIC which ranges from 0.25 for Attitude and TITIC to 0.32 for SACIE and TITIC. Table 7 also shows that there is a strong positive significant relationship between TEIP and TITIC which ranges from 0.67 for EUII and TITIC to 0.75 for TEIP and TITIC.

Discussion

This research aimed at assessing the current status of the university teachers' attitude, self- efficacy and intentions to inclusive practices. In addition, it explored the underlying relationship among the study constructs. According to the analysis it is concluded that university teachers possess positive attitudes, self-efficacy and intentions towards inclusion.

Moreover, there is a positive significant correlation among university teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy and intentions in implementing inclusive practices. The recent study has shown that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusionary practices. These results are also imitated by the research of Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000). On the other hand, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) and Yada (2015) investigated the in-service teachers' attitude towards inclusion and found that teachers have neutral attitude to teach in inclusive classrooms in Japan. Inclusive practices are no more a new concept in Pakistan now. It is prevailing as fast in Pakistan as it is growing day by day all through the global world. Educational policies for inclusion of disable students have made it practicable to include them within general and streamline educational institutes. As it is no more a new scenario and teachers have been working with them since long, following the policies, a mutual understanding and acceptance has been established between teachers and special students and between special students and normal students. They are no more aliens for any of the person in university premises. That's why; results of the recent study are also encouraging about implementation and practicability of inclusive practices in Pakistan. Teachers have acceptance, warm feelings and welcoming attitude towards them. They are having low concerns dreadfulness about their disabilities. In universities, such students are given special treatment as per their requirements. They are provided with educational and personal facilities and equipment which they require to get accommodated in the education centers easily.

Furthermore, the teachers have shown a satisfactory level of self-efficacy to engage in educational practices with the special students. They perceive themselves as efficient and effective teachers who could manage classroom including both types of students, i.e. special and mainstream students. They are proficient in using different assessment techniques, clarifying their misconceptions using a wide range of methods, designing learning activities to engage all students, providing appropriate challenging tasks to students according to their potentials, making them work in cooperative groups and managing their disruptive behavior.

They showed positive intentions to engage with special students in their mainstream classes. They support the notion of inclusive practices. They are willing to attend in service trainings to learn how to accommodate and manage special students in general class room.

Another major finding is that, there is positive significant correlation among university teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy and intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. This finding is replicated by many previous studies (Meijer

& Foster, 1988; Malinen, Savolainen & Xu, 2012) Savolainen et al., (2012) and Weisel and Dror(2006) also studied the same variables and confirmed a moderate correlation among the study constructs.

Recommendations

It is highly encouraging to find out that university teachers have shown fewer concerns towards the specialty of disabled students and a positive attitude towards their education in inclusive setup. Still there is a need to organize some trainings or seminars to get teachers aware of the inclusion policies and how they can be translated into practice. They need to learn more about some special treatment and use of special equipment which are necessary to accommodate special students in general classroom.

In addition, Due to limited resources and time, the present study title, “University teachers’ attitudes, concerns, efficacy and intentions to teach in the inclusive classrooms” was carried out in only single university of District Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan with very limited sample. More studies can be carried out in the other universities/ institutions of the country with more generalized sample. This research is carried out in university only. Therefore, it is suggested that this kind of research should be carried out at all levels i.e., from college level to school level. Data may be collected from such teachers who have interaction with students with SEN, so that they may have an idea about inclusive education and give more authentic information. Questionnaire may contain some open-ended questions or qualitative research methods like interview may be used in future research works, so that teachers would express any of their inclusionary experience in a better way or to check the validity of quantitative research methods.

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