Parental Attitudes Towards Educational Placement of Their Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Regular Schools

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Abstract

Inclusive education is an emerging trend at the global level. Children with intellectual disabilities (CWIDs), if included in mainstream schools, may have rich experiences with their peers without disabilities in regular schools to become active members of society. In Pakistan, there is a small number of CWIDs in regular schools who are largely unsupported. The focus of the study is to collect the perceptions of parents regarding inclusive processes such as curriculum adaptations, accommodation of individual needs, collaboration and socialization of children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings. This study was conducted to unfold the perceived parental attitudes towards the educational placement of their CWIDs in regular schools. The population of the study was parents of the CWIDs. Data were collected from 150 parents of the CWIDs studying in different special schools in Lahore by using a purposive sampling technique. The reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of the questionnaire was 0.80. The results of the study indicate that most of the parents want the educational placement of their CWIDs in regular schools for better learning, socialization and grooming of academic skills. It was concluded that parents considered inclusive education as the best placement for their children with intellectual disabilities. With such parental support, the government should change the policy for the implementation of inclusive education.

Keywords: Parental Tendency, Educational Placement, Intellectual Disabilities and Inclusive Education.

Introduction

The placement of children with an intellectual disability is still a controversial issue in educational debate, even in the global wake of inclusive education. Intellectual disability brings multiple challenges in the life of a child, such as psychological, social, medical and academic that hinder the placement of the child in regular school.

Parents, as the principal stakeholders, have to face these challenges irrespective of the policy change and make all crucial decisions about the education of their children. Many studies indicated the feelings of parents, which give genuine initial information. Information is also available about the rehabilitation of such children on the world level for the support of parents of CWIDs who are always in search of some natural environment to eliminate social stigma.

Parents' participation in all aspects of decision-making is not only acknowledged but also mandated in educational laws in different parts of the world. For instance, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) legalizes the role of parents and requires that schools make every effort to sustain a joint relationship with them during the IEP development and execution process.

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Moreover, parents of children with severe disabilities had optimistic attitudes by reason of healthier socialization, and functional and complex cognitive skills (Palmer et al., 1998; Parson, Lewis & Ellins, 2009; Hanline & Torres, 2012).

Inclusive education usually labels the exercise of "teaching PWDs in regular class of locality institutes – institutes which they would go to if they did not have a disability and providing them with required facilities and care" (Rafferty & Griffin, 2001, p. 266). Razer and Friedman (2017) coded that it is a "brain surgery" of the teaching profession, engaging with excluded scholars and helping them escape the cycle of segregation.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the parent's attitude towards the educational placement of their children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools.
- To unfold the link between parents' attitudes and other demographic variables.
- To highlight the difference between the attitudes of fathers and mothers about the educational placement of their children with intellectual disabilities.
- To suggest the future placement measures for children with intellectual disabilities.

Research Questions

- What are the attitudes of the parents toward the educational placement of children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools?
- Do the attitudes of parents about the educational placement of children with intellectual disabilities differ on the basis of gender?
- Do the attitudes of parents about the educational placement of children with intellectual disabilities differ on the basis of educational level?
- Do the attitudes of parents toward the educational placement of children with intellectual disabilities differ on the basis of parental age?

Study Background

The cognitive theory of child development by Vygotsky works as per a seamless framework to explain the positive effect of academic inclusion, which contains placement of persons with special needs in typical schoolrooms along with their classmates for the utmost of the school period (Bryer et al., 2004; Swick & Hooks, 2005) to afford 'common meaningful learning practices' (Giangreco & Doyle, 2000). Clearly, all nations are moving similarly, however, at an alternate speed, given the unexpected and pragmatic hardships as closures and intentions fluctuate (Peters, 2003). Definitely, inclusion conveys assorted importance in various circumstances with similar yet unmistakable points of view of the two fathers and, mothers and educators inside the developing and developed countries of the world. In Pakistan, the first National Policy for PWDs 2002 and the National Plan of Action (NPA) 2006 brought a change to an inclusive arrangement of instruction for persons with distinct requirements (Bhatti, 2007). Qurrat ul Ain (2021) concluded that socialization inside and outside the class gives freedom to learn normal practices through association with peers and by making companions.

Klutch et al. (2007) discovered few families in search of better academics. They even travel to different cities for their children with special needs for inclusive opportunities (Ryndak et al., 2008). Constantinescu et al. (2017) social inclusion of little youngsters with hearing deficiency taught utilizing tuning in and communicating in language to ordinary hearing children, utilizing double sides of social inclusion (education and interacting with individuals and satisfying cultural parts) showed the similar social inclusion towards the typical hearing kids.

Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) acknowledged six zones of pre-transition anxieties for inclusion: safety, attitudes of peers, faculty and program excellence, transport, regional assurance, and probability for failure. Star and Foy (2006) surveyed parentages of 209 kids with autism

spectrum disorders, Down syndrome or learning incapacity about their insights into the education of their children in 7 zones: school staff' familiarity about the disability, finest work, behavioral concerns, parental/institute association, teaching crew, individual educational program, and varied added things for successful inclusion. Elkin et al. (2003), in their qualitative study with 354 Australian parents, explored the views and concluded that most of the parents initiated inclusive education for their children with special needs.

Leyser and Kirk (2011) with a specimen of 68 parents of youngsters with Angelman Syndrome, explored that nearly entirely all parentages (91.2%) responded that they would like to see their children have contact in school with peers without disabilities. Most of the parents (92.7%) felt that inclusion is also advantageous and presented a positive attitude toward peers without disabilities by fostering acceptance of individual differences (Amruta & Shruti, 2012; Hallahan & Costenbader, 2000).

A countrywide German study (JAKO-O) of the opinions of 2000 parents by Paseka and Schwab (2020) and Sosu and Rydzewska (2017) found strong support for inclusion. Ninety percent of parents in a nationally representative Scottish sample had a normally encouraging general perception of inclusive education for their children with disabilities.

Priya (2012) found parents of children with disabilities were dissatisfied with the education of special schools and wanted inclusive education for their children. Other researchers revealed that guardians moaned that they needed to "struggle" or "battle" for their special kids to be in integrated setups (Gasteiger et al., 2013; Ervin & Soodak, 1995; Swick & Hooks, 2005; Mudekunye & Ndamba, 2010; Qureshi & Hussain, 2016). Opinions of the parents showed that inclusive setups are the finest placements for learners with special needs.

Tafa and Manolitsis (2003) surveyed 290 parents of children with disabilities on 29 substances of the "*Parental Attitude towards Kindergarten Inclusion Scale*" (PATKIS) based on four factors, 'global attitudes', 'impact on children with SEN', 'impact on typically developing children' and "classroom practices". The mean score of the responses was nearer to the concurrence with inclusion replies. Studies also demonstrated that home and institute joint efforts give higher scholarly accomplishments, constructive behaviours, further developed conduct, and more effective projects (Yssel et al., 2007; Elizabeth & Janis, 2015). Mann et al. (2016) interviewed 30 parents of children with disabilities who had a firm focus on their kids being loved, having high expectations, and being perceived as individuals in an inclusive setup. There are several other studies which show a trend towards the placement of kids with special needs in usual schools, yet the voices of the parents in our context are not well documented, and it seemed desirable to conduct a study on parent's attitudes towards educational placement for their children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools.

Research Methodology

It was a descriptive study, and a quantitative research design was used for the current research. The main subject of the study was directed to disclose the perceived parental inclination to the educational placement of their CWIDs in regular institutions.

Population and Sampling

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities were the population of the current study. A purposive sample of 150 parents, who could provide necessary data, of the children with intellectual disabilities studying in different special schools for IDs of Lahore. Age of the respondents was between 30 to 60 years old.

Instrument

After reviewing the associated literature, the scholar developed a form comprised of 18 constructs about inclusive education. Two choices were specified to get item replies in the form

of yes or no. Choice yes was given "2" marks and option no was given "1'. The reliability of the form was 0.80 which confirms that the quality of the instrument was good. This questionnaire, with 18 questions, was pilot-tested on 30 parents of kids with IDs. Reliability analysis was run on these 18 questions. Two items were erased because of their little correlation with the scale score. It upgraded the reliability of the form. The questionnaire with 16 items was then field-tested on 150 parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The forms were distributed personally amongst the parentages of Lahore. A cluster of 14 parents did not reply, so the return rate turned out to be 91%.

Findings

After gathering the required data, an independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were applied to answer the study's questions. Demographic variables, gender, education, and parents' age were also coded and used in the analysis to discover the difference in parents' opinions of the kids with IDs.

Table 1: Distribution of sample in special schools of Lahore

Demographics of study	F	%
Child welfare center	3	2
Ameen Maktab	60	40
Allama Iqbal Spl Edu Center	26	17
National Spl Edu Center	11	7
Meherban	10	7
Rising Sun	40	27
Total	150	100

Table 1 represents the distribution of sample of special schools of Lahore city. 40% parents were from Ameen Maktab for intellectually disabled children, 27% from Rising Sun for intellectually impaired children, 17% from Allama Iqbal Special Education Center, 7% from National Special Education Center, 7% from Meherban institute and 2% from Child Welfare Center University of the Punjab.

Table 2: Demographics of the study on gender of the parents

Demographic of the study	F	%
Gender		
Father	75	50 %
Mother	61	41 %
Missing	14	9 %
Total	150	100%

Table 2 shows the gender of the parents. 50 % fathers & 41. % Mothers out of 150 parents responded to the researcher. 14 parents were missing during analysis.

Table 3: Demographics of the study on education of the parents

Demographics	F	%
Education		
Uneducated	7	4.7
Primary	6	4.0
Middle	7	4.7
Matric	42	28.0
F. A	27	18.0

BA	25	16.7
MA	16	10.7
Post Graduate	6	4.0
Missing	14	9.3
Total	150	100.0

Table 3 shows the qualification of parents. 4.7% parents were uneducated, 4.0% were having primary qualification, 4.7% parents were middle, 28.0 matric, 18% were inter, 16.7% with graduation, .10.7% masters, 4.0 post graduates and 9.3% didn't show any qualification as they wished to remain absent.

Table 4: Demographics of parents on basis of parents' age

Age of the parents	*F*	%
20-30	13	9.6
31-40	45	33.1
41-50	61	44.9
51-60	17	12.5
Missing	14	9.3
Total	150	100

Table 4 shows the responses on age of the parents. 9.6% parents were 20-30 years, 33.1% were of 31-40 years, 44.9% were of 41-50 years, 12.5% were 51-60 years old and 14 (9.3) parents didn't mention their age range.

Table 5: Frequency of the distribution of responses

Sr#	Constructs	(No) %	(Yes) %
1	Special educator is there to assist general education teachers	20	80
2	General curriculum is taught to all including CWIDs	34	66
3	Abilities are kept in consideration than disability	14.7	85.3
4	Higher expectations are made	15.3	84.7
5	High attention is on education, social interaction, and other related skills	15.3	84.7
6	High self-concept, confidence	27.3	72.7
7	Focus on hidden abilities	16.7	83.3
8	Given education is beneficial in future	13.3	86.7
9	Sense of friendship	16	84
10	Inclusive society due to inclusive schooling	15.3	84.7
11	Collaboration of staff members	9.3	90
12	Education with their typical peers	14.7	85.3
13	Placement based on chronological age	17.3	82.7
14	Adaptations to teach difficult topics	12.0	88.0
15	Democratic class room environment	10	90
16	Parent's involvement in decision making	6.7	93.3

Table 5, 03 out of 16 items show that 90% parents were positive towards involvement in decision making
The questions that have more than 90% agreement include:

1. Parent's involvement in decision making
2. Collaboration of staff members
3. Democratic class room environment

The above-mentioned constructs clearly indicate the type of environment parent of children with intellectual disabilities wanted to see in inclusive schools. However, under the existing circumstances meeting these requirements, though crucial for the success of inclusive education, yet would be uphill task for the administration. The reason is the un-democratic, authoritarian and inflexible traditions prevailing in our schools.

The constructs having agreement between 85 and 89% are:

1. Adaptations to teach difficult topics
2. Given education is beneficial for his future
3. Abilities are kept in mind rather than disability
4. Education with their typical peers

The above statements show the classroom concerns of the parents. Interestingly enough parents realize the need of curriculum adaptation. In other words, they in favor child-centered and differentiated teaching in inclusive classroom. Parents are very concerned about future of their children and want education that is aligned with future job market.

The constructs that carried agreement in between 84% to 80%:

1. High expectations are made
2. High attention is being paid on education, social interaction and other related skills
3. Inclusive society due to inclusive schooling
4. Good sense of friendships
5. Individual attention on hidden abilities
6. Placement based on chronological age
7. Special educator assists general education teacher

The above-mentioned constructs indicate the third priority area of the parents. Although majority of parent attach high importance to these matters yet they are relatively flexible about them. First five requirements are not even measurable so implementation level cannot be ascertained. The last set of conditions is least preferred. These include:

1. High self-concept and fully confident
2. General curriculum is taught to all including children with special needs?
3. Parents' attitudes toward these constructs show that they are least interested about these matters. For them the statements are not very meaningful for their kids. In other words, they are not worried about whether the inclusive school will ensure the compliance of these requirements.

Comparison among the attitudes of parents in favor of inclusive schools on the basis of gender

Independent sample t-test was used to analyze the perceived parental attitudes towards academic placement of their offspring with intellectual disabilities in regular schools on base of gender.

Table 6: Comparison between the opinion of parents on base of gender in favor of regular schools

Group	N	Mean	SD	MD	T	Sig.
Inclusive	F 78	29.42	3.00	0.006	0.01	0.99
	M 72	29.41	3.1	0.006		

In table 6 findings pointed no significant difference between the tendencies of the parents about school placement on the base of gender. The response of male parents in indulgence of

inclusive institutes (M=29.42, SD=3.1) was nearly similar as the group responses of female parents (M=29.41, SD=3.00). It displays both male and female parents were in indulgence of inclusive education (t=0.01, p=0.99).

Table 7: Comparison between the opinions of parents on basis of education, in favor of regular institutes

Group	P. Age	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
Inclusive	Between groups	11.96	3	3.98	0.42	0.73
	Within the groups	13.76	146	9.42		
	Total	1388.5	149			

In table 7 findings specified no significant difference in tendencies of the fathers and mothers about the educational placement of kids with IDs in regular institutions on the base of diverse groups of education (F=0.42, sig=0.7).

Comparison between the views of parents in favor of inclusive schools on the basis of age
One-way ANOVA was executed to discover change in perceived parental tendencies towards educational placement of their kids with IDs in regular schools on basis of the categories of age of parents.

Table 8: Comparison between the views of parents on basis of ages, in favor of regular schools

Group	P. Age	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
Inclusive	Between groups	61.26	3	20.42	2.24	0.08
		1327.27	146	9.09		
	Within groups	1388.54	149			
	Total					

Table 8 shows there is no significant difference among the parents' opinions in favor of regular schools based on age (F=2.24, sig=.08). Both male and female parents were likewise in favor of inclusive placement of their kids with intellectual disabilities.

Discussion
The findings of the study show that the attitudes of parents of PWIDs to inclusion are very encouraging. They were not only aware of the benefits of inclusive education but also familiar with the major indicators of its success. Parents of PWIDs believe that inclusive education will lead to better learning of academic skills, improved socialization, and the ability to integrate with society. Results of previous research by David and Kuyini (2012) are also consistent with the current results that inclusion may produce better school results and improved peer communication among scholars with and without disabilities. Regular schools accomplish the academics and other services for the rounded progress of their PWIDs. Jasbir and Arora (2014) referred to findings of the largest data study done by National Longitudinal Transition (NLT) in which academic results of 11,000 persons with disabilities (PWDs) exhibited that when PWDs spent maximum time in a regular classroom, they performed better on standardized tests of reading & number work irrespective of the scholars' disability, level of disability, gender or economic condition. Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) supported that an inclusive class environment can lead to improved academic attainment and a sense of pride and belongingness. Major benefits relate to the current study that in regular schools' placement of children is on the basis of chronological level, studying general curriculum with high expectations taught by

general teachers, collaboration is common, all members are accountable for results of progress and peer tutoring is encouraged (Carter et al., 2015; Harding, 2009). PWDs are self- confident in learning the upcoming oriented syllabus in regular schools, which will aid them to contribute to the social order.

The key purpose of this study was to know parental attitudes towards the educational placement of their children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools. Both the literature review and findings presented in this research paper indicated a positive tendency towards regular schools. This study also showed that all the parents, regardless of their gender, age or education, have the same views about the educational placement of their children with intellectual disabilities.

Conclusion

The current study's findings conclude that the majority of parents were in favor of the educational placement of their CWIDs in normal schools, keeping in mind the improved understanding of socialization, grooming, and educational skills. They have relationships in institutes. Regular institutes accomplish the educational and added services for the complete growth of their kid.

Parents reinforced the awareness of educational placement in regular schools, as all kids are positioned on the basis of chronological level. The regular instructor, with the assistance of a special educator, teaches the general curriculum. In regular school, the CWIDs are self-confident, learning the future-oriented curriculum that will help them join society.

All staff members collaborate with each other, and each fellow of the staff, as well as parents, are involved in planning and accountable for the outcomes of the improvement of the scholar. All probable practices are being applied to explain to the pupil. Peer tutoring is appreciated in class. All children have a claim to swim together or will drown together.

Current research also showed that all parents, irrespective of their gender, education or age, have similar opinions about the educational placement of their kids with intellectual disabilities.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is strongly recommended that,

1. An inclusive education system for children with intellectual disabilities should be initiated with better collaboration between parents, administration, and school staff members.
2. Training sessions for regular teachers and guidance from experts in the field should be available to assist them in successfully implementing this approach for children with special needs.
3. The government should make available all-out services for the CWDs in all regular schools at all stages, such as providing special educators, psychologists, counsellors, physiotherapists, and speech therapists under one roof. General courses should be adapted according to the student's educational needs.

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