

THE INVESTIGATION OF PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR SLOW LEARNERS

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali Akbar ARJMANDNIA
University of Tehran
Tehran, IRAN

Assist. Prof. Dr. Keivan KAKABARAEI
Islamic Azad University of Kermanshah
Kermanshah, IRAN

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effective factors on attitude of parents that have slow learning children in regular schools toward educational integration. 204 available parents in Arak were used (all of parents that have slow learning child). In this correlational research, questionnaire of assessing attitude was prepared by researchers. Researchers used the statistical parameters such as regression analysis for analyzing data. Results showed that the attitude of the parents was positive toward educational integration. The relation between parents' attitude and their age, the number of children's friends, and their academic grade was significant. Parents were dissatisfied with poor facilities in classrooms and school size. They approve teachers' supportive and sympatric relation with their children. So regression analysis showed that relation of other variables with parents' attitude was not significant. The other results are presented in the article.

Keyword: Slow learning students, integration, parents' attitude, inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main discussions in Education and rehabilitation of exceptional children in recent years is to integrate these students in normal schools and follow normalization principle. Inclusive education is opposed to the concept and practice of special education. It demands that schools should change in order to be able to meet the learning needs of all children in a given community. It seeks to improve the learning outcomes of students in academic achievements, social skills and personal development (Ainscow, 1995). Normalization principle believes that disables persons must benefit from same rights and opportunities as normal persons. Integration programs, comprehensive education, and setting up inclusive schools are the applications of integration principle (Behpajuh, 1992; Williams, 1988). In school year 93-94, execution of measurement plan for children ready to go to primary school, which one of its results was distinguishing and replacing slow students for education and rehabilitation, resulted in extra classes for these students beside normal classes in normal schools. These classes were held for two years in some cities of Iran. This integration was followed in school year 95-96 and was stopped after five years because of some problems like increment of costs, space problems, transportation of students, and negative emotional effects, and finally in 2000-2001, Ministry of Education decided to follow merging slow students and in normal classes beside normal students (Tat & Housepian, 2000).

Children with borderline intellectual functioning ("slow learners") have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of 71 to 84 (APA, 1994). An overall poor performance in all school subjects, difficulty in reading / writing / mathematics, poor memory, and hyperactivity/ inattentiveness in the classroom are the usual problems noticed by classroom teachers in slow learners (Karande, Kanchan & Kulkarn, 2008).

Educational experts believe that these slow learning students are better to educate in normal schools because they have little difference from normal students by mental growth.

Meanwhile, families of slow students believe that in separate system their children have opportunity to attain skills and knowledge proportional to their level. On the other hand, they desire their children interact with normal students and learn conformity with social life (Nelson, 1988). Also, participation in normal schools can help modification of view of normal students and help them to remove negative views toward disabled children (Vang, 2008). There are many factors that affect success of integration of disabled students in normal schools. Parents of normal students often resist against integration plans, especially when these plans have not been compiled well and children suffer severe disability. In other words, integration is affected by attitudes (Behpajuh, 1988). From those factors that are effective in integration of slow students is socio-economic situation of families. Hall et al. also found that one of the success conditions of exceptional students is that their parents have higher education and desire their children have higher education and help their children and make good relations with them.

In a study by Minayi and Vismeh (2001) in Tehran, they found that low-hearing integrated students in normal schools suffer from special problems like undesired quality of teacher services, view of other parents, low educational level of teacher, non-consent teacher of his job, low experienced teacher, and lack of rehabilitation services. Another study on 230 parents of disabled students showed that parents aside from their children studied in normal schools, they had positive beliefs about integration because it improved participation of their children in group situations (Miller et al, 1992). One of the basic integration elements is related to teachers and parents of slow students. They should be prepared to encounter a slow student in their class. On the other hand, positive views of teachers can affect views of parents. Paul & Young (1975) designed an on-the-job program to guide teachers, and this helped somehow removing misunderstandings and superstitions about these students (narrated from Jenkinson, 1997). In a study by Bruilet (2000) in Vietnam, there are deficiencies in inclusive programs for low-hearing students like non-desire and non-participation of parents in training and lack of time for presenting special training like sign language and behavioral problems. Many factors affect view of parents of slow students toward integration, such as type of facilities, type of communication with normal classmates, and type of educational planning. In a study, Kakabrayi (2005) by examination of attitude of parents of low-hearing or deaf students concluded that parents of low-hearing students have a positive view about integration and factors like correct planning and justification of parents of low-hearing students affect this view. Results of studies of BalBoni (2001) showed that those parents with a good economical situation have a more positive view toward integrated educational plans. Presence of slow learner students in regular classes is a subject that has been noticed by education experts all the world and researchers of different countries also studies about this. For example, Opdal (2001) studied views of normal teachers in inclusive education and concluded that 60 percent of teachers agreed on this method. Meanwhile, many of them suggested that architectural style of public schools should be changed in respect to needs of exceptional children.

Education of slow students in integrated situations is affected by many factors that can be discussed by either number or type. Integration is a complex process in which success of disabled students depends on special corporal and psychological situations, recognition of effective factors, and planning for integrated education. In a space that there is not an integral research about mainstreaming slow students and successful factors of these plans, this research seeks to answer this basic question that “what factor or factors do affect attitude of parents of slow students toward integration?” In other words, this study seeks to find answers of the following questions:

- From the views of parents, what problems do the schools encounter to execute integration plan?
- What are the attitudes of parents of slow students toward integrated education?
- What are factors related to attitude of parents toward inclusive education?

REREARCH METHOD

In this research, there are two types of subjects:

1. All slow students of Arak, Iran in school year 2007-2008 in normal primary schools.
2. Parents of these students, which there are 204 slow students in normal schools of Arak (133 boys and 71 girls).

Samples were also selected by counting. To measure attitude of parents of slow students toward integration, a researcher-built measuring scale was used. To construct these tools, 30 expressions from five-score Likert scale were used. Initial form of this scale including 30 expressions, was executed in a pilot study on 70 parents (35 fathers and 35 mothers). The gathered data were analyzed based on classic error model, and 15 expressions that were not from features of a desired psychometric were removed. Internal consistency coefficient of final form of this scale was estimated by Alpha formula of Chronbach of 0.84. Salvia & Yezeldike (1991) suggest that minimum reliability coefficient for a test is 0.60. Therefore, this scale is enough and their marks can be ensured.

This is an application study, because this is done in order to obtain practical results. Since this plan identifies and determines factor or factors that are related to view without any mental inference, this is a traversal-analytical plan. Analytical traverses are specially arranged to discover and examine relations between certain variables (Openheim, 1968).

FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

Findings are offered in two descriptive and inferential sections. In the first section, results of demographic features of sample and data descriptions are included. In the second section, inferential data are offered to answer research questions.

Most important results of this research are included in following tables. Frequency of socio- economic situation for slow learners' families will be presented in table number 1.

Table 1: Frequency of socio- economic situation for slow learner's families

Socio- economic situation	frequency	Frequency percent
high	14	7
average	44	21
low	146	72
total	204	100

As table 1 shows, 72% of families have low SES. Frequency of Amount of literacy for slow learners' families will be presented in table number 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Amount of literacy for slow learners' families

Amount of literacy	Up to 5 grade	diploma	B.S.	B.A.	total
father	178	15	3	8	204
Frequency percent	90.6	.075	.015	.04	100
mother	188	11	2	3	204
Frequency percent	92.9	.055	.01	.015	100

As table 2 shows, more than 90% of families have low literacy level.

Table 3: Frequency of attitude levels of parents toward inclusive education for slow learners

Attitude	frequency	Frequency percent
negative	17	8.3
positive	164	80.4
unknown	23	11.3
total	204	100

As can be seen in table 3, 80.4% of parents have positive perspectives toward inclusive education for slow learners. In contrast, 8.3% of them have negative attitudes.

It is essential to mention that for determining positive and negative attitudes, researchers used a cutting point. Number 45 is considered as cutting point because the questionnaire for assessing parents' attitude had 15 multiple choice questions. If we want to give 1 till 5 to each option, so we will have maximum 75 and minimum 15 with average 45. Therefore, parents who attained 44 or below, were considered as having negative attitudes. In contrast, those parents who attained 45 or above, were considered as having positive point.

Table 4: Frequency of parents' opinions toward relationship between teacher and students

opinion	frequency	Frequency percent
agreement	120	60
Without opinion	60	29
disagreement	24	11
total	204	100

As can be seen in table 4, 60% of parents have positive perspectives toward relationship between teacher and students. In contrast, 11% of them have negative perspectives.

Table 5: Frequency of parents' opinion toward class population and class facilities for their children

opinion	frequency	Frequency percent
satisfied	64	31
Without opinion	48	23
unsatisfied	91	46
total	204	100

As can be seen in table 5, 46% of families are not satisfied with school facilities. In contrast, 31% of them are satisfied.

Table 6: Result of one way ANOVA for parents' attitude

Source of changes	Sum of squares	df	Mean	F	Sig.
Within group	52975.02	3	17658.34	71.32	.001
Between group	4951.21	200	247.57		
total	102489.2	203			

As can be seen in table 6, F ratio is significant. On the other hand, changes of parents' attitude are predictable based on anticipant variables.

Table 7: Result of regression for parents' attitude

Model	coefficients	t	Sig.
Constant		10.63	.001
Age of parents	.41	7.65	.001
Academic level of parents	.34	6.27	.001
Number of friends (of slow learners)	.18	3.44	.001

As can be seen in table 7, all coefficients are significant. On the other hand, changes of parents' attitude are predictable based on anticipant variables such as age of parents, academic level of parents and number of slow learning friends. So there are significant relations between them.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates factors that affect attitude of parents of slow students in respect to educational integration. Questions that were studied in this research were:

- From the views of parents, what problems do the schools encounter to execute integration plan?
- What are the attitudes of parents of slow students toward integrated education?
- What are factors related to attitudes of parents toward inclusive schools?

About the first question, 45% of parents were not consent about facilities of schools and placement of students in a class. But 31% were consent. Also, according to descriptive results of this study, lack individualized instruction and extra classrooms for borderline students can be pointed as one of the problems and limitations of inclusive schools. One of the effective factors in non-consent of parents is communication of slow students with their normal classmates. As Eva (2003) also reported, non-acceptance of slow students by their normal classmates is not because of their weak of performance but it is because they disarrange the classroom and they are children that suffer from communicational and behavioral features. This was also suggested in another research differently. Abbasalizadeh Qarahshiran (2001) reported that slow learning students have lower social compliance than normal students. About the second question, the results showed that 80.4 percent of parents of slow students have positive views toward integration plans and only 8.3 percent of them have negative views. In a research by Kakabarayi (2005), it is mentioned that some parents of mainstreamed low-hearing students have negative views toward integration plans. In respect to the third question, regarding the data we can say that variables of parents' ages, parents' academic level, and number of children's friends have a significant relation with parents' views. Namely, the more the age, educational level, and number of children's friends, the more the positive views. This result expresses that increment of social compliance and interpersonal relation of students are very important for parents. Another point is effect of level and type of awareness of parents and its relation with their views toward inclusive education. In a research, Naor & Milgram (1980) concluded that whatever we increase information about exceptional children, we will improve public views about them. In another research, Minayi et al. (2002) showed that the more the economical level of a family, the more positive the parents' views of low-hearing students toward integration. Kakabarayi (2005) in a study showed that level of education and age of parents have direct relation with their views toward their children. One of the factors that affect integration of slow students is socio-economic situation of families. This finding complies with the results of Hall et al. These researchers found that one of the conditions of success of exceptional students and slow learning students is higher educational level of their parents and their desire to enable higher education of their children (Hassanzadeh & Khodaverdian, 1998). Other results of this study should be noticed. The reason of concentration of slow learning students in first and second grades of primary school is that either the current instructions can compensate their growth delay and guide them to educate in higher levels, or a group of these students cannot attend normal schools so they finally get into exceptional schools. Naeij showed that 17% of borderline intelligence students use individualized instructions in their home

and 76% of them are disadvantaged in terms of such instructions. This finding can be interpreted besides the finding about socio-economic situation of families of integrated students.

Finally, we can say that slow students can be educated and must be educated in inclusive schools. However, this requires exact planning, usage of more facilities, and support of parents, teachers and classmates. Since integration, in perception of some researchers (e.g. Wong, 2008), is affected by views of involved persons, enough notice is necessary for teachers and parents (of exceptional and normal) students. Anyway, in Iran, educational integration has gradually opened its place in education system of exceptional students, and parents of this group has accepted this well. However, this does not mean there is no problem in implementation of this method. Authorities should proceed to remove problems of this method precisely. Inclusion is better educational option for slow learning students but this educational setting needs to have some facilities and preparation.

We hope that till the time such ideal educational facilities are made available, pediatricians, psychologists, and counselors will be able to counsel the parents of slow learners of the benefits of inclusive system of education. Such timely counseling will prevent slow learners from experiencing grade retention and becoming school drop-outs. We hope standard tools will be used to examine parents' views for integrated education in next studies, because in this study, researchers were forced to examine parents' views upon raw marks for lack of standard questionnaires. This places the findings subject to validity damages. Of course, this method is not unexampled in study of integration. For example, Kakabarayi (2005), Minayi, Vismeh, & Hassanzadeh (2005), and Vismeh (2005) used this method. Future researchers can examine views of other groups affecting integration (e.g. teachers, normal students, parents of normal students, etc) by doing more psychometric activities on these tools.

Acknowledgement: This article has been presented at the 2nd International Conference on New Trends in Education and their Implications – ICONTE, 27- 29 April 2011, Antalya – TURKEY.

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESSES OF AUTHORS



Ali A. ARJMANDNIA is an assistant professor in University of Tehran, psychology and education of exceptional children department.

His research interests are special education and curriculum; social psychology and culture; and motor and psychological treatments and rehabilitation. Dr. Arjmandnia has authored/edited four books and authored, co-authored, or presented several articles, and conference presentations.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali A. ARJMANDNIA
Jalal Ale Ahmad Ave. Dr Kardan St.
Psychology and educational science faculty, University of Tehran,
Tehran, IRAN
E. Mail: aaarjmandnia@yahoo.com or arjmandnia@ut.ac.ir



Keivan KAKABARAE is an assistant professor in Kermanshah branch Islamic Azad University, psychology department.

His research interest is special education and curriculum; children psychology; and motor and psychological treatments and rehabilitation. Dr. Kakabaraee has authored/edited one book and authored, co-authored, or presented several articles, and conference presentations.

Keivan KAKABARAE
Ferdosi Ave. kasra St.
Psychology, Kermanshah branch Islamic Azad University,
Kermanshah, IRAN
E. Mail: keivan_k76@yahoo.com or keivan@iauaksh.ac.ir

REFERENCES

Abbasali Gharehshiran, Z.(2002).Investigation of academic achievement and social adjustment in slow learner students that studying in 1st grade in special schools in comparing slow learners that studying with normal students. Master of Art (MA) dissertation. Azad Islamic University, center of Tehran.

Afroz, GH. (2004). Introduction to exceptional children. (22nd Ed.).Tehran: University of Tehran press.

Ainscow, M. (1995). Education for All: M, baking it happen. Keynote address presented at the International Special Education Congress, Birmingham, UK, and 10-13 April 1995.

American Psychiatric Association (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Balboni, G. (2000). Attitudes of Italian teachers and parents toward school inclusion of students with mental Retardation & developmental disabilities. *Journal of Mental Retardation*, 32 (2), 148-159.

Brouillette, R. N. (2000). The efficacy of Total Communication within an Conclusive education system for Deaf students in Vietnam. Presented at international Special Education Congress (SEC) university of Manchester.

Beh pajoo, A. (1993). Normalization mobilization. *Exceptional children*, 2 & 3.20-32.

Beh Pajouh, A. (1988). What is integration? Keele University, Department of psychology.

Eva, Bosca (2003).School adjustment of borderline intelligence pupils. Summery of doctoral thesis. University of Cluj-Napoca. Faculty of psychology and education sciences.

Hall, R. & et al. (1999). Auditory rehabilitation for children with hearing impaired. (Translated by Saeed

Hassanzade & Soheila Khodaverdian, 1999).Tehran: Research institute for exceptional children.(Persian)

Jenkinson, J. (1997). Mainstream or special education? Educating Student with disabilities. Rutledge: London & New York.

Kakabaraee, K. (2004). Comparing attitude of inclusive teachers with itinerant teachers and parents that have hearing impaired children with parents that have normal children about Integration. Master of Art (MA) dissertation. Tehran University.

Karande, S.; Kanchan, S. & Kulkarn M. (2008). Clinical and Psychoeducational Profile of Children with Borderline Intellectual Functioning. *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, 75, 795-800.

Minaee, A.; Vismeh, A.A. & Hassanzadeh, S. (2006). Effective factors on academic achievement in hearing impaired students. *Journal of research on exceptional children*, 2, 172-189.

Naor, M. & Milgram, R. M. (1980). Two pre-service strategies for preparing regular class teachers for mainstreaming. *Exceptional children*, 47, 2, 126-130.

Nelson, M. (1988). Social skills training for handicapped students. *Teaching exceptional children*, 20(4), 19-23.

Norwich, B. (1994). The relationship between attitudes to the integration of children with special educational needs and wider socio-political views: a US-English comparison. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 9, 91-106.

Openheim, A. N. (1992). *Questionnaire design: interviewing attitude measurement*. Pinter publishers, London.

Salvia, J. & Ysseldyke, J. E. (1991). *Assessment (5th Ed.)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Tat, M. & Housepian, E. (2001). *Inclusive education for slow learners*. Tehran: special education organization press. Research institute for exceptional children (Persian).

Vaughn, J.S., Schumm, J., Jallad, B., Slusher, J. and Samuell, L. (1996). Teachers' views of inclusion. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 11, 96-106.

Walraven, B. (2000). *Combating Social Exclusion through Education*. Louvain: Garant Press.

Williams, P. (1988). *A glossary of special education*. England: Open University press.

Wong, Donna (2008). Do contacts make a difference? The effects of mainstreaming on students attitudes toward people with disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 29, 70-80.