

Challenges Faced by Teachers during Teaching Students with Developmental Disability at Primary School Level in Lahore

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Abstract

Purpose of this study was to examine the challenges faced by the teachers during teaching students who are intellectually disabled; suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disability, and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at primary school level. The study was descriptive in nature and cross-sectional survey method was used to collect data. The sample of the study comprised of 258 (43 male and 215 female) teachers from the special education institutes of Lahore district selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A self-developed questionnaire comprising 14 closed-ended items was the research tool. The results of the study showed that teachers faced many problems during teaching. The majority of the participants face challenges during group activities, to control hyperactivity of the students and misbehavior of students. It is concluded that there was a significant difference between male and female teacher's perceptions about the challenges faced during teaching to developmental disabled students. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers regarding challenges faced during teaching students with developmental disabilities in term of teachers' age and area of specialization. The study recommends pre-service and in-service teacher training was recommended.

Keywords: Intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, learning disability, teachers of primary school level, children with developmental disability

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Introduction

Education demands teachers who have the capability to create social awareness in society about disabled students. In society of disabled students, children need more attention of teachers with extraordinary effort, teachers teaching way method and material to guide these disabled children must be more effective (Agran, Alper, and Wehmeyer, 2002).

Machalicek, O'Reilly, Beretvas, Sigafos, and Lancioni (2007) described that enrollment ratio of Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools is much low as 9% attend school and whole 6% complete their primary school and go to secondary school according to a conducted study by UNICEF. 30% of the kids matured gave handicap as one reason for not going to school. In Pakistan, few studies conducted on challenges faced by children with developmental disabilities. Neef, Walters, and Egel (1984) said that a child who is developmentally disabled has limited access of information. Zimbelman, Paschal, Hawley, Molgaard, and Romain (2007) said that the teacher's attitudes depend on child behavior. Intellectual disabled students behave aggressively that's why teachers feel uneasy and need more hard work to teach them compare with and without disabled students. In local primary schools, there is a lack of training of teachers for disabled students. In most schools of Pakistan, there is a shortage of primary school teachers which is the utmost worst for special need units. Due to a shortage of trained teachers in special education, it has made a negative effect on the quality of education (Hastings, 2002). A study on students with learning difficulties emphasized need of more attention and different strategies to teach them like experienced teacher, teachers having professional development training who can build self-efficacy in a student with learning difficulties and build interactions in people with disabilities (Woolfson and Brady, 2009).

Comparative procedures were utilized by Western Australian standard educators to adapt to the difficulties of instructing understudies with learning disability (LD) in a controlled instructive framework (Vaz et al, 2015). Peters (2013) described the teacher relationship with autistic children in the classroom. Teachers face social, behavioral and different professional skills challenges during teaching such students. This study reveals the different strategies to overcome these challenges. Mayes (2000) discuss that some students have both a learning disability and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) disability. It is

estimated that 15-50% of students with both disabilities have reading problems. 24-60% of students with learning disability have spelling problems because of their low attention span. Handwriting skills play an important role during teaching disable students. Teachers of special schools involve special children during reading, writing, and other academic activities. To change the mind of a special person handwriting consider like a shadow of the mind. If disable students write something or even build the skill to write some teachers consider this as a reward or consider as a brilliant student (Jameel and Nabeel, 2017).

Knight, Spooner, Browder, Smith, and Wood (2013) said that many terms were interchangeably used for developmental disability in past; mental retardation and now the term 'intellectual disable' and 'developmental disability'. The term developmental disability is referred to as intellectual disability with many guesses; serious, long haul issues. Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) while describing the experience of general education teachers who teach learning disable children with normal students said that most teachers have a negative review of disabled children in class because of required extra time and modification of the curriculum. Some teachers think that other students take benefits of teaching through lecture as it is an easy way of delivering. Our education system demands teachers who have the capability to create social awareness among students. Banks and Banks (2010) stated that teachers must be arranging physical activities, managing students' needs, dealing with behavior problems and make a chart for disable children to teach them easier.

Udoba (2014) conducted a study on challenges faced by instructors during teaching children with developmental disabilities and used a structured interview protocol as a toolbox to get data. Results showed that the classrooms were large; the environment was not supportive for learners with a developmental disability. Hence, teachers faced difficulty to teach developmental disable students. Ogunjuyigbe and Fadeyi (2001) conducted a study on teachers who work in inclusive schools and handle different disable students in the early years. In a start, teachers face some issues in a class afterwards these teachers themselves change the environment and strategies in a classroom and overcome the issues they faced before. Teachers make a different lesson plan for every child and give attention according to the need of the student

Dick (2010) reported many studies on how teachers solve problems and what strategies they adopt to teach the disable children inside a classroom (Green & Ross, 1996; Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropely, 1999; Donnell, & Melendres, 2009). Busby et al. (2012) took the study

on address the teacher's challenges and overcome methods. The purpose of the study was to testing the progress of highly effective teachers with not only rang less educational students but also disable students. Result of the study concluded that autism spectrum disorder students need special attention and more time of teachers then normal students. The study concluded that challenges were; disrupting the behavior of children in classrooms and lack of self-regulation to merge in learning tasks.

S'lungile, Ntinda, & Hlanze (2015) conducting a study on a student who enrolled in inclusive classrooms in Switzerland. This study was related to qualitative methods. By which focus group discussion was used to collect data from 35 teachers belong to the primary level. The result showed that the majority of teachers were not trained for the inclusive class. Bullock et al (2017) describes three challenges faced by teachers in the classroom to teach special children. These challenges are: overload of paperwork in a class, segregated classroom & curriculum and no scale for test the behavior. Woolfson and Brady (2009) described that behavioral issues, learning problems, lack of social skills, poor communication exist in a disable children. Teachers want to improve all these weakness exist in children but somehow teachers fail because of negative responses come from parents and society. Lindsay et al (2013) describes the strategies for autistic children in the classroom such as understand the behavior of a child, barriers in a society and training of teachers for how to teach these students in the classroom. The above researches give a detail and background information about the study. Now in Pakistan, there is a need to introduce special teaching methodology at least in professional degree programs to deal with children with a developmental disability. The teaching methodology for additional consideration may include educational modules adjustment, showing strategies, and accessibility of instructing and learning materials, assistive innovation, evaluation frameworks, and additionally assets and assets for more help with adjusting the school condition.

Teachers face many problems and face different situations to teach students with developmental disabilities. The present study aims to examine the challenges faced by teachers during the process of teaching to students with developmental disabilities at the primary level. Teachers faced many challenges during teaching at special education institutions. In a developing country like Pakistan, very few studies conducted on mapping and coping with the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching children with developmental disabilities. So, the present study aims to examine the challenges faced by teachers during the process of

teaching to students with developmental disabilities at the primary school level in Lahore.

Objectives

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the challenges faced by teachers to teach developmentally disabled students at primary school level
2. Find out the difference in perceptions of teachers about challenges faced during the process of teaching to students with developmental disabilities based on demographical variables; gender, age, and area of specialization.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions of the study.

1. What are the challenges faced by teachers during the process of teaching to students with developmental disabilities at the primary school level?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions about challenges faced during teaching with developmentally disabled students?
3. What is the difference in the perceptions of teachers about challenges faced during teaching to students with developmental disabilities based on their age?
4. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of teachers about challenges faced during teaching to students with developmental disabilities based on their area of specialization in academic qualification?

Research Methodology

A quantitative approach was adopted whereas the research design was descriptive to examine the challenges faced by teachers during the process of teaching to students with developmental disabilities. A cross-sectional survey method was used to collect data through a self-developed questionnaire. Population consisted of teachers working in special education institutions of district Lahore. There are 19 special education institutes in district Lahore and working teachers are 862 (144 male and 718 female) in these Institutes. The selected sample of this study comprised 258 (43 male

and 215 female) teachers who teach at special education institutes of Lahore district selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique, 30% from each stratum. Data was collected through self-developed questionnaire comprising of 14 closed-ended items divided into two sections. The first section was based on demographic information; the second section was based on challenges that teachers faced in a classroom. Each item was developed on a five point-Liker type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The validity of the questionnaire was made sure from educational and assessment experts while the reliability was calculated 0.851 at Cronbach Alpha which showed that instrument was statistically reliable. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques by using SPSS version 21. Frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation was calculated. Independent sample t-test and ANOVA were applied to calculate the difference in the perceptions of teachers about challenges faced during teaching to developmentally disabled students based on gender, age, and area of specialization of teachers by using inferential statistical techniques.

Results

The results showed that majority of the participants agreed that teachers faced difficulties to teach students in special education institutes (i.e. when students need extra attention during learning, managing students while doing group activities, handle bad behavior during the classroom, and to teach students who are kids or a teenager). Lack of teacher training and teaching material, teaching methodology and class size are the major challenges for teachers to teach disable students in the class. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a most challenging disability. Both male and female teachers face problems while teaching disable students. Irrelevant area of specialization also affects the teaching and creates problems for teachers. Experienced teachers faced fewer problems as compare to new and young teachers because they were non-experience teachers.

Table 1
Statement Wise Mean and Standard Deviation

Sr. no	Statements	Mean	SD
1	Students need extra attention.	4.07	0.912
2	Managing students while doing group activities.	4.04	1.003
3	Individual lesson plan.	4.10	1.045
4	Handling bad behavior.	4.35	0.924
5	Collaboration between teachers and parents.	4.33	0.979
6	Shortage of train teachers.	4.17	0.985
7	Lack of training opportunities.	4.22	1.048
8	Unavailability of teaching and learning materials.	4.15	1.009
9	Class size is too big for teachers to facilitate quality learning.	4.20	1.085
10	Relevant teaching method.	4.13	1.034
11	Intellectual disability.	4.29	0.742
12	Autism Disorder.	4.49	0.719
13	Learning Disability.	4.28	0.884
14	ADHD	4.67	0.784

$N=258$

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation value of each statement.

Table 2
Independent sample *t*-test on Gender

Factors	Male (43)		Female (215)		df	T	P
	M	SD	M	SD			
Challenges in Teaching	34.50	3.681	41.49	7.928	256	2.091	0.005
Age Group Challenges	13.00	1.348	17.57	2.210	256	1.956	0.020
Class Level Challenges	13.08	1.564	18.41	2.379	256	-2.957	0.002
Gender base Challenges	9.25	.866	11.38	1.525	256	-1.930	0.014
Challenges with Disabilities	18.42	1.621	27.65	2.279	256	2.135	0.030
Overall Challenges	78.25	8.024	96.50	14.585	256	2.144	0.035

Table 2 shows the result of an Independent sample *t*-test which was applied to find out the differences between male and female teacher's perception regarding the challenges faced by teachers during teaching to students with developmentally disabled. Results demonstrate that there was significant difference between male and female teachers perceptions about challenges faced during teaching to students with developmental disability in all five sub-scales and overall challenges faced during teaching $t(256) = 2.091$, $p = 0.005$; $t(256) = 1.956$, $p = 0.020$; $t(256) = -2.957$, $p = 0.002$, $t(256) = -1.930$, $p = 0.014$; $t(256) = 2.135$, $p = 0.030$, and $t(256) = 2.144$, $p = 0.035$ respectively which were less than alpha 0.05. Male and female both faced challenges while teaching. Females

face more difficulty in handling the students as compared to male teachers.

Table 3
One way ANOVA comparison of overall challenges

	N	M	SD	df	F	P
Teacher Age						
21-26	146	92.16	14.819	255	1.345	0.026
27-32	88	95.59	11.190			
33-38	124	89.00	19.088			
Area of specialization						
MR	186	42.10	6.930	254	0.580	0.006
LD	38	40.68	9.793			
ID	28	40.29	10.291			
A	6	45.33	2.082			

Table 3 shows the results of one way ANOVA which applied to find out the difference in perceptions of teachers about challenges faced by teachers during teaching to developmentally disabled students based on teachers' age and area of specialization. Results indicates that there was a significance difference in the opinion of teachers based on age group (21-26) $M=92.16$, $SD=14.819$; (27-32) $M=95.59$ $SD= 11.190$; (33-38) $M= 89.00$, $SD= 19.088$, $df(255) = 1.345$, $p = 0.026$ which was less than alpha 0.05. Results also demonstrates that there was a significant difference exist in the perceptions of teachers about challenges faced by teachers during teaching to developmentally disabled students on the basis of area of specialization (MR) $M=42.10$, $SD=6.930$; (LD) $M=40.68$ $SD= 9.793$; (ID) $M= 40.29$, $SD= 10.291$; (A) $M=45.33$. $SD= 2.082$, $df(254) = 0.580$, $p = 0.006$ which was less than alpha 0.05. Most of the teachers teaching in special education institutions are not specialized in teaching intellectual disable children. Teachers with more teaching experience faced less difficulty in teaching intellectual disable students as compared with the teachers with less teaching experience.

Discussion

According to Pakistan Census 1998; 2.4% of the total population was disabled. 7.6% of the total disable people were classified with various intellectual disabilities such as down's, ADHD, autism, ADD, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities. Many challenges were identified in this study of children with developmental disabilities. With the result that

teachers are not properly educated and trained to deal with these problems, closing the doors forever to the rehabilitation and education of those with these disabilities. Lack of teaching material was a major challenge to teach developmentally disabled students.

Further, this research revealed that in special education institutions teachers need advanced teaching material to teach students confidently in the classroom. Teachers faced difficulties to teach students in special education institutes when students need extra attention, group activities, handle bad behaviors, and to teach younger students, similar results were concluded by (Udoba, 2014).

The study revealed that in special education institutions there was a lack of trained teachers who teach students easily. Most of the times fresh graduates of different subjects with no background knowledge and training of intellectual disable children are hired for teaching. Most of the teachers are not fully motivated rather their purpose is to only getting a job. The study also revealed that lack of motivation in teachers is a major reason to face these challenges. A few teachers think that these children have no secure future and it is useless to put effort into them. They also blame the government for not make proper policies to integrate these intellectually disabled children in mainstream of the nation. A very few special education teachers give extra time and attention to the children for a better future.

In special education institutions mostly, teachers have a different area of specialization that's why teachers faced challenges to teach developmental disable students. Teachers are graduated in Punjabi, History and many of the arts subjects instead of Psychology or other related subjects. No proper in-service training sessions and workshops are arranged for the teachers. Finding of this research revealed that experienced teachers teach and handle students in class more comfortably as compared to young and new teachers.

In special education institutions, teachers demand a high salary comparison then general education teacher. Teachers have a right to increase their charges for the motivation of the teachers. The study also showed that acceptance of the children with developmental disabilities is very low in society. Society excludes these children from society that is the major disadvantage of attending local schools (Bricker, 1995). In this study, fewer classes and poor learning environment are other major factors identified. For example; there is no latest technology inside the classroom, No provided ICTs, furniture, and desks placed for special children in a class to move easily in a class. Some of the learners sat on

the floor despite the policy on education in Pakistan insisting on having suitable learning environment for all children (Vygotsky, 1980).

In Pakistan, we need to hire trained teachers in a special education institution. Most of the teachers do not have enough updated knowledge. The new modern world needs the latest technology education. ADHD children need a special environment and IEP for every child. This study also revealed that in special education institutions parents are not allowed to take a part in their child's regular meeting and time of making IEP. Male teachers hire less as compared to female teachers. Male teachers have more experience and strength to handle ADHD and autistic children.

Conclusions

The study aimed to find out the common problems or issues faced by teachers during teaching the students with developmentally disabled at the primary school level. It is concluded that majority of the teachers faced challenges in teaching students who were suffering from ASD than the students who were intellectually disabled. Moreover, there is a lot of differences in the perception of male and female teachers and they are facing many challenges when they teach disabled students in a class. It is also concluded that a significant difference exists according to teachers' teaching experiences and teacher's area of specialization. Experienced teachers faced fewer challenges as compared to new hire teachers. The research creates the understanding that teachers expressed the need for modern teaching aids, and motivation to teachers and extra support from the government. Lack of training institutes for the teachers and a very few numbers of professional degree programs offered by the universities results in a very low number of teachers specialized in this area. So teachers feel that in-service training programs may inculcate ability for teaching students with developmental disabilities. It is also concluded that higher the trained teachers at special education institutions can easily teach the students developmental disabilities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that developmentally disabled students require extra attention so that a teacher should be professionally trained to teach developmentally disabled students. Teachers should make an individual lesson plan for individual students with the help of parents and there may

be a multidisciplinary team in a school because education of disable students need collaboration of other disciplines also. Teachers should promote innovative teaching method in schools. Teachers should collaborate with the parents of developmental disable students to share the progress of a student. There should also be a limited number of students included in each class.

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