

Obstacles encountering Teachers of Integration Programs in the Public Schools of Najran

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Abstract:

The research includes the obstacles encountering teachers of integration programs in the public schools of Najran. The male and female teachers of integration program in the public schools of Najran constituted the study population. The study sample consisted of (61) male teachers and (28) female teachers, whereas the study instrument was a questionnaire which included (56) paragraphs distributed to (7) aspects to determine such obstacles. The results showed that there are great obstacles encountering the teachers of integration program in the public schools in most questionnaire aspects, and that there are no statistically significant differences in the obstacles encountering male and female teachers due to the gender variable. Also the study showed that there are no statistically significant differences in the obstacles facing the teachers due to the experience and academic specialization variables.

Keywords: Obstacles, Integration, Special Education Programs.

1. Introduction:

Special education teachers have recently been an important source of researches and studies which highlight the teacher as a part of the educational process. Moreover, a special education teacher's effort to educate persons with special needs faces several challenges and difficulties, such as diagnosis and referral as they are difficult tasks due to the lack of diagnosis tests or the incompatibility of available tests with the local environment, as well as the lack of specialists in test application and interpretation. (Kamal, 24, 2008) There are other obstacles including the clarity of teachers' role, and the nature of his/ her qualification to perform his/ her role efficiently. (Dunne & Wragg, 96, 112) There are also obstacles related to the weakness of teachers' preparation, and the inability to implement the proper individual educational plan, in addition to the obstacles concerning students' parents which include lack of interest and following-up their children. (Al Ayid, 2003) Ibrahim (5, 2002) has pointed out that there are other obstacles which are related to school including lack of support and finance for special education programs, large numbers of students in the classes and the lack of teaching aids and methods which help to teach the students.

2. Problem of Study:

Special education teachers face obstacles which reduce the level of services provided to the students with special needs. The problem can be determined as follows:

What are the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran?

Are there significant differences on the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran due to the gender factor?

Are there significant differences on the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran due to the effect of experience years?

Are there significant differences on the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran due to the effect of specialization?

2.1. Significance of Study

The study is significant for determining the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs in Najran, hoping that it would be an introductory for further studies concerning the solutions for such obstacles.

2.2. *Limitations of Study:*

Time: the academic year 1435/1436 H - the second semester.

Place: the city of Najran

2.3. *Concepts of Study*

Integration Programs: the educational programs, which provide services to the students with special needs in normal schools in order to facilitate their education and integration with normal students.

3. **Previous Studies**

There are several studies, which refer to the obstacles facing the special education teachers such as the following:

Maylor's study (Maylor, 93) aimed at knowing resource room teachers' opinion about the services provided to the students and the problems they encounter in dealing with them. The study showed that the problems they face could be represented by the following: lack of specialized curricula, lack of finance, lack of support provided by officials and the lack of communication with parents. However, the study found some variables, which can improve students' education such as reducing the number of student in classes, improving work circumstances and developing learning methods and strategies.

Al Hammadi (2014) has conducted a study that revealed the obstacles facing the special education teachers from teachers and school headmasters' view. The study showed that there are obstacles in all scale domains with a medium degree. Family was the greatest obstacle, whereas the legislations occupied the last rank. It also showed that there are significant differences in regard to experience years variable, and lack of difference in the obstacles attributed to the gender and educational qualification variables.

Al Ayid et al (2011) conducted a study on the obstacles in Ta'if and it showed that there are obstacles encountering special education teachers which include the instrument nine aspects. The results also showed that there are no differences belong to disability category, whereas there are differences in the obstacles attributed to the gender variable between female and male teachers. It also showed that there are no differences in obstacles attributed to experience years as well as educational qualification.

Al Ayid (2003) has also conducted a study to investigate the obstacles facing special education teachers in Jordan. The study highlighted a group of problems facing the special education teachers, and they were classified in terms of importance as follows: the problems related to parents, then the problems related to the philosophy of education, then the problems related to the school community, then the problems related to the clarity of teacher's role, then the problems related to teaching aids, then the problems related to diagnosis and referral, and then the problems related to the absence of proper curricula . The study showed that there are no significant differences attributed to gender, qualification or experience.

Rakiz (2003) conducted a study to investigate the problems encountering P.E. teachers in integrating the persons with special needs in Jordan. The study concluded that there are no statistically significant differences attributed to the teacher's gender, teaching experience, qualifications, or an interaction between two of such variables.

Jennings (2003) has conducted a study to investigate the problems encountering teachers of learning disabilities in California. The study concluded that there is an effect concerning financial problems such as incentives and low salaries, in addition to other problems including qualifications, training and practices which enhance the education process of students with learning disabilities.

Al Hadidi (2003) also conducted a study which aims at determining the problems facing male and female teachers of resource rooms when applying the educational programs in Jordan. The study results showed that the major problems encountering male and female teachers of resource rooms are in connection with parents of students with special needs as well as dealing with them, whereas the problems of educational resources and materials are less popular.

Al Sabah, Khamis, Al Shaikha, Awwad and Sa'id (2008) conducted a study in Palestine that aims at recognizing the most significant difficulties encountering the integration of students with special needs from the staff's perspective. The study results showed that there are considerable difficulties of students' integration including the lack of proper, formal diagnosis strategies, the inappropriate teaching aids used for education, and the lack of sufficient training programs that teachers obtain to enhance their ability to deal with students with special needs.

Hsu (2010) conducted a study in Taiwan to identify the perceptions of public education teachers towards

integration practices and main obstacles regarding the students with special needs. The results showed that teachers' perceptions towards integration were positive, and that the school environment was the major obstacle, then the disability severity, whereas the environmental adaptations inside classrooms was the less significant obstacle.

4. Methodology and Procedures:

4.1. Study Methodology

The researcher depended on the survey method of descriptive approach to diagnose the obstacles encountering the teachers of integration programs for students with special needs.

4.2. Study Population and Sampling:

The study included all special education teachers of integration programs in Najran, who were (94), particularly (66) male teachers and (28) female teachers. (5) Teachers who evaluated the instrument were excluded, so that male teachers became (61).

4.3. Study Instrument:

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher has developed a questionnaire in cooperation with previous studies such as (Al Ayid 2011, Al Sabah 2008, and Al Hammadi 2014). The questionnaire initially consisted of (7) domains and (62) paragraphs.

4.3.1 Instrument Validity

Instrument validity has been examined by the following:

Validity of Arbitrators: The instrument has been presented to (14) arbitrators who were faculty members at Najran University, and (3) arbitrators who were special education teachers. They were consulted for the loyalty and linguistic formation of the questionnaire paragraphs, and the paragraphs were edited according to the arbitrators' opinions. Therefore, its final version consisted of (7) domains and (56) paragraphs.

Validity of Structure: The questionnaire was applied to an exploratory sample including male and female special education teachers who did not participate in the study sample. Correlation coefficients and total degree between the paragraphs of each domain from one hand, and between each paragraph and the domain it belongs to, on the other hand. The correlation coefficients of paragraphs with the instrument en bloc were between (34, - 76,) and with the domain, they were between (41, - 80,). It is notable that all correlation coefficients' degrees were acceptable and statistically significant at the significance degree (0.05) and (0.01).

4.3.2. Instrument Reliability:

Cronbach Alfa instrument coefficient was derived and the instrument reliability degree was (0.83) which is an appropriate value for application.

Study Procedures:

The questionnaire was distributed to the study sample, i.e. (100) male and female teachers and only (51) were retrieved.

5. Results:

The quintuple Likert scale was used in the instrument.

First: The following proportional scale was adopted for the obstacle degree in connection with the first question which is: "What are the obstacles encountering the teachers of integration programs in Najran?" To answer this question, averages and standard deviations for each instrument paragraph and domain were calculated as follows:

The table shows that there are large obstacles in the instrument aspects as the overall average of all aspects was (3.5318). The aspects were: (Obstacles due to parents, curricula, the nature of teachers' role, school environment, diagnosis and referral) which largely existed respectively where their averages ranged from (3.43 – 4.03), whereas the obstacles regarding the two aspects (teaching students and educational programs) were medium as their averages were (3.228, 3.229).

The table also shows that all such problems constitute real obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs

Obstacle Degree	Average
No Obstacles	1- 1,80
Low	1,81 – 2,60
Medium	2,61 – 3,40
Large	3,41 – 4,20
Very Large	4,21 – 5

in Najran which reflects the importance of such obstacles and the need to overcome them. When considering such obstacles, one can find that they are integrated, connected and overlapped at all their levels, and that they require great efforts to be treated by the officials of integration program.

This study agrees with Al Ayid's (2011) which showed that there are great obstacles encountering the teachers of students with disabilities including the lack of parents' interaction, the obstacles of curricula, as well as the obstacles related to teachers' role, the diagnosis of the students with disabilities, and the philosophy of education. It also agrees with Al hammadi's study (2014) since family and dealing with parents constitute actual obstacles facing integration programs. Furthermore, the study is congruent with Al Sabah's study (2008) which indicated that the difficulties of student integration in the public schools is highly existed, and that one of integration obstacles is the absence of clear policies regarding the diagnosis of students with disabilities.

Second: In connection with the second question which is (What are the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran?), mean, standard deviation and T-value test were calculated to confirm the significance of mean differences as explained in table (2).

In summary, and for all domains, table (2) shows that there are no differences between males and females in the obstacles encountering them during their work in the integration programs of students with disabilities, whereas the results showed that there are differences in gender in the second domain which is the educational programs as both male and female teachers have the same problems when teaching the students with disabilities, since both male and female teachers follow the same instructions and legislations of education managements, and they fall under the same educational circumstances in terms of teaching, diagnosis, referral and curricula. They also share the same nature of work and role as teachers. The current study is consistent with Al Hamadi's (2014) whose results showed that there are no differences between males and females.

On the other hand, it disagrees with Al Ayid's study (2011) which showed that there are differences between male and female teachers in connection with the estimation of obstacles as female teachers showed higher estimation of obstacles than male teachers because the education officials there made decisions which might reduce the obstacles facing the teachers, and such decisions differ from those applied to the teachers in Najran. In addition, the physical structure of male teachers enables them to overcome some obstacles encountering the integration of the students.

Third: In regard to the third question which is (What is the effect of experience years on the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran?), mean, standard deviation and T-value test were calculated to confirm the significance of experience differences as explained in table (3).

In summary, and for all domains, table (3) shows that there are no differences between the teachers with a long experience and those with a short experience in connection with the obstacles facing their work in the integration programs of students with disabilities, as the overall performance has no differences in the experience years. This can be because such obstacles might be general and all teachers might feel them when dealing with students, so that a teacher with a long experience does not differ from a recently appointed teacher. This is consistent with the first question of the study which explained the obstacles encountering the teachers as well as their degree, as the obstacles which fall under the domain of parents and curricula constitute the largest obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs, and those are general obstacles that are not related to the teacher's experience years. The study agrees with Al Ayid's (2011) which showed that there are no significant differences that belong to the variable of the teacher's experience years. It also agrees with Al Hamadi's study (2014) and Rakiz's study (2003) both of which showed that there are no significant differences in regard to the experience years of the teacher.

Fourth: In regard to the third question which is (What is the effect of the academic specialization on the obstacles facing the teachers of integration programs for the students with special needs in Najran?), mean, standard deviation and T-value test were calculated to confirm the significance of academic specialization differences as explained in table (4).

In summary, and for all domains, table (3) shows that there are no differences between special education teachers and grade teachers (whose specialization is not in the field of special education) in connection with the obstacles encountering their work in the integration programs of students with disabilities, as the overall performance has no significant differences in the academic specialization due to the nature of the obstacles encountering the teachers as they are general and do not belong to the teacher's competence. Therefore, there are no significant differences between the teachers majoring in special education and those who have other specialization in the general education or what is called here as "grade education" with a particular qualification such a diploma or a practical course to deal with the students with disabilities. The problems were general, and both specialized

teachers and those who have a qualification to work in the field of special education, along with their specialization, suffer from the same problems.

6. Recommendations:

- In light of the study results, the researcher further recommends the following:
- The need to organize practical and awareness meetings for the parents of the students with disabilities concerning the way to deal with their sons and daughters, and the necessity to cooperate with the school to activate their roles.
- Preparation of training sessions in the evaluation and diagnosis of students with disabilities for the teachers, and reconsideration of diagnosis tools.
- Reconsideration of the curricula used for the teachers with disabilities.
- Conducting further studies on the obstacles and setting appropriate solutions to reduce them.
- Developing teachers' abilities and providing in-service specialized courses for them.

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Table (1) shows the averages and standard deviations of instrument aspects as well as the degree of obstacles per each one:

Domain	Mean	Std. D	Degree of Obstacles
Diagnosis and Referral	3.43	.745	Large
Educational Programs	3.2229	.69036	medium
Curricula	3.8000	.84137	large
Teaching Students	3.2289	.93082	medium
Students' Parents	4.0350	.75383	large
School Environment	3.4667	1.03016	large
Nature of Teachers' Role	3.5200	.93407	large
Overall Performance	3.5318	.60226	large

Table (2) shows the mean, standard deviation and T-value of each instrument domain according to the gender variable:

Domain	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Diagnosis and Referral	-3.774	48	.000	-.75674
Educational Programs	.496	48	.623	.10452
Curricula	-.161	48	.873	-.04136
Teaching Students	-1.089	48	.282	-.30678
Students' Parents	-1.664	48	.103	-.37362
School Environment	-1.622	48	.111	-.49837
Nature of Teachers' Role	-.577	48	.566	-.16462
Overall Performance	-1.574	48	.122	-.28315

Table (3) shows the mean, standard deviation and T-value of each instrument domain according to the experience variable:

Domain	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Diagnosis and Referral	-.471	48	.640	-.12500
Educational Programs	-.319	48	.751	-.07857
Curricula	-.679	48	.500	-.20313
Teaching Students	-.142	48	.888	-.04722
Students' Parents	-1.129	48	.265	-.30000
School Environment	.340	48	.735	.12500
Nature of Teachers' Role	.451	48	.654	.15000
Overall Performance	-.272	48	.787	-.05848

Table (4) shows the mean, standard deviation and T-value of each instrument domain according to the experience variable:

Domain	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Diagnosis and Referral	.871	48	.388	.20503
Educational Programs	-.075	48	.941	-.01644
Curricula	-.576	48	.567	-.15377
Teaching Students	.933	48	.356	.27381
Students' Parents	-.366	48	.716	-.08780
School Environment	1.082	48	.285	.35053
Nature of Teachers' Role	.316	48	.753	.09392
Overall Performance	.528	48	.600	.10084