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Challenges with Students with Special Needs and Teachers' Attitudes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the problems that inclusive classes have. The factors affecting inclusive classes as well as the attitudes of teachers in these classes should be seen as a priority since the inclusion of students with special needs in the class unaccompanied by assistant/support teachers significantly increases the difficulties in these classes. The study suggests that the attitudes of teachers in inclusive classes are strongly related to: experience in teaching in these classes, professional development of teachers as well as conditions for adapting teaching depending on the learning abilities of students with disabilities. This study is a quantitative study regarding the method of data collection and processing. The SPSS program, version 20, was used to process the data collected from the teacher surveys. The sample taken for the study are the teachers of grades 6-9 in pre- university education schools in three cities such as Durrës, Kukës and Korçë (N=271). The instrument used in the survey is STATIC (Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Classrooms Scale - Cochran, 1998, revised 2000). In this study, a sample consisting of 71 teachers was taken. This study describes some of the findings related to the analysis of factors that may influence the teaching of inclusive classes. The results of the study, after analyzing the data obtained from the teachers' survey, as well as examining the hypotheses, in relation to the developed hypotheses, concluded that: "Teachers who have experience in teaching students with special needs have higher efficiency than teachers who have no experience in teaching students with special needs", the first hypothesis was not confirmed. Also in relation to "Training related to contemporary teaching is a distinctive characteristic and shows high efficiency of those teachers who engage in these trainings, than teachers who are not continuously trained in contemporary teaching of students with special needs" the second hypothesis was proved that by ANOVA.

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The ANOVA analysis showed that there is a relationship between the training of teachers of contemporary teaching and its adaptation in the comprehensive education of students with special needs. Such data were also displayed in Cross Tabulations developed with the same variables. We can conclude: that although with few limitations in the study, the results of the research show a relationship between the effectiveness of teaching and the attitudes of teachers in comprehensive schools. The influencing variables are related to professional attitudes, teachers' experiences with these students as well as the training received. The number of students with special needs in the same class with other students in the class affects and complicates teaching in these classes - it can be addressed in later studies. This study can serve and will positively influence as a guide for beginning teachers, who see working with students with disabilities as a challenge in their career.

Keywords: students with special needs, training of teachers, experience in teaching

1. Introduction

Students with special needs demonstrate a number of challenges in the classroom. For new teachers, teaching in these classes is as aspiring and challenging though.

The advance of these students is influenced by effective and desirable teaching, which is also related to the positive experiences that teachers inherit. Efficiency is also affected by teachers' willingness to cooperate or not to collaborate with these children in inclusive classes (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The teachers take into consideration and put forward the idea that if they can really rely and motivate the children with special needs the students should have a performance much more positive and in advance. This has to do with the fact of intruding the students, all the children, even those with special needs, in this case they will no more find themselves not protected or not supported, (Cheung, 2008, P. 104).

This study, throughout its findings, can introduce or suggest solutions to some of the problems associated with inclusive classes. The analyzes made in this research also serve to mitigate the difficulties they encounter in their daily work.

Analysis of the factors that are determinants in effective teaching in inclusive classrooms will influence specific orientations, as well as acquaint teachers with some necessary elements of differentiated or individualized teaching, without which this teaching will not be successful (Rizvi & Elliot, 2005).

The research brings forward the idea that teachers' manners towards effective teaching in inclusive classrooms clarify the strong bonds with: teaching experience, teachers' professional development as well as adaptive facilities and states.

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1.1 The aims and objectives of the study

This study is led by the aim to analyze some of the variables that influence teaching through the attitudes of experienced and trained teachers and new teachers in classes that include students with special needs. As well as the impact of the necessity for constant training of teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Objectives in this study:

- To analyse the relationship between the positive attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with special needs;
- To analyse the connection of demographic elements for the creation of a new relationship that affects teachers' attitudes;
- Evaluation of the effective teaching role of teachers (general and support/special) in relation to training in those classes where the presence of students with special needs makes it necessary.

The willingness of teachers for a tutoring process as close as possible to the needs and abilities of the student, which requires intrusion, creative thinking and effective strategies in the classroom, is influential in effective teaching (Villa & Thousand 2003).

The analysis of the factors that are decisive in the teaching of inclusive classes will influence specific orientations, as well as introduce teachers, especially new teachers or those interns, with some necessary elements of teaching in these classes.

1.2 Literature review

The attitudes required to include students with special needs in general education still have room to be discussed (Kavale, 2002). The concept of inclusion has not only fuelled a debate on the appropriate environment of students with special needs in general education, but it has also required care to be taken in screening, so that this inclusion is as humble as possible.

According to the Greek researchers Avramidis & Kalyva (2007), in their survey regarding the influences and attitudes of teachers on inclusion, they identify positive manners towards the general concept of inclusion as well as variable views on the difficulties that different sorts of disabilities are visible in ordinary classrooms.

The attitudes of teachers regarding the intrusion on one hand and the contradictory results are observed (Hwang 2010), while some researchers have reported negative attitudes and even express uncertainty in the direction of inclusiveness. This reference is based on a study conducted with North Korean teachers. However, the "availability" of teachers must vary according to the type and serious state of the Disability which we face. The right to modify (adapt) the teaching facilities according to the needs presented by the student with special needs" are seen as a necessity for students with special and specific needs. We can consider

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students who have problem in distinguishing the objects or students who cannot speak, but also students with other problems like learning or creating concepts.

Regarding effective teachers, they will become experts in helping students how to learn. It is useful to create responsibility in teaching which reduces problems in education (Ross, 2007). In this survey, it is argued that effective teaching should increase the likelihood of teachers acquiring and imparting teaching experiences and skills, as powerful foreseers in this process. Also, there are advanced programs designed to increase the efficiency of teachers. The teacher using effective methods and techniques in teaching, as well as communicating clearly and precisely. When teachers use effective methods and techniques in the classroom, turning it into "a laboratory for learning..., for a learning community that places great value on each member of the class," it fosters the development of understanding in the process of learning, so the classroom atmosphere increases the opportunities for high quality learning experiences, etc, (Greenberg, 2005).

2. Methods

The methodology used in this research is the quantitative method of data collection and processing. This kind of methodological approach makes more stable the arguments that emerge in his conclusion regarding the influencing factors on teachers' attitudes in inclusive classes. The instrument used in the research is the surveys conducted among the teachers of grades 6-9.

2.1 The sample included in the study

The population selected in this research are teachers of grades 6-9, in three districts: Durrës, Kukës and Korçë (Albania).

The districts from which the samples were selected were intentionally considered, since the cities of Durrës and Kukes are districts where the number of students with special needs is considerable.

The technique used to select the sample of Questionnaires was random clustered, regarding the completion of the questionnaires, teachers were selected from schools: in the city centre, in its surrounds or outfits as well as in schools situated in rural areas, whose selection was proceeded to represent them in order to be almost equal.

A conventional sample, N=71 teachers, was used to pilot STATIC. They completed the questionnaire and provided feedback on its clarity and ease of completion, as well as suggestions on how it could be improved. In piloting, Chronbach's alpha of STATIC was $\alpha=0.69$. After piloting, some changes were made in the way the statements were expressed. Data from the pilot sample were not used in the final sample. In the final study, changes

were found to be accurate and the STATIC had a Chronbach's alpha of $\alpha=0.82$.

2.2 Bright hypotheses for the study

Regarding the teaching process in inclusive classes, it faces with several tough problems. The establishment of hypotheses, their analysis, as well as their verification or not, in relation to teachers' attitudes and the factors that influence this teaching in classes where students with special needs are included, it necessary to deal with this issue step by step.

Arising different hypotheses compared to the hypotheses of studies of the same nature established by different researchers in other countries, they help us to highlight the common sides and the differences that have influential factors on effective teaching in inclusive classes.

H.1: Teachers who have experience in teaching students with special needs have higher efficiency than teachers who do not have experience in teaching students with special needs;

H.2: Trainings related to contemporary teaching are a distinctive feature and show high efficiency of those teachers who are engaged in these trainings, compared to teachers who are not continuously trained in contemporary teaching of students with special needs.

2.3 Quantitative data analysis

To verify the hypotheses, several quantitative data analyzes were used and performed to summarize and explain them (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

To analyze the quantitative data, the database was first created using the statistical program SPSS, version 20. For the analysis of the hypotheses, ANOVA, t-test, etc. were used.

Before performing all statistical tests, the fulfilment of mandatory assumptions for these tests (Pallant, 2010), such as: normal distribution of variables, assumption of homogeneity of variables, assumption of homogeneity of variance, etc., were taken into account.

3. Results

As per below, the table will present a general overview regarding the averages, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values for each variable.

Table 1. Descriptive data of the sample regarding the new variables of teacher efficacy and attitudes

	The location of school	N	Average	Deviation Standard	Value minimum	Value maximum
STATIC	In the center of the city	110	51.4	1404	10	85
	On the outskirts of the city	70	52.7	10.9	5	76
	In the village	91	51.8	11.9	25	82
	TOTAL	271	52.0	11.8	5	85

3.1 The crosstabulations

The STATIC instrument was used in this case to see if the training offered to teachers regarding inclusive teaching would affect the way teachers would see disability in a positive or negative light.

Detailed values are found in the table below. From a general look at the data in this table, it can be seen that trainings for various reasons (which are not part of this study) are not very efficient to change teachers' attitudes about disability.

64.9% of teachers who have been trained for contemporary teaching have a positive attitude towards inclusive teaching; and 35.1% of teachers who have not received training have negative attitudes. So, regardless of whether they have received the training or not, teachers are differentiated considering their attitudes. As a result, we have a visible difference between teachers who have received this training and those who have not received this training, this is reflected especially in the new techniques used by teachers in the lesson.

Table 2. Crosstabulation between STATIC and inclusive teaching training

			Have you followed courses or continuing training during your work on inclusive teaching?			Total
			Yes	No	I can't answer	
STATIC.CAT.	Negative attitude towards the Disabled	Frekuencat	74	29	7	110
		% STATIC cat.	57.1%	34.5%	8.3%	100.0%
		% Have you followed courses or continuing training during your work on inclusive teaching?	24.1%	26.9%	31.8%	25.5%
		% of Total	14.6%	8.8%	2.1%	25.5%
	Attitude positive to Limited ability	Frekuencat	38	27	5	70
		% STATIC CAT.	61.6%	32.2%	6.1%	100.0%
		% Have you followed courses or continuing training during your work on inclusive teaching?	75.9%	73.1%	68.2%	74.5%
		% of Total	45.9%	24.0%	4.6%	74.5%
	Total	The frequency	31	48	12	91
		% STATIC Cat.	60.5%	22.8%	6.7%	100.0%
		% Have you followed courses or continuing training during your work on inclusive teaching?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	60.5%	22.8%	6.7%	100.0%

So, we can mention that training affects teachers' attitudes. H.2 is verified.

Another analysis was performed to notice whether or not years of work had an effect on how teachers perceived Disability, which addresses H. 1, the ANOVA showed that it did not matter whether you had a few years of work as a teacher or a fully lengthened experience. In this issue we consider the way the teacher faces and treats the student with special needs and this helps us to come to a conclusion that it does not depend on the teachers' work experience. In the table below, it can be shown that the averages obtained by teachers with several years teaching experience are very close to each other. ANOVA comes to the conclusion that there is no relationship between these two variables. The specific values for each of the teaching years of work are clearly shown:

Table 3. Descriptive data table for years of work

	N	Average	Deviation Standard	Value minimum	Value maximum
Until 5 years	81	97.80	11.53	44	105
6-10 years	69	97.94	11.01	56	109
11-20 years	70	96.97	16.23	21	124
More than 20 years	51	95.91	10.36	57	110
Total	271	96.02	11.92	22	124

Table No. 4. Reliability coefficients for the factors of the study

The variable	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Teachers' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in inclusive classes. STATIC	.811

4. Conclusions/Recommendations

Based on the results of the survey and at the same time of other long lasting process of study regarding students with speial needs e may consider the Reseach A school for all sorts of students, it is a long process in teaching students ith special needs in the ordinary schools. Led by Save the children. (2010). The study prepared by the team of specialists and employee makes us be aware of the ork, the burden that teachers face with the students of different types and kinds motivated by the great process of teaching students , for a sustainable teaching process , where we find ourselves motivated and inspired by the great achievement done , regarding different implementation .The most evident thing noticed is the the gratefulness and the loving care of the teachers and specialists to accomplish their teaching process in the intrusive curriculum, providing the proper facilities and the proper tools at school.What is to be clearly visible is the detailed process of the staff , evaluating and implementing PEI, it is a great orientation which the staff and the leading board of te school should be aware of. (Save the Children).

4.1 Conclusions regarding the (dis)validation of the hypotheses

The study aimed to examine hypotheses in an attempt to come to a conclusion regarding teachers and their teaching in relation to the inclusion of students with special needs. Below is the (dis)confirmation of the hypotheses raised at the beginning of the research regarding teachers' attitudes:

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H.1: Teachers who are embraced with experience in teaching students with special needs have higher efficiency than teachers who do not have experience in teaching students with special needs;

It was hypothesized that experience in the profession would be a factor related to efficiency, as shown in the third hypothesis. The ANOVA showed that it did not matter if the teacher had less than five years of teaching experience, belonging to Group I: up to 5 years old, (according to the grouping of teaching experience), in relation to the other Groups. "Table 3" shows that the similarity between these groups was very close to each other. Comparison of these similarities argues that this hypothesis was not proven.

H.2: Trainings related to contemporary teaching are a distinctive feature and they show high efficiency of those teachers who are in these trainings, compared to the teachers who are not continuously trained in contemporary teaching of students with special needs.

ANOVA analysis, Table 2 showed that there is a relationship between teacher training of contemporary teaching and adapting it to inclusive education of students with special needs.

Such data also appeared in the Crosstabulations developed with the same variables, Table 2.

We can say that: although with few limitations in the study, the research results show a relationship between teaching effectiveness and teachers' attitudes in inclusive schools. The influencing variables are related to the professional attitudes as well as the teachers' experiences with these students as well as the training received.

The number of students in the class (which in Albanian schools is more visible than the average number of significant numbers), as well as the number of students with special needs in the same class (cases which notice that there are more than two students with special needs in the class environment and no special teachers), affects and makes teaching in these classes too hard - can be addressed in subsequent studies.

4.2 Recommendations

There are several factors that operate and have an impact on inclusive education in this case, individually or in groups, they play a progressive or diminishing role regarding the effective teaching in these classrooms.

Recommendation 1. Greater support is currently required regarding didactic tools that facilitate the adaptation of inclusive education. The moral and emotional and intention support towards the teachers dealing with the children with special needs is really considered very essential.

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Recommendation 2. To increase the efficiency and quality of teaching in inclusive classes, stronger collaboration between the teacher and the family is suggested, since the role of the family is very crucial in this process.

Recommendation 3. The inclusion of children with special needs in extracurricular activities makes them more capable of the learning and indisputably socially and emotionally aware.

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