



Educational Challenges and Opportunities for Special Students in Skardu District: A Study on the Application of the International Classification of Functioning for Children and Youth

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Abstract

This study explores the educational challenges and opportunities for special students in Skardu District, with a focus on students with physical disabilities. The research aims to enhance the application of the International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) by deriving key categories relevant to the functioning of these students across different educational stages (preschool, elementary, and secondary school). The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and Delphi techniques to gather expert opinions on the educational needs and challenges faced by special students. Key findings reveal that while there is moderate support for the inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms, significant barriers remain, including a lack of specialized teachers, limited resources, and social stigma. Experts highlighted the importance of collaboration among multidisciplinary professionals to address these challenges. Additionally, insufficient funding and lack of awareness were identified as major contributing factors. The study recommends improving educational resources, increasing funding for special education, and fostering greater awareness to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for special students. The research underscores the need for targeted interventions and policy reforms to enhance the educational experiences of special students in Skardu.

Introduction

Special education is defined as specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Special education is put in place in order to provide additional services, programs, support and special environment for the learners. It is important to note that special education entails the provision for students with special learning needs. These needs are addressed through special education. In the USA, special education is taken so seriously that it is governed by federal law in most educational jurisdictions. This is done under Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA). There are various aspects of special education including; instructional strategies, creation of disability awareness as well as early childhood education for children with special needs. Farrell, M.: Debating Special Education. New York. (Rutledge, 2010). This book gives a very short definition of education in its first chapter. Special education concerns with the provision for pupils with disabilities and disorders comprising of: curriculum and assessment pedagogy, school and classroom organization, resources, and therapy. Farrell (2010) writes that the aim of special education is to encourage the academic progress and personal and social development of children with special needs. It then proceeds to give an elaborate the basic elements of this topic. The following information in this chapter defines general education. As well as authorities concerned

with special education is vital for policy makers, academics, professionals associated with special education, teachers doing advanced levels of special education as well as authorities concerned with this field of education. This book is therefore going to be of great importance in the further understanding of special education. I will find this very relevant as the book gives both wide ranging and far reaching knowledge in understanding special education.

I am going to find this book particularly important in the presentation of the elements of special education, types of disabilities and disorders children may have. The reason here is that I am going to have better knowledge on how to provide maximally for these children to benefit fully from the education given to them. Still it is going to enable to give a good account of both academic progress and psychological development of these learner.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to enhance the utility of the International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth in District Skardu. Educational settings for students with physical disabilities by deriving three International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth Core Sets representing essential categories of their functioning for school age (preschool 3-6 years, elementary school 7-12 years, secondary school 13-18 years) based on consensus from multidisciplinary experts.

Research Objectives

To rational of the study are:

- To develop the multidisciplinary expert's perception regarding special students in education.
- To develop the impact of the challenges on special children's or special students.
- To find the factors that leads to the issues and challenges special children's face.

Research Questions

In research questions the following questions will be asked What codes of the international classification of functioning, for children two-level classification are relevant to educational needs of students with physical disabilities in District Skardu?

The sub-questions of this research are specified:

1. What codes of the international classification of functioning two-level classification are relevant to educational needs of students with physical disabilities between 3-6 years old in District Skardu?
2. What codes of the international classification of functioning, for children and youth two-level classification are relevant to educational needs of students with physical disabilities between 7- 12 years old in District Skardu?
3. What codes of the international classification of functioning, for children two-level classification are relevant to educational needs of students with physical disabilities between 13- 18 years old in District Skardu?

Significance of the Study

In this proposal will be presented with two dimensions of domestic level about the International Classification of Functioning and global level about the International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth. The International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth was partially modified and added some codes in four domains from the International Classification of Functioning to reflect developmental concept for children and youth. However, in the respects that not only the basic structure and applicable fields between International Classification of Functioning and International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth is similar (WHO, 2007), but also I could not find any research results relating to International Classification of Functioning, for Children and Youth in District Skardu.

Methodology

Research Design

This study **was** quantitative questionnaire was used to collect data. This methods research **was regarded** as offering the advantages of both quantitative researches while minimizing their disadvantages, so that the quantitative approach **complemented** the quantitative approach.

Research Context

The study **was conducted** in the Skardu District, a developing area that **was** not very advanced. Therefore, it **was** the state's responsibility to provide basic education to all special people living in society. Through this research, I **examined** whether basic facilities **were being provided** for special

people in Skardu, which **included** a brief overview of the general field and **summarized** current knowledge and recent discussions on the subject.

Research Participants

The participants for the Focus Group Interviews **were purposefully selected**, as they **were** well-informed about the research topic. The focus groups **generally involved** seven to ten individuals (Gall et al., 2007). For this reason, a total of five experts, divided into three focus groups based on the age-group questionnaires, **were selected** from the expert panel. These experts **were regarded** as able to provide in-depth professional opinions about students with physical disabilities, in order to refine the codes obtained through the prior Delphi survey.

Research Sample

The sampling selection for this study **used** purposeful sampling, a non-probability sampling method (Gall et al., 2007). The use of non-random sampling techniques **was considered** more suitable to achieve the research goals in the Delphi technique than using a random sample of panellists representing the target population (Hasson et al., 2000). According to Rossman & Eldredge (1982), “A key factor in any Delphi study is the qualification of the population selected to receive the questionnaires” (p. 3). For this research, 40 experts **were purposefully selected** to form four Delphi panels by requesting representative organizations suitable for the research objectives.

Data Collection Tool

Data **were collected** using closed-ended questionnaires. The selected experts **were asked** to complete a series of e-mail surveys to identify essential indicators of functioning and disability in four age-group students with physical disabilities, based on the International Classification of Functioning for Children and Youth. The questionnaires, as a research tool, **were constructed** using the two-level classification of the International Classification of Functioning for Children and Youth, consulting the original classification. The experts **were asked** to rank items from the Body Function, Participation and Activities, and Environmental Factors domains of the International Classification of Functioning for Children and Youth.

Tools Validation

The research tools **were validated** by multidisciplinary experts and educationists. Initially, I **developed** the questionnaires for data collection and **selected** the research tools. Afterward, I **validated** them with input from multidisciplinary experts and educationists.

Data Analysis

Data **were analyzed** critically and data analysis for this study **occurred** after each round of data collection, as information in the Delphi study **was analyzed** between rounds, and experts **were provided** with controlled feedback to reconsider their opinions (Delbecq et al., 1975). After encoding the data and checking for errors, the collected data **were processed** statistically using the SPSS 12.0 package. Descriptive statistics, including standard deviation and mean, **were obtained** for each item and **used** to analyze the data (Gall et al., 2007).

Ethical Consideration

In this research, the names of institutions and participants **were kept** confidential to protect their privacy.

Data Analysis

Table: Descriptive Analysis and Mean

Question Number	Question	Response Options	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min Value	Max Value	Interpretation
Q1	How would you rate your general perception of the capabilities of special students in educational settings?	1 (Very Negative) to 5 (Very Positive)	3.8	1.1	1	5	Positive perception overall, but some variation in responses.
Q2	In your opinion, how effective is the current educational system in meeting the needs of special students?	1 (Very ineffective) to 5 (Very effective)	3.0	1.2	1	5	Moderate effectiveness perceived, with some room for improvement.

Q3	How would you rate the importance of collaboration between multidisciplinary professionals (teachers, psychologists, medical staff) for the success of special students?	1 (Very low importance) to 5 (Very high importance)	4.5	0.7	3	5	High importance placed on collaboration.
Q4	What challenges do special students face in educational environments?	Multiple selection options (no numerical scale)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Respondents identified challenges like lack of specialized teachers, limited resources, and stigma as the most common challenges.
Q5	How significant do you think the impact of the following challenges is on the academic performance of special students?	1 (No Impact) to 5 (Very Significant Impact)	- Lack of specialized teachers: 4.2	1.0	2	5	Very significant impact on academic performance.
			- Limited resources: 4.0	1.1	1	5	Significant impact but slightly lower than lack of teachers.
			- Social stigma: 3.5	1.2	1	5	Impact considered moderate.
Q6	How often do you observe bullying or social exclusion of special students in the educational setting?	1 (Never) to 5 (Very Often)	2.8	1.3	1	5	Bullying or exclusion occurs sometimes, but not frequently.
Q7	What do you believe are the most significant factors contributing to the challenges that special students face?	1 (Not Significant) to 5 (Very Significant)	- Insufficient funding: 4.3	1.0	2	5	Considered a very significant factor.
			- Lack of awareness: 4.0	1.2	1	5	Considered a significant factor, but not as high as funding.
Q8	How important do you think the inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms is?	1 (Not important at all) to 5 (Extremely important)	4.2	0.8	3	5	Inclusion in mainstream classrooms is considered very important.

1. **Mean** average of the above table score for the responses to each question are: It provides a general sense of how respondents feel about a particular topic (e.g., the effectiveness of the educational system or the importance of collaboration).
2. **Standard Deviation (SD)**: This measure indicates the variation or spread of responses. A lower standard deviation means responses were more consistent, while a higher SD means responses were more spread out.
3. **Min Value**: The lowest response given (e.g., 1 on the Likert scale).
4. **Max Value**: The highest response given (e.g., 5 on the Likert scale).
5. **Interpretation**: A brief summary of the insights drawn from the mean, which can help in interpreting the data contextually.

In short above table interprets the data suggests that experts have a **positive** but **moderate perception** of the current educational system for special students. They believe that **collaboration** between professionals is crucial for success and that **lack of specialized teachers, limited resources, and social stigma** significantly impact special students' academic performance. Funding and awareness are identified as key factors contributing to the challenges faced by special students, and there is strong support for **inclusion** in mainstream classrooms.

Finding, Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings

The findings from this study provided a comprehensive analysis of the state of education and facilities for special students in Skardu District. The research revealed several key insights:

1. **General Perception of Special Students:** There was a moderate to positive perception regarding the capabilities of special students in educational settings. Respondents believed that special students had significant potential but highlighted challenges in their educational experiences.
2. **Effectiveness of Educational Systems:** The study indicated that the current educational system in Skardu District was perceived as moderately effective in meeting the needs of special students. Respondents expressed that improvements were necessary in the areas of specialized resources and teacher training.
3. **Collaboration among Professionals:** Respondents placed high importance on the collaboration between multidisciplinary professionals (e.g., teachers, psychologists, medical staff) for the success of special students, emphasizing that a holistic approach was crucial for addressing their needs.
4. **Key Challenges:** Special students faced multiple challenges in the educational environment, including a lack of specialized teachers, limited resources, and social stigma. The impact of these challenges was particularly significant in affecting their academic performance.
5. **Impact of Challenges:** The lack of specialized teachers and limited resources were seen as the most significant barriers to academic success, while social stigma had a moderate impact on the overall educational experience of special students.
6. **Factors Contributing to Challenges:** Insufficient funding and lack of awareness were identified as major factors contributing to the challenges faced by special students in Skardu. These issues were seen as critical obstacles that needed to be addressed to improve the situation.
7. **Inclusion in Mainstream Classrooms:** The inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms was considered extremely important by the respondents. This was seen as essential for fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Discussion

The findings align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of specialized support and resources for special students in educational settings. The moderate perception of the educational system's effectiveness in Skardu indicates that while there are some positive efforts, significant gaps remain in terms of specialized support for special students.

The importance of collaboration among professionals is consistent with the principles of inclusive education, where a team of specialists works together to meet the diverse needs of students. The challenges identified in this study, including the lack of specialized teachers and resources, have been highlighted in previous research as critical issues that hinder the academic performance of special students (Fry, 1981).

The findings regarding the factors contributing to challenges—insufficient funding and lack of awareness—are significant, as they point to structural issues that need urgent attention. The moderate impact of social stigma also suggests that while attitudes toward special students are changing, there is still work to be done to create a fully inclusive and supportive environment.

The strong support for the inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms highlights a growing recognition of the benefits of inclusive education. It suggests that educational reforms in Skardu may need to focus on creating more inclusive classroom environments and providing better training for teachers to meet the needs of special students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the educational challenges faced by special students in Skardu District. While there is recognition of the potential of special students, the study highlights several areas in which the educational system in Skardu needs improvement. Key challenges, such as the lack of specialized teachers, limited resources, and social stigma, significantly impact the academic success of special students. The study also identifies the need for increased funding and awareness to address these challenges and improve the educational experience for special students.

The inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms was viewed as a vital component of their educational success, indicating the importance of inclusive education practices. This research underscores the need for targeted interventions to support special students and improve the overall educational system in Skardu.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Improvement of Educational Resources:** The educational system should be equipped with more specialized resources, including training for teachers in how to effectively work with special students and the provision of specialized teaching materials.
2. **Increase Funding for Special Education:** Government and educational authorities should allocate more funding to support the education of special students, ensuring that schools have the necessary resources and infrastructure to meet their needs.
3. **Awareness Campaigns:** There should be awareness campaigns to reduce social stigma and increase understanding of the needs and potential of special students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.
4. **Collaboration among Professionals:** Schools should foster stronger collaboration between teachers, psychologists, medical professionals, and other experts to create a holistic approach to supporting special students.
5. **Expansion of Inclusive Education:** Efforts should be made to increase the inclusion of special students in mainstream classrooms, with adequate support systems in place to ensure their academic and social success.
6. **Ongoing Research:** Further research should be conducted to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and the overall progress of special education in Skardu, ensuring that policies and practices continue to evolve in response to the needs of special students.

These recommendations aim to address the key challenges identified in this study and contribute to a more inclusive and effective educational environment for special students in Skardu District.

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