

Abstract

Fteha, Ahmad Mahmoud. Attitudes of Basic Cycle Teachers in Jerusalem Towards Integrating Special Needs Students in Regular Education. Masters Thesis in Education, Birziet University- Palestine, 1998.

The issue of integrating special education students within the general educational system has gained much interest lately. Much of the research in this field was devoted to investing the teachers' attitudes towards this integration. The attitudes of the teachers who implement and teach in integrated classes were found to be of great importance to the success of this process. As the Palestinian Ministry of Education is heading towards the implementation of this integration within the current educational system this study is expected to provide decision-makers with the needed information.

The study population of this research consisted of the lower elementary school teachers in all Jerusalem 81 basic schools. These schools are distributed as follows: (1) 16 schools affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, (2) 25 with the Israeli Ministry of Education, (3) 33 private schools, and (4) 7 schools with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East). The study sample included 20% of the study population. Sixty male and sixty female teachers were chosen randomly and stratified sample according to gender.

The study tool included two sections: The first section was composed of a nine-item questionnaire related to the teachers' attitudes towards the integration of special education students within the existing educational system. The second section was composed of a twelve-item questionnaire. The aim of this section was to spot the teachers' expectations of the consequences of the implementation of this integration.

The study's 13 hypotheses examined to compare the teachers' attitudes towards the integration process, and their expectations of the consequences which may

result from its implementation. The teachers' gender, years of experience, and the type of the student's handicap were the independent variables in this study.

Descriptive (means and standard deviations) and inferential (two-way Anova and T tests) statistical analysis were conducted on the data to test the study's hypotheses.

The results of the study showed no differences between the teachers' attitudes towards the integration of special education students within the general educational system attributable to gender, experience, or their interaction. However, the results showed that the teacher's gender influenced his/her attitude towards the type of handicap the student suffers from (e.g., sensory or physical).

The results of the study were discussed within the results of similar studies and research. The researcher recommended that the Palestinian Authority should legislate a law which guarantees the special education students rights comparable to their healthy peers. It was also recommended that the Palestinian Ministry of Education should integrate these students within the normal school-life. Well trained and highly motivated teachers are the core of such a program. However, further research on this topic, and its specific aspects and consequences were among the recommendations for future research.