

Difficulties Associated With Integrating Students With Disabilities From Their Point Of View

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the difficulties of inclusion faced by students with disabilities. Also, the gender variable was correlated with the study sample's responses. To achieve the study objectives, the descriptive approach was utilized. The study sample consisted of (15) participants (8 males, 7 females). A 30-item questionnaire was developed and divided into four dimensions: environmental adaptations, teaching adaptations, supportive technologies and faculty members. The results showed that the difficulties in integrating students with disabilities came from their point of view to a medium degree. Also, there were no statistically significant differences in the difficulties integrating students with disabilities according to the variable of gender. In light of the current results, the study recommended adopting the program for the inclusion of students with disabilities in universities. Also, there is a need to design training programs for teachers and specialists on the mechanisms of integrating students with disabilities.

Keywords: inclusion, students with disabilities, Najran University.

Introduction

Disability is considered an obsession inherent in human societies since ancient times until now. Those societies varied in their view of the disabled and their treatment according to the religious and social values, norms and ideas prevailing in each society (Al-Adra, 2016). Several societies witnessed a human tendency to defend the rights of people with disabilities to live a decent life in society. Known as the principle of normalization, it had a significant impact on educating students with disabilities in a natural educational environment as much as possible with their ordinary peers. Later, it became known as the policy of inclusion (Al Hinawi, 2003).

Everyone knows that the disabled have the full right to education and participation actively in life regardless of their age and abilities. To help them achieve this goal, it is necessary to integrate them into public education with ordinary individuals because this inclusion contributes to developing their awareness. It

also provides an educational environment that is as close as possible to the natural environment (Al-Attar, 2015). Universities are among the important social institutions that contribute to preparing the individual for life and training him to assume responsibility before entering the labor market. Therefore, the success of universities in facing the problem of the disabled and integrating them into society depends on the role of those universities with their social and educational responsibilities toward these disabled (Issa & Othman, 2012). Hassanein (2015) believes that the inclusion of students with disabilities faces a real problem. Especially as it faces several obstacles, including environmental, cultural and economic obstacles. Therefore, when merging these students, it is necessary to take into account how to find solutions and necessary facilities. Some students in universities suffer from difficulties that hinder them in their university educational career, and students with disabilities are part of human diversity. The

National Statistical Center for Education in the United States of America reported in 2008 statistics that (9%) of university students have disabilities (Office for Civil Rights, 2011).

Several advanced societies that are interested in human aspects, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have adopted the principle of integrating people with disabilities with their ordinary peers. This is what the Universal Declaration (Education for All) came with urging everyone to protect people with special needs from discrimination and isolation and give them their right to education and equal them with their ordinary peers and involvement in society (Khader, 2008).

Inclusion of students with disabilities will not succeed unless it has major elements that contribute to its success. One of the most important of these elements is the acceptance of the university administration, the faculty and ordinary students for them. There must also be a prior preparation for the inclusion program in terms of providing requirements for the inclusion of students with disabilities such as providing educational materials and means for them. In addition, facilities must be adapted to suit them and provide courses for university staff members and students that mimic the characteristics of students with disabilities and ways of dealing with them (Al-Dababneh & Al-Hassan, 2008).

Heyward (2006) confirmed this notion. He believes that it is necessary to re-design university facilities to take into account students with disabilities and train teachers to match their abilities with those students. Al-Ghanim (2015) also referred to the knowledge of the reality of educational services provided to students with disabilities in public education in the city of Jenin from their point of view. The study sample consisted of (50) students with disabilities. The study confirmed the existence of appropriate facilities for the inclusion of students with disabilities and the provision of educational means dedicated to them. The study also confirmed the existence of strategies and organized methods for the care and rehabilitation of faculty members to deal with

them.

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, several years ago, has tended to integrate students with disabilities into universities, and this step comes within the framework of the development that education has reached in the Kingdom. Although the programs for students with disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have witnessed great development, these programs still need more support that several studies in the field of special education confirmed.

Al-Ayed et al. (2010) addressed the difficulties facing students with disabilities at Taif University. The study sample consisted of (17) male and female students. The results have concluded that the economic difficulties for students with disabilities were most represented followed by the administrative difficulties, and then transportation and communications. The psychological problems were least represented among students with disabilities. Maajini et al. (2009) showed that the number of students with disabilities was few in universities because of the difficulties they face in higher education. Jawarneh (2003) indicated that the inclusion of students with disabilities needed several educational programs and related services. This is because the disability entails several problems (social, academic and environmental). It requires the provision of support services to rehabilitate this category. Al-Mutair (1424) showed that a large number of students with disabilities did not continue their studies at the university due to several problems that hinder the pursuit of their studies. Also, the study (Ibrahim, 2001) indicated that the services provided to students with disabilities within the university at the academic, educational, social and economic levels were still below the required level. These obstacles limit their integration into the university environment.

This study is considered one of the first studies that addressed the difficulties associated with integrating students with disabilities in Najran Region. The current study is also distinguished from previous studies in the scale used, through

which the difficulties of the inclusion of students with disabilities were exposed. Through what has been reviewed, it becomes clear to us that despite the early attention that students with disabilities received in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, their integration programs in universities still fall short of meeting their needs. As a result, several problems and obstacles limit their integration into the university environment.

Through the researcher's work at Najran University and his supervision of the division for students with disabilities, he noticed the need to pay attention to the difficulties of students with disabilities and the importance of providing services that suit them. Especially, there is an increasing admission in the number of students with disabilities, which affects their performance and interaction within the university and requires identifying the difficulties they suffer from.

The significance of this study stems from the fact that it focuses on students with disabilities at Najran University. Also, it is interested in identifying the difficulties and directing the attention of officials to the problems of inclusion among students with disabilities in universities to work on finding successful solutions to them.

The current study was designed to answer the following questions:

- What are the integration problems facing

people with disabilities who are enrolled in Najran University?

- Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the inclusion problems faced by students with disabilities at Najran University according to the gender variable (male, female)?

Method

In the current study, the descriptive approach was used for its suitability to achieve the objectives of the study and to answer the research questions. The study aims to identify the difficulties associated with integrating students with disabilities enrolled in Najran University.

Participants

The study population consisted of all students with disabilities in Najran University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which numbered (29) male and female students with disabilities during the academic year 2021. Fifteen male and female students were selected to participate in the study with a percentage of (65%) of the study population. The study sample was selected using the convenience sampling method and included (8) males and (7) females. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample according to the gender variable.

Table 1. Frequencies for the distribution of the study sample according to gender

Variable	Category	Number	Frequency
Gender	Male	8	53%
	Female	7	47%

Instrument of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher reviewed the scales that were applied in the following studies (Al-Khalidi, 2020; Al-Hassan, 2019; Baker, 2012; Daily, 2015). Accordingly, a questionnaire was developed, and it consisted of (30) items divided into four dimensions: environmental adaptations, teaching adaptations, supportive technologies

and faculty members.

Validity of Instrument

Face Validity

The questionnaire, in its initial version, was presented to a group of experts from faculty members in special education at Saudi universities to check the soundness of scale

items. They approved the scale's items to measure the inclusion difficulties of students with disabilities. After that, the scale was produced in its final version.

Internal Consistency

The study instrument was applied to an

exploratory sample of (10) students from outside the main study. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the items and the total score of the domains to which they belong. Also, the items and domains with the total score on the scale were calculated as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient between items and the total score of domains and between items and domains with the total score of the scale

	Domains -items	Correlation of items with the domain	Correlation of items and domains with the total score of the tool
1	Environmental adaptations	1	.871**
2	teaching adaptations	1	.895**
3	Supportive technologies	1	.853**
4	Faculty members	1	.869**

** Statistically significant at (0.01)

Table 2 shows Pearson correlation coefficients between items and the total score of the domains to which they belong and between items and domains with the total score of the scale. The results showed a statistical significance at (0.01). This result indicates that the scale is valid to measure what was prepared for.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability coefficients were calculated on

the domains and the total score of the study scale using Cronbach Alpha. The study instrument was applied to a survey sample consisting of (10) students. Also, reliability was calculated through the test-retest method. It was applied again to the exploratory sample after two weeks to the same individuals who were given serial numbers from (1-10). After that, the reliability coefficients were calculated as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients and test-retest coefficients for the domain and the total score of the study scale

No.	Domains	Test-retest	Cronbach alpha
1	Environmental adaptations	0.89	0.86
2	teaching adaptations	0.92	0.87
3	Supportive technologies,	0.91	0.82
4	Faculty members	0.92	0.83
	Total	0.94	0.91

Table 3 shows that the reliability coefficient of Cronbach alpha for the scale as a whole was

(0.91). The reliability coefficients of domains ranged between (0.82 - 0.87). Also, Table 3

shows the reliability coefficients by the method of test-retest for the total score of the study scale scored (0.97). The reliability coefficients of domains ranged between (0.89 - 0.92). These coefficients enjoy high and are suitable for the study and indicate that the scale is reliable.

Statistical Processing

The statistical software (SPSS) version (23) was adopted to analyze the results of the study and answer its research questions. The following analysis methods were used.

-Pearson correlation coefficient was used to check the scale's internal consistency.

-Cronbach Alpha was used to check the reliability of the study instrument.

-Means, standard deviations and ranks were extracted to answer the first research question in identifying the difficulties to integrate students with disabilities at Najran University from their point of view.

-The following gradation was adopted for the degree of verifying the items and domains of the study instrument to determine the degree of

agreement based on the range equation: 1.00 - 1.80= very low, greater than 1.80- 2.60= low, greater than 2.60= 3.40= medium, greater than 3.40- 4.20= high, greater than 4.20- 5= very high.

-Mann-Whitney test was used to answer the second research question about the significance of the differences between the mean ranks of the study sample's responses about the difficulties to integrate students with disabilities at Najran University from their point of view according to the gender variable

Results

Results of the First Research Question: What are the integration problems facing people with disabilities who are enrolled in Najran University?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the integration difficulties for students with disabilities at Najran University were extracted as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of inclusion problems facing students with disabilities

No.	Scale dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree
1	Environmental adaptations	3.22	.346	Medium
2	Teaching adaptations	3.13	.408	Medium
3	Supportive technologies	3.07	.431	Medium
4	Faculty members	3.34	.482	Medium
	Total	3.20	.311	Medium

Table 4 shows that the total degree of the mean scores of the difficulties in integrating students with disabilities at Najran University from their point of view reached (3.20) with a standard deviation (.311), rating a medium degree. The domain of faculty members received the highest rank with a mean of (3.34) and a standard deviation of (.482), rating a medium degree. The domain of environmental adaptations came second with a means of (3.22), a standard deviation of (.482) and a medium degree. The domain of teaching adaptations ranked third with a means of (3.13), a standard deviation (.408) and a medium degree. Finally, the

domain of supportive technologies was least perceived with a means of (3.07), a standard deviation of (.431) and a medium degree

Results of the Second Research Question: Are there statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the inclusion problems faced by students with disabilities at Najran University according to the gender variable (male, female)?

The Mann-Whitney test was used to show the significance of the differences between the mean ranks of the study sample's responses

about the difficulties of integrating students with disabilities at Najran University from their

point of view according to the gender variable.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney test for the significance of the differences in the study sample's responses according to gender

Domain	Gender	No.	Mean	Total ranks	U	Sig (2-tailed)
Environmental adaptations	Male	8	8.44	67.50	24.500	.682
	Female	7	7.50	52.50		
	Total	15				
Teaching adaptations	Male	8	9.38	75.00	17.000	.199
	Female	7	6.43	45.00		
	Total	15				
Supportive technologies	Male	8	9.06	72.50	19.500	.320
	Female	7	6.79	47.50		
	Total	15				
Faculty members	Male	8	8.88	71.00	21.000	.414
	Female	7	7.00	49.00		
	Total	15				
Total	Male	8	9.13	73.00	19.000	.297
	Female	7	6.71	47.00		
	Total	15				

Table 5 shows that there were no statistically significant differences at (0.05) between the means ranks of the study sample's responses about the difficulties of integrating students with disabilities at Najran University from their point of view according to the gender variable in all domains and the total degree.

Discussion

The current results indicated that students with disabilities perceived the difficulties of their inclusion at Najran University moderately. The domain of difficulties related to the inclusion of students with disabilities ranked first. Maybe, this result is due to the lack of follow-up by faculty members for students with disabilities through periodic meetings with them to learn about their problems and the lack of attention to their complaints and the provision of their needs. Difficulties that are related to supportive technologies for the integration of students with disabilities in regular education at university scored last. This result means that Najran University has provided technologies quite

enough to support integrating students with disabilities. This result meets with the results of Mostafa's (2001) and Hamosh's (2012) studies, which indicated that the level of problems faced by students with disabilities in universities was at a medium degree. However, the current result is not in line with that of Al-Khalidi's (2020) study, which indicated that the inclusion problems faced by students with disabilities were high.

The results also indicated that there were no differences in the responses of students with disabilities at Najran University concerning the difficulties of inclusion from the study sample's point of view due to the gender variable (male, female). This result means that the variable of gender did not play any role in the participants' responses about the inclusion difficulties that they faced at Najran University. Also, the result indicates that psychological and social support is provided to students with disabilities regardless of their gender. In addition, the laws and regulations that apply to them are the same. The current result agrees with those of Al-

Rifai's (2019) and Amr et al.'s (2010) studies that revealed no significance in the participants' responses to the problems of including students with disabilities in regular education according to gender.

Conclusion

In light of the current results, the study presented a set of recommendations. It recommended the adoption of the program for the inclusion of students with disabilities in universities. Also, there is a need to design training programs for teachers and specialists on the mechanism of integrating students with disabilities. In addition, there should be programs to prepare students with disabilities and organize courses within universities. Furthermore, it is necessary to attract a group of supportive students to help students with disabilities and implement programs to educate and assist them. Finally, some university laws and regulations should be amended to suit the needs of students with disabilities.

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