

INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER STUDENT'S OPTICS

Gëzim Dibra¹, Fatbardha Osmanaga², Jozef Bushati³

¹ University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania Faculty of Education
Sheshi 2 Prilli, 4001 Shkodër, Albania E mail: gdsh53@yahoo.com

² University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania Faculty of Education
Sheshi 2 Prilli, 4001 Shkodër, Albania. E mail: bardha_osmanaga@yahoo.com

³ University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania. Advising Information Student Center
Sheshi 2 Prilli, 4001 Shkodër, Albania E mail: jozefbushati@gmail.com

Abstract

This article addresses the problem of integration of students with disabilities in public schools that is priority of Albanian education. To achieve integration and inclusion of such students, it is important to establish the hospitable climate in the classroom by students and their parents. The paper aims to gather opinions of students and their parents about the process of integrating students with disabilities in schools. Also another aims is to get the opinions of teachers in the process of integration of students with disabilities in schools.

For this purpose the survey methods was used by students in some schools in Shkodra, which incorporate students with disabilities and their parents. It is also used structured interview techniques with teachers from some of these schools, to obtain their opinion about the attitude of students toward their peers with disabilities and interaction between these students and students with limited disabilities. It includes such issues as: student knowledge about disability; reaction of students about their attitudes on a bench with a student with disabilities to give help to students; their collaboration with a student; reaction students about their association in environments outside the school with students, with disabilities and others. In this line are also issues related to parents' knowledge about disability; opinion of parents regarding their integration into schools; reaction of parents if their child will have in class students with disabilities. But there, not absent discussions that are done between parents and their children about disability also opinions of teachers for integration.

Key words: *integration, students with disabilities, inclusive education, public school.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Some studies/research around world

- According to the research in Scotland (2005): “The surface attitudes that Scots express about disabled people are almost uniformly positive” (Scottish Council Foundation “Disability in Scotland 2005–2020, A State of the Nation Report, p.24).

- Related to Russian researcher Elena Iarskaia - Smirnova, during 2001-2002 years (2001/2002): “The opinion of the key actors of the educational system – teachers, parents and children – is favorable towards the idea of inclusion as a project. At the same time, when it comes to a real life situation, a very practical concern arises, that hinders the true inclusion of the child. (Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2001/2002, p.24):
- Prof. Helen Phtiaka, researcher from Cyprus states:
 “In total, it appears that peers accept children with learning disabilities more easily than those with other disabilities. In the school without a special unit, children with special needs were more accepted and had developed better interpersonal relationships with their peers. It is noticeable that peer attitudes become more negative with the increase of age”¹ (Phtiaka H. 2005)
 “Moreover, children with special needs are stigmatized by their social environment which marginalizes and depreciates them”² (Phtiaka H. 2005)

1.2 Some words for studies in this area for Albania

- According to a study, done in the period January-March 2002 in Tirana and Durres, from Albanian Foundation on Disability Rights, (Nano 2002) it turns out that: "First, we must recognize that the integration of children with disabilities in our public schools is not a massive phenomenon. As a result of multiple parents' pressures, some of with disabilities (from these with minor problems/ cases), arrive to engage in general schools. Over the years, their performance in school becomes more difficult, especially in the upper 8-year school³. Not a few of them leave school without even completed the fourth grade⁴. For students with disabilities included in general schools, teachers and students attitudes are generally positive, benevolent beings. According to them, these children benefit from experiences in general school and not trouble for the classroom and school. Furthermore, they benefit themselves from these processes: teachers in professional side and students in many other respects. 90% of students in the classes want and feel able to help these children's, but do not know how”;

So, as you can see, the process of inclusive education has difficulties related to attitudes towards disability. Inclusion of persons with disabilities is a priority for our country, as well as developed countries. Such process, has its beginnings in childhood, in it`s time that start integration of students with disabilities in school. Even for our country, the process of school integration of such students is one of priorities of Albanian education. It also enshrined in the basic school documents. To achieve school integration process of students with disabilities is very important

¹ These study was conducted between February and April 2004 in a secondary school in Nicosia and aimed to investigate teachers' and students' attitudes towards the special students with special needs of the school

² This qualitative study was held out to examine the attitudes of principals, teachers and pupils about the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools. Moreover, it explored if and to what extent, attitudes of principals and teachers influence those of pupils. For the purposes of the specific research, a case study took place in two primary schools of Limassol, during the period October – November of 2004.

³ 8 - years education now changed to 9 - years education.

⁴ Elementary Education has been 4 years, later until 2012 year was changed in 5 years and after 6 years, will be 6 years Education, which is low cycle of pre-university education (Pre-university Education Law)

The 1st International Conference on Research and Education – Challenges Toward the Future (ICRAE2013), 24-25 May 2013,

in creating positive classroom climate, besides providing the necessary conditions and didactic teaching equipments.

2. Theoretical Background

Integration is a term that expresses commitment to educate every child, the maximum potential in school and in class that can follow. It includes implementation of support services for the child and requires that child to benefit from his being in class and not just stay with other students, as it found it in : Wisconsin Education Association Council ⁵

Integration in a regular classroom does not mean the elimination of special education, it brings the best, and that special education can offer education in a regular classroom, in order to benefit all students. It means:

- a) Having an individualized education program (IEP) and
- b) Appropriate support (special education and related services) necessary for success in this environment according to (Guetzloe, 1999)

At the study: Schools for All - Including disabled Children in Education, 2002, p. 9).

- Comprehensive education includes all students in all aspects of school life.
- Comprehensive education is the process of increasing of participation of all students in schools, including students with disabilities”

Characteristics of comprehensive education are as follow:

- Affirms that all children can learn.
- Recognizes and respects differences in children.
- It enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children.
- It is part of a broader strategy for promoting an all inclusive society.
It is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving.

2.1 Legal basis.

In our country there is a legal basis related education and integration of students with disabilities that derive from Constitution of the Republic of Albania, states:

1. Everyone has the right to education.

Mandatory school education determined by law (Article 57)⁶

Legal Package on Disability December 2004, (publication of the Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which states that: "the education of students with disabilities conducted in two forms:

1. Their integration in public education (general schools), in the context of their inclusion and training.

⁵ http://www.weac.org/Issues_Advocacy/Resource_Pages_On_Issues_one/Special_Education/special_education_inclusion.aspx

⁶ http://www.parlament.al/web/Kushtetuta_e_Republikes_se_Shqiperise_e_perditesuar_1150_1.php
The 1st International Conference on Research and Education – Challenges Toward the Future (ICRAE2013), 24-25 May 2013,
University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkodra, Albania

2. In public schools or particularly classes (special), by category and specifications that they represent, which are part of a network of pre- university public educational institutions in Republic of Albania (p.260).

Integration of students with disabilities with students of general schools, is a necessary contemporary process, implemented in the practice of special schools and is considered as an important process in child development. This process is mutual and special cases can be transferred to full integration (p.264) ".

2.2 National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities⁷, which states:

- To provide educational opportunity for all children with disabilities, giving priority to inclusive education.
- To improve and modernize special teaching education in special schools.
- Creation and gradual expansion of integrated schools and kindergartens.
- Creation and gradual expansion of psycho-educational services and psycho-social services in integrated schools and kindergartens (National Action Plan for the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, the field of education, employment and vocational training, points, 3.4. 5.6).

As described above, the basis of academic integration of students with disabilities constitute a comprehensive education. The core of inclusive education is the active involvement of this group of children along with normal children in the academic process, that in all school activities. (Hyrje në Edukimin Special / Introduction to Special Education, Ardian Turku, p.230). Turku, A. (2002) "Hyrje në Edukimin Special", Sejko, Elbasan.

3. Methodology

3.1. Goals and objectives of the research

3.1.1 The main goals of the paper are:

- Obtaining students opinion regarding the integration of students with disabilities in schools.
- Obtaining parents opinion the integration of students with disabilities in schools.
- Obtaining teachers opinion regarding students' attitudes toward their peers with disabilities.

3.1.2 The main research objectives of the paper are:

- Obtaining information from the students about their knowledge on disability.
- Obtaining information from the students for the response of students about their attitudes for standing on a bench with a student with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about help to provide a student with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about their collaboration with a student with disabilities during playing game.

⁷ http://www.adrf.org.al/images/strat_komb_pak.pdf

The 1st International Conference on Research and Education – Challenges Toward the Future (ICRAE2013), 24-25 May 2013,

University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Albania

- Obtaining information from the students about their companionship outside the school environment with a student with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about the integration of their peers with disabilities in schools.
- Obtaining information from the students about the reaction of parents if their child will have in class a student with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about their discussion by their children about disability. .
- Obtaining information from the students about the willingness of parents to help parents of children with disabilities and, specifically, which directions are considered priority in assistance by the parents of students without disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the teachers about students' attitudes toward their peers with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about affective component of attitude toward their peers students with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students about the behavior of students towards their peers with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the students regarding the students' perception of their peers with disabilities.
- Obtaining information from the teachers about the attitude of parents of students to their peers with disabilities.

Obtaining information from the teachers about their view on the process of integration of students with disabilities in schools. For the study we have used survey techniques. Measuring instruments are questionnaire, developed with the students and the questionnaire developed by their parents. Also was done the interview techniques with public school teachers in which students with disabilities integrated in order to obtain their opinion regarding the students' attitudes toward students with disabilities on the perceptions of teachers for inclusion of such students in the classroom.

3.2 . Sampling

The study population consists from students and teachers of 9 years schools of Shkodra city To identify schools, that has students with disabilities, integrated into their societies, and to identify the classes in which they participated, are used obtained information from Shkodra Regional Education Directorate. Inclusion of subjects carried out by adhering ethical principles, without forcing anyone and getting permits. Sampling of the study consists on students without disabilities who attend public schools and their teachers. Sampling mode of selection is rational. It is not casual sample and is representative sample of the entire population of public school students (9 year Education) for Shkodra city.

Inclusion criteria:

- Being public school students.
- Being a 9-year education student.
- Include as both boys and girls.
- Having or not students with disabilities in the classroom.

Exclusion criteria include:

- Denial of permission for student participation in the study by the Regional Education Directorate.
- Denial of permission for participation in the study of children by parents.
- Denial of permission for participation of children in the study from the respective schools.
- Denial of the children to be part of the study.

Parents subjects were studied are according to the following variables: age, sex, education.

3.2. The way of completing the questionnaires

Questionnaires are themselves fulfilled from students and parents and are distributed to schools. The students have fulfilled in class, while parents have fulfilled at home within 1-2 days and in this line distribution and their reversal was done in.

3.3. Content of interviews

Content of the interviews was designed in order to obtain the opinion of teachers about students' attitudes toward students with disabilities. It is intended to obtain the opinion of teachers about:

- Students' attitudes toward students with disabilities;
- The affective component of attitudes toward students with disabilities;
- Students' behavior toward students with disabilities;
- Students' perceptions toward students with disabilities.
- The attitudes of parents of students without disabilities to students with disabilities integrated in the classroom where their children learn.

Specifically, these questions were developed:

- Other students whether express regret for children with disabilities?
- Other students whether express disturbance, if a child with disabilities stays on a desk with them?
- Parents of students without disabilities how they react? Do they want their children to stay on a desk with a disabled child?
- Other students whether express wishing to sit on a desk with a child with disabilities?
- Other students whether express their thoughts about children with disabilities? How are these opinions, positive or negative?
- Other students whether interact with a child with disabilities during the learning process?
- Other students whether interact with a child with disabilities during the game?
- Related to you, integration of disabled students in public schools is :
a) no necessary, b) useful, c) accelerated, d) necessary. Why do you think so?

3.4. Ways of analyzing data.

The data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed through SPSS program. It is intended to examine the relationship between the variables in the study, to see how this relationship is statistically significant or not.

4. Findings of the study

The findings of the study include:

- Data obtained from the survey conducted with students.
- The data obtained from the survey conducted with parents.
- Data obtained from interviews with teachers.

4.1 General information about students who participated in the study

Table Nr.1 Information about school pupils

School name	Frequency	Percentage
I. QEMALI	41	34,7
A. LACEJ	38	32,2
SKENDERBEG	39	33,1
TOTAL	118	100

Table Nr. 2 General information about the class of students

Class	Frequency	Percent
6th Class	41	34,7
7th Class	31	26,3
8th Class	46	39,0
Total	118	100,0

Table Nr. 3 General information about related the presence of disabilities students in the classroom

	Frequency	Percent
YES	33	28,0
NO	85	72,0
Total	118	100,0

4.2 General information related to teachers, director who were interviewed

There are done 13 interviews were conducted with teachers of elementary education, teacher profiles mathematics, physics, chemistry, English, deputy director, director of 9-year-schools "Skanderbeg", "Ali Laçej", "I.Qemali"

4.3. The data obtained from a questionnaire developed by students.

We have obtained some interesting data from the questionnaire developed with the pupils.

Table Nr. 4 General information about related the presence of disabilities students in the classroom

	YES	NO	Total
Standing in the same school desk	94,1%	5,9%	100%
Assistance in lessons	95,8%	4,2%	100%
Desire to play	94,9%	5,1%	100%

Table Nr. 5 General information about related the presence of disabilities students in the classroom

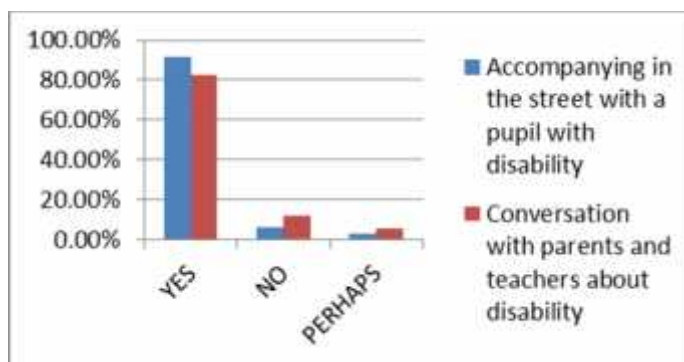
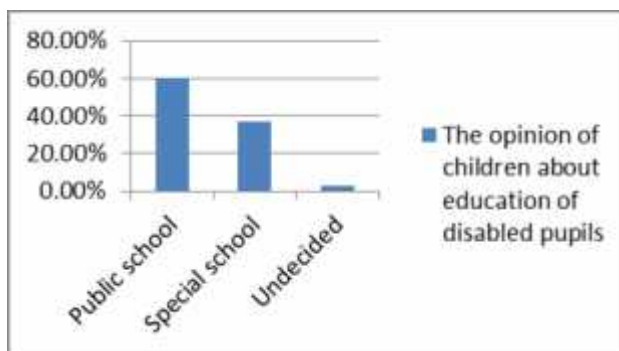


Table Nr. 6 The opinion of children about education of students with disabilities



5. Conclusions

- According to various studies, developed in our country or in the world, there are different attitudes about disability. Attitudes are generally positive, but there are problems related to the integration of students with disabilities in classrooms
- Given such facts, expectations regarding the integration of students with disabilities in the classroom consisted in the fact that, in general, the climate in the classroom is positive, but there are problems related to the integration.

The 1st International Conference on Research and Education – Challenges Toward the Future (ICRAE2013), 24-25 May 2013,

University of Shkoder “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkoder, Albania

- Conclusions are consistent with expectations.

8. References

- Analizë e Kuadrit Ligjor që garanton edukimin e fëmijëve me aftësi të kufizuara në kushtet e arsimit gjithpërfshirës (2005). Raport Studimor, Tiranë.
- Ammaniti, M.(2001) “Manuale di psicopatologia dell’infanzia”.Milano
- Dibra, G., Hasani, S.(2000) “Fëmijët me aftësi të kufizuara-veçori psiko-pedagogjike të punës me ta”.Shkodër
- Fondacioni Shqiptar për të Drejtat e Personave me Aftësi të Kufizuara (Dhjetor, 2006) “ Paketë Ligjore mbi Aftësinë e Kufizuar”.
- Ianes, D.(2001) “Didattica speciale per l’integrazione” Edizioni Erickson
- Nováková, Radka (ed) (2001) ‘Co je to integrace?’, Bez hranic. časopis nejen pro pedagogickou veřejnost, (1, p. 17).
- Peters Y.S.(2004) “Inclusive education : An EFA Strategy for All Children” World Bank
- Save the Children (2002) “Schools for All-Including Disabled Children in education”.
- Strategjia Kombëtare e Personave me Aftësi të Kufizuara.
 - Turku, A. (2002) “Hyrje në Edukimin Special”, Sejko, Elbasan
- Scottish Council Foundation “Disability in Scotland 2005–2020, A State of the Nation Report, p.24
- <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/DRC/DRC%20Scotland%202005-2020.pdf>
- Iarskaia-Smirnova E. 2001/2002“Creating Future Together: Problems and Perspectives of Inclusive Education in Russia”, CPSI International Policy Fellowship Program, p.24
- Phtiaka H. (2005) “Children with special needs in the ordinary classroom: teachers’ and peers’ views”, ISEC). http://www.isec2005.org.uk/isec/abstracts/papers_p/phtiaka_h.shtml . Accessed on September 30, 2012.
- Nano V. (2002) Albanian school toward integration processes–Study for the integration of children with disabilities in general schools, Tirana
- Wisconsin Education Association Council.
 - http://www.weac.org/Issues_Advocacy/Resource_Pages_On_Issues_one/Special_Education/special_education_inclusion.aspx. Accessed on September 30, 2012.
- Guetzloe, 1999. Education Disabilities.
 - http://www.behavioralinstitute.org/FreeDownloads/Education_Disabilities/Inclusion%20of%20Students%20with%20EBD-text_Guetzloe.pdf . Accessed on September 30, 2012.
 - http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/schools_for_all.pdf
 - http://www.parlament.al/web/Kushtetuta_e_Republikes_se_Shqiperise_e_perditesuar_1150_1.php