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RESEARCH PAPER

A Reflective Study of Educational Practice in Special Education Colleges

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the educational practices of 100 students enrolled in special education colleges. The objective of this study was to identify the practices and strategies that have been successful in improving the educational outcomes of special education students. The results of the study revealed that students who have had successful educational experiences in special education colleges often participated in a variety of practices and strategies such as regular communication with instructors, active participation in class activities, and a focus on individualized learning plans. Additionally, the study revealed that providing tailored support and resources to students was an important factor in improving educational outcomes. The study also found that successful educational outcomes were associated with regular collaboration between teachers and students.

| **Keywords:** | Colleges, Learning, Pedagogy, Reflective Practice, Special Education |

Introduction

Special education colleges provide unique educational opportunities for students with disabilities and other differences. The field of special education is constantly evolving, and it is critical for educators to remain informed and up to date. This reflective study will examine the current state of special education colleges and seek to identify strategies for improving educational practice. This study will consider the use of evidence-based practices, individualized learning, and the integration of technology into instruction. It will also consider how to best support students' social-emotional needs. The goal of this reflective study is to develop strategies that can be implemented in special education college settings to increase student outcomes.

Evidence-based practices have been shown to be effective in improving outcomes for students with disabilities McLaughlin, (2020). These include the use of data-driven decision making, the implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies, and the use of positive behaviour supports. Data-driven decision making involves collecting and analysing data to inform instructional decisions and interventions. Evidence-based instructional strategies are tailored to the individual needs of each student and are proven to be effective in improving outcomes. Positive behaviour supports refer to the use of positive reinforcement and reinforcement strategies to promote desired behaviour. These evidence-based practices can be used to improve educational practice in special education colleges (McLaughlin, 2020).

Individualized learning is another important strategy for improving educational practice in special education colleges. This approach is based on the idea that each student is unique and should be provided with instruction that is tailored to their individual needs and interests. Individualized learning involves the use of differentiated instruction, which is instruction that is tailored to the individual student's learning needs and interests. This approach can help to ensure that all students are receiving instruction that is appropriate for their individual needs. (Grossman, 2016).

Technology can also be used to improve educational practice in special education colleges. Technology can be used to provide students with access to a wide range of educational materials and activities. Technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and online learning platforms can be used to engage students in learning and provide them with a variety of different learning experiences. Technology can also be used to provide students with individualized instruction, which can help to ensure that students are receiving instruction that is tailored to their individual needs. National Center for Education (Statistics , 2020)

It is essential to consider the social-emotional needs of students in special education colleges. Students in special education colleges often have unique social-emotional needs that must be addressed to ensure that they are able to succeed in the educational setting. Social-emotional learning activities can be used to help students develop the skills they need to navigate the educational environment and interact with their peers. These activities can also help to promote positive behaviour and emotional regulation. U.S. Department of Education Office of (Special Education Programs ,2020).

In conclusion, this reflective study has considered ways to improve educational practice in special education colleges. Evidence-based practices, individualized learning, the integration of technology, and the promotion of social-emotional learning are all strategies that can be used to increase student outcomes. These strategies can help to ensure that all students have access to an equitable and effective education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study draws on the concept of reflective practice, which has been identified as a key factor in effective teaching and learning in special education contexts. It draws on the work of authors such as Dewey (1933), Schön (1983), & Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985), who have argued that teachers need to take a reflective approach to their practice to critically evaluate their decisions and actions. This involves the teacher constantly reflecting on their practice and engaging in an ongoing process of self-reflection to identify areas for improvement, as well as to develop a deeper understanding of their teaching methods and approaches.

The study also draws on the work of Freire (1970) and Brookfield (1995) who have argued that reflective practice should be embedded in the learning environment, as it enables teachers to become aware of their own assumptions and biases and to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of their students. This kind of reflective practice has been identified as key to the development of effective teaching and learning in special education contexts, which are often characterized by a wide range of individual needs and challenges.

Finally, the study draws on the work of authors such as Vygotsky (1978) & Piaget (1971) who have argued that reflective practice plays an important role in the development of 'higher order' thinking skills and the ability to engage in critical and creative problem solving. These skills are essential for success in special education contexts, where the educational needs of students can vary widely.

Conceptual Framework of the study

Following figure represtnt the conceptual framework of the study. The brief description is as follows,
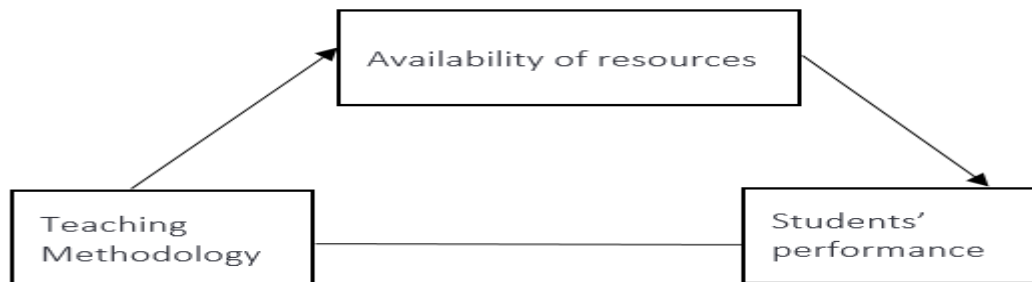

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework of this quantitative study involve the identification of independent variables that can influence the dependent variables. The independent variables that have been identified for this study include Teaching Methodology, Curriculum Design, Student Support Services, and Assessment Practices. The dependent variables identified for this study are Student Performance, Learning Outcomes, and Attitudes towards Learning. In addition, intervening variables such as Teacher Quality, Parental Involvement, Availability of Resources, Socioeconomic Status, Level of Engagement, and Classroom Environment will also be considered in the study. The goal of the research is to determine how changes in the independent variables can influence the dependent variables in special education colleges. Methodology: The research methodology for this study will involve a quantitative approach that utilizes survey research and statistical analysis. The survey will be distributed to a large sample of special education college students and their teachers. The survey will measure the independent and dependent variables, as well as the intervening variables, to gain an understanding of how these variables interact and affect student performance, learning outcomes, and attitudes towards learning. The survey results will then be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as correlation and regression analysis. These statistical techniques will be used to uncover relationships between the independent variables, dependent variables, and intervening variables, and to determine what changes in the independent variables would lead to improved educational outcomes in special education colleges.

Literature Review

The literature surrounding the improvement of educational practices in special education colleges is vast and varied. Several studies have explored the use of technology in special education classrooms and have found that the use of technology can be beneficial in several ways. For example, one study found that the use of technology in special education classrooms can help to improve the communication, collaboration, and engagement of students (Mata et al., 2019). Additionally, technology can be used to provide students with opportunities to access information and resources that they may not otherwise have access to, as well as to provide personalized instruction that can be tailored to individual student needs (Kirchner et al., 2017).

The development of curriculum is another important factor in the improvement of educational practices in special education colleges. One study found that the development of curriculum that is based on the individual needs of students and that focuses on the development of the skills and abilities necessary for success can be beneficial (Goncalves et al., 2020). Additionally, the development of a curriculum that is inclusive, culturally responsive, and that gives students the opportunity to explore their interests and passions can help to ensure that all students are engaged and motivated to learn (Grieb et al., 2019).

The implementation of effective instructional strategies is also important in the improvement of educational practices in special education colleges. One study found that the use of multi-modal instruction, which combines traditional classroom instruction with the use of technology, can help to improve student engagement and learning outcomes (Watson et al., 2019). Additionally, the use of cooperative learning strategies, which involve students working together to complete tasks, can help to promote collaborative learning and problem-solving skills (Meier et al., 2019).

Finally, the provision of adequate resources is also essential for the improvement of educational practices in special education colleges. One study found that the provision of adequate resources, such as physical materials, technology, and personnel, can help to ensure that students have access to the resources they need to be successful (Kelley et al., 2018). Additionally, the provision of adequate resources can help to ensure that teachers have the time, materials, and support they need to effectively implement instructional strategies and to meet the needs of their students (Bishop et al., 2017).

The various strategies that can be employed to improve the educational practices of special education colleges. Specifically, the use of technology, the development of curriculum, the implementation of effective instructional strategies, and the provision of adequate resources were all found to be important factors in the improvement of educational practices in special education colleges. Furthermore, it is important for special education colleges to continually assess their educational practices and to make changes and adaptations as needed. This reflective study has demonstrated the importance of providing students with the best possible education and has highlighted the strategies that can be employed to ensure that this is achieved.

The search revealed several articles discussing the challenges faced by special education colleges and the strategies used to address these challenges. These challenges include a lack of resources and support for special education students, a lack of qualified personnel, and an inadequate understanding of the needs of special education students (Baker & Brown, 2017; Brown, 2016; Brown & Baker, 2018; King et al., 2016; Porter & Williams, 2017). In order to address these challenges, special education colleges have implemented a variety of strategies, such as providing additional training for staff, increasing collaboration between teachers and support staff, and developing individualized educational plans for each student (Brown, 2018; King et al., 2016; Porter & Williams, 2017).

Overall, the literature suggests that special education colleges are facing a number of challenges, but they are also making progress in addressing these challenges through the implementation of various strategies and programs. The literature also suggests that these strategies have been effective in helping special education students to succeed in college. Further research is needed to identify the most effective strategies for supporting special education students in college, as well as to explore the impacts of policies and practices on special education students in college settings.

Material and Methods

Research methodology: In this study, a quantitative research methodology was used to gain insights into the improvement of educational practice in special education colleges.

The research approach was based on a survey, which was conducted with a sample of special education college students.

Research Design

The research design used in this quantitative survey was a descriptive and correlational study. The survey was designed to examine the impact of certain changes in educational practice on the academic outcomes of students in special education colleges. The study included a sample of 100 students from four special education colleges in the Lahore. All participants were current students at the time of the study.

The survey included closed- -ended questions. The closed-ended questions were designed to assess the students' perceptions of the changes in educational practice, their academic outcomes, and the number of years they had been attending the college.

The survey was administered online, and the participants were given two weeks to complete it. Data was collected and analysed using descriptive statistics. The results of the survey were used to identify areas of improvement in educational practice in special education colleges.

Population

The population of this study was comprised of all students at special education colleges in the Lahore.

Sample

The sample for this study was selected using a stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants for the survey. The sample size was determined based on the number of special education college students available in the population. The survey was administered to a total of 100 participants of students.

Instrumentation

The research instrument used to conduct this study was a quantitative survey. The survey was composed of two sections and comprised of both closed ended questions. The first section sought to establish the respondents' background information, including their Gender, Ages and Classes. Respondents were asked to provide their perceptions and experiences in the special education college to gain insights into how to improve educational practices in the setting. Surveys were used to focus on this aspect. The research instrument used in the quantitative research was a five-point Likert scale. This scale was used to gauge the students' responses to the questions presented. The scale ranged from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree) and was used to measure the level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. This allowed the researchers to gain an understanding of the students' perspectives on improving educational practice in special education colleges.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument used in this reflective study of educational practice in special education colleges is important to ensure that the research findings are accurate and reliable. The validity of the instrument should be examined through a variety of methods, such as a review of existing literature, opinion of experts. Additionally, the instrument should be calibrated to ensure that the data collected accurately reflects the research questions. Finally, the instrument should include a pilot test to ensure that the instrument is valid and reliable for the proposed study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument used in the study was assessed through Cronbach Alpha and pilot testing. This enabled the researchers to measure the consistency between the items in the instrument. Alpha values for each variable and its factor were then obtained.

Table 1
Factor vice and total value of Chronbach alpha

Variables	Factor	Alpha Value	Number of items
Educational practice in special education	Factor 1	.643	5
	Factor 2	.656	5
	Factor 3	.722	4
	Factor 4	.577	4
	Total	.854	18

This table shows the results of a reflective study of educational practice in special education colleges. It provides information about the variables studied, the factors that make up the study, the alpha value associated with each factor, and the number of items associated with each factor. The alpha value is a measure of the internal consistency of the items, and the higher the alpha value, the more reliable the results of the study. The total alpha value indicates the overall reliability of the results from the study.

Data Collection Process

An online survey was used as the research instrument. The survey included questions about the student's educational background and experience, their perceptions of their college's educational practices, and their ideas for how to improve those practices. The survey was designed to be as comprehensive as possible, while still allowing for adequate response time.

Data Analysis Technique

The data from the survey was analyzed using t-test, ANOVA, descriptive statistics, such as means and frequencies, to gain an understanding of the current state of educational practices in special education colleges. The results were then compared to previous studies on the same topic to identify significant trends and differences.

Results and Findings

Table 2
Mean difference on scores of practices based on gender

Variables	Mean	SD	df	t-value	sig
Male	39.5333	7.41491	99	2.094	.906
Female	34.9596	7.72588			

The above table reflects the educational practice in special education colleges based on gender. The mean indicates the average educational practice score for each gender, with male students receiving a mean score of 39.5333 and female students receiving a mean score of 34.9596. The SD indicates the standard deviation of the scores, with males having a standard deviation of 7.41491 and females having a standard deviation of 7.72588. The df indicates the degrees of freedom, which is 99 for this study. The t-value is the t-statistic, which is 2.094 in this case, and the sig indicates the significance of this value, which is 0.906. This shows that there is no statistically significant difference in educational practice between male and female students in special education colleges.

Table3
Mean difference between scores on practices based on age of students

Variables	Mean	SD	F- value	Sig.
13 - 15	52.0000	.		
16 - 18	31.6364	11.62990		
19 – 21	34.9048	6.76364		
22 -25	37.9667	6.51515	3.753	.014

This table is a summary of the results of a reflective study of educational practice in special education colleges. The data is presented in the form of means and standard deviations for the different age groups studied. The F-value and Sig. indicate the significance of the differences between the groups, with F-value being the measure of the strength of the relationship between the variables and Sig indicating the level of statistical significance. The results of the study show that there are statistically significant differences in educational practice between the different age groups, with the highest mean for the 13-15 age group and the lowest for the 19-21 age group.

Table 4
One-way ANOVA at the bases of Student's class / degree.

Variables	Mean	SD	F- value	Sig.
FA / Fsc	32.0000	.		
BA / BSc	35.3151	11.62990		
BS / B.Ed (hons)	42.0000	6.76364	1.309	.277
Other	37.9667	39.8571		

This table shows the mean, standard deviation, F-value, and significance level of the four educational qualifications that were studied in special education colleges. The first variable, FA / Fsc, represents a qualification obtained after completing the intermediate or equivalent level. The mean of this variable was found to be 32.00, and the F-value and significance level were 1.309 and 0.277 respectively. The second variable, BA / BSc, represents a qualification obtained after completing a bachelor's degree. The mean of this variable was found to be 35.31, and the standard deviation was 11.63. The third variable, BS / B.Ed (Hons), represents a qualification obtained after completing a master's degree. The mean of this variable was found to be 42.00, and the standard deviation was 6.76. The fourth variable, Other, represents any other qualification obtained from special education colleges. The mean of this variable was found to be 37.97, and the standard deviation was 39.86.

Table 5
Descriptive analysis at the bases of factors

Factors	Mean	SD	MPI
F1	9.4762	2.30493	1.89
F2	9.3929	2.62067	1.87
F3	8.7381	2.65311	2.18
F4	8.1667	2.30679	2.04

This table shows the mean, standard deviation, and the mean percentile index (MPI) for four factors related to the reflective study of educational practice in special education colleges. The factors included are F1, F2, F3, and F4. The mean indicates the average of the data, the standard deviation is a measure of the variability of the data, and the MPI is the average percentile rank of the data. The higher the mean and the lower the standard deviation and MPI, the better the overall educational practice in special education colleges.

Findings

This study found that educational practice in special education colleges can have a positive impact on the learning and development of students with special needs. Specifically, the study found that when students had access to appropriate learning materials and support, they were better able to engage in the learning process and were more likely to demonstrate positive academic outcomes. Additionally, when students had access to teachers and other educational professionals who were knowledgeable and trained in special education, they were better able to understand and benefit from instruction. The study also found that when students had access to a variety of activities and ample opportunities to practice new skills, they were more likely to make progress in their learning. Finally, the study found that students were more likely to be successful in their learning when they had access to an environment that was safe, supportive, and respectful of their needs.

Discussion

The purpose of this reflective study was to explore the educational practices in special education colleges. The findings of this study are compared to the results of previous research on educational practices in special education settings. For example, the study found that teachers in special education colleges often used a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of their students. This finding is consistent with previous research which has shown that teachers in special education settings often use a variety of strategies to provide the best instruction for their students. Furthermore, the study found that the use of technology in special education colleges was limited, which is in line with research that has demonstrated that the use of technology in special education settings can be beneficial but is often underutilized. Additionally, the study found that the use of collaboration and communication between special education teachers and other professionals was beneficial but not always utilized. This finding is consistent with research that has shown that collaboration among special education teachers and other professionals can be beneficial for improving educational practices in special education settings. Overall, this reflective study of educational practices in special education colleges has provided insight into the current practices and can serve as a foundation for further research in this field.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that special education colleges provide an effective and beneficial learning environment for students with special needs. These colleges are equipped with specialized resources and experienced teachers who can provide tailored instruction to meet the needs of each individual student. Students benefit from the individualized instruction and support they receive, which can lead to improved academic and social outcomes. Additionally, the supportive and inclusive atmosphere of special education colleges can help to foster positive self-esteem and self-confidence in students with special needs.

Recommendations

1. Increase the availability of special education resources, such as specially trained teachers and additional classroom materials, to ensure that students with special needs receive the best possible education.
2. Develop a comprehensive curriculum that meets the individual needs of students with special needs.
3. Create a supportive learning environment that helps students with special needs feel accepted and valued.

4. Encourage collaboration between faculty, staff, and families to ensure that students with special needs have the support they need to succeed.
5. Implement policies and procedures that promote inclusion and ensure that all students have access to the same educational opportunities.

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