

CAN THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE OF THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS REMOVE THE SOCIAL PREJUDICE TOWARDS THE PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to highlight the attitude of the students (N=72) from Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education Program (pre-service teacher), from first and third years of study, related to how they want, as future teachers, to develop pupils' learning skills in the inclusive classroom by adopting certain behavioral management of pupils with special needs. The working tool used is the Behavior and Instructional Management Scale, developed by Martin and Sass (2010). The comparative analysis of the results obtained according to the year of study captures the existence of statistically significant differences in the aspect of the management of the behavior in the classroom, both in traditional and inclusive classes, during the lessons, with higher averages for the pre-service teachers of 3rd year. Also, pre-service teachers from the 3rd year of study have a higher level of expectations for implementing the rules in school activities with pupils with special needs, compared to the pre-service teachers of the 1st year, which draws attention to the importance of pedagogical practical stage in primary school.

Keywords: behavioral management, pre-service teachers, pupils with special needs, primary school, inclusive classroom

Discipline: pedagogy

Absztrakt***A TANÁRKÉPZÉS PEDAGÓGIAI GYAKORLATA MEGSZÜNTETHETI-E A SZOCIÁLIS ELŐÍTÉLETEKET A SAJÁTOS NEVELÉSI IGÉNYŰ TANULÓKKAL SZEMBEN? AZ ÁLTALÁNOS ISKOLAI VISELKEDÉS MENEDZSMENTTEL KAPCSOLATOS ATTITŰDÖK ÖSSZEHASONLÍTÓ ELEMZÉSE***

A tanulmány célja, hogy bemutassa az első és harmadéves tanító és óvodapedagógia szakos hallgatók (N=72) attitűdjét azzal kapcsolatban, hogy hogyan képzelik fejleszteni jövőbeni pedagógusként a tanulók tanulási képességeit inkluzív osztálytermi környezetben, az SNI-s diákok bizonyos viselkedésirányítási módszereinek alkalmazásával. Mérőeszközként Martin és Sass (2010) *Behaviour and Instructional Management* skáláját használtuk. Az évfolyamoknak megfelelően kapott eredmények összehasonlító elemzése statisztikailag szignifikáns különbségeket mutat a tanítási órák során az osztálytermi viselkedés irányításában, mind a hagyományos, mind az osztálytermi környezetben, ahol a harmadéves hallgatók értékei magasabbak. A harmadéves hallgatók összehasonlítva az első évfolyamos hallgatókkal magasabb elvárásokat fogalmazznak meg az SNI-s diákok iskolai tevékenységéhez kapcsolódó szabályok alkalmazásában, ami felhívja a figyelmet az általános iskolában a pedagógiai szakmai gyakorlat fontosságára.

Kulcsszavak: viselkedésmenedzsment, tanárjelöltek, sajátos nevelési igényű tanulók, általános iskola, befogadó tanterem

Diszciplína: pedagógia

Introduction

Education systems have changed drastically in the last few decades as educating children with disabilities in regular schools has become an important goal in many countries (De Boer et al., 2011). The present study brings to the centre of the issues related to the attitude towards the integration of pupils with special needs (SEN) in inclusive classes in Romania. The study takes into account that the attitude towards others, in general, can be based on either social prejudices or previous experience with them. De Boer et al. (2011) state that teachers with experience in inclusive education hold more positive attitudes than those with less experience. One of the best known and most often used definitions for the attitude was published by Allport in 1935. "The attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through

experience, exerting a-directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it's related." (Allport, 1935 cited in Balázs-Földi, E, Gortkárakó, E, and Szabó, G., 2019). There is also found that the majority of teachers hold neutral or negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular primary education (De Boer et al., 2011). Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998), reported that teachers hold the most negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with mild or moderate learning disabilities and emotional disturbances. Teachers' attitudes also seem to be related to other variables, such as experience with inclusive education (Moberg, 2003), and class size (Rose 2001; Smith and Smith 2000).

Several variables are found related to teachers' attitudes, such as training, experience with inclusive education and pupils' type of disability (De Boer et al., 2011).

In order to integrate and include pupils with the SEN, there have been a number of clarifications in the literature on the factors that facilitate the two processes we enumerate: adaptation of the methods, techniques, means of teaching (Dariu, 2017); development and adaptation of learning materials (Dariu, 2017), positive teachers attitudes (De Boer et al., 2011), elements of the educational workplace for teachers (Smith and Smith, 2000), individualized curriculum and so on.

Specifically, the research aims to investigate aspects that have been taken into account in previous studies, on issues that have more to do with managing the behavior of pupils with SEN in inclusive classes, according to the attitudes that pre-service teachers have about this aspect. The management of the behavior of the students in the lessons is an important aspect for the school success, and our interest is to highlight the extent to which this approach is achieved differently in the classroom, according to the year of study of the respondents, but also according to the category of pupils subjected investigation, namely pupils with SEN from inclusive classes and pupils with normal development, from traditional classes.

Classroom management is an extremely studied and researched issue. A meta-analysis of 50 years of research concluded that classroom management is a powerful component of the overall classroom climate as it impacts the level of student engagement, the frequency of inappropriate behavior, and, by extension, the quality of student learning (Wang, Haertel, Walberg, 1994).

The premise from which we start is that the attitude of the pre-service teachers regarding the achievement of the management of the pupils with SEN in the classroom will be influenced by the experience gained through the specialized

pedagogical practice of the pre-service teachers of the 3rd year, compared with the attitude that the pre-service teachers from the 1st year could have, most probably based on social prejudice. In order to describe the concept of social prejudice, the authors of some publications, especially in the field of psychology, used terms such as: discrimination, ethnocentrism, in-group favoritism, group bias, auto-group derogation, social antagonism, stereotyping and social distance (Augoustinos and Reynolds, 2001). But in order to ensure positive school climates and eliminate discriminatory practices the adults in schools must become aware of their own biases and negative actions and we must also search for and eliminate discrimination in the actions of our students (Popa et al., 2012).

The premise from which we start is that the attitude of the pre-service teachers regarding the management of the behavior of the pupils with special needs in the classroom will be influenced by the experience gained through the specialized pedagogical practice of the pre-service teachers of 3rd year, compared with the attitude that the pre-service teachers from 1st year could have, most probably based on social prejudice. In order to describe the concept of social prejudice, the authors of some publications, especially in the field of psychology, used terms such as: discrimination, ethnocentrism, in group favoritism, in-group bias, auto-group derogation, social antagonism, stereotyping and social distance (Augoustinos and Reynolds, 2001). Many classic and contemporary theorists have suggested that prejudice is an inevitable consequence of ordinary categorization (stereotyping) processes (Allport, 1954, Billig, 1985, Ehrlich, 1973, Hamilton, 1981, Tajfel, 1981 all cited in Devine, 1989). The development of the internship of pedagogical practice of the students from the Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences during the training period at the level of the bachelor's degree studies, is carried out semi-annually, four hours a week, in pre-school and

primary education institutions, respectively, and we hope that can contribute to the change of prejudices related to the integration of pupils with SEN in inclusive classes, through a management of the behavior of the pupils in lessons, adapted to the development needs.

Database and method of the research

The purpose of the research

The study aims to highlight, through comparative analyzes, the attitude of the pre-service teachers of the first and third year, regarding the behavioral management of pupils with SEN in inclusive classes, respectively the management of the behavior of pre-service teachers in traditional classes.

Hypothesis of the research

Specific hypothesis 1: If there are differences of opinions of pre-service teachers from the 1st year, regarding the behavioral management of the pupils with SEN from inclusive classes, compared with the behavioral management of pupils from traditional classes, this fact is due to some social prejudices.

Specific hypothesis 2: If there are differences of opinions of the pre-service teachers from 3rd year regarding the management of the pupils' behavior with SEN in inclusive classes, compared with the management of the behavior of the pupils in the traditional classes. This fact can be largely due to the pedagogical practice carried out in primary schools.

Specific hypothesis 3: If between the attitude of the pre-service teachers of the 1st and 3rd year, respectively, regarding the behavior management, there are differences, this is largely due to the experience gained during the pedagogical practice, carried out in primary schools.

Participants

The study was attended by 72 students, from the Primary and Preschool Education Program at the University of Oradea, Social and Human Sciences Faculty, Romania, in the first year (n=30) and third year (n=42). The average age is about 21 years (minimum age 18 years and maximum 42 years). Depending on gender, the group is made up of female gender only.

Method and working tool

The method used in data collection is the survey based on a questionnaire. The working tool used is the *Behavior and Instructional Management Scale*, developed by Martin and Sass in 2010, translated and adapted by us in the research purpose.

The *Behavior and Instructional Management Scale* is structured in two parts. The first part aims to capture issues related to behavior management (12 items) and the second part aims to capture issues related to instructional management (12 items) during the school program.

In this study we used only the scale related to the behavior management, which was adapted to be completed for two different educational environments: students from the traditional classes (Crombach alpha coefficient is 0.707, satisfactory level) and for pupils with special needs from inclusive classes (Crombach alpha coefficient is 0.737, satisfactory level).

Completing the answers involves ticking a response variant of those offered on a Likert scale in 6-point from strongly agree to strongly disagree. High scores indicate a more controlling or interventionist approach while lower scores are indicative of a less controlling used by pre-service teacher in behavioral management of pupils in the classroom. Some example of items are: „I nearly always intervene when students talk at inappropriate times during class”, „I strongly limit student chatter in the classroom”, or „I firmly

redirect students back to the topic when they get off task”.

Results

The results of the research will be illustrated by analyzing data obtained from pre-service teachers, in comparative studies on paired and independent samples. The results analysis was performed using the SPSS for Windows statistical package, version 18. Processing the results with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was verified the shape of the data distribution and we obtained results which indicated normal distributions.

Study 1: The attitude of the pre-service teacher from the first year of study regarding the management of the pupils' behavior with special needs from inclusive classes versus the management of the pupils' behavior from the traditional classes.

To verify the study hypothesis 1: If there exists different opinions of the pre-service teacher in the 1st year of study regarding the behavioral management of the pupils with special needs (from inclusive classroom) compared with the behavioral management of the pupils of the traditional classes, this fact is due to social prejudice, we present the results obtained at t paired test in Table 1.

From the data observed in Table 1, we conclude that there are statistically significant differences regarding the way in which the management of the pupils' behavior is performed in the traditional class, compared with the management of the pupils with SEN in the inclusive class ($t=3,424$, $p < 0.01$). Higher averages were obtained in the traditional

classes. The effect size is $d=0,635$, the value being above average, which means that the study hypothesis is supported and the study has some practical implications.

According to the research hypothesis, the management of the pupils' behavior at the lessons by the pre-service teachers from the 1st year will be performed differently for the pupils with special needs compared to the pupils of the traditional classes due to a large extent of social prejudice. The data obtained reflect that the pre-service teachers of the 1st year considered that is necessary a lower control of behavioral management of the pupils with special needs from the inclusive class compared to behavioral management of the pupils from traditional classes. We supposed that this differences could be explained by a social prejudice about the inclusion of pupils with SEN in inclusive classes.

Study 2: The attitude of the pre-service teacher from the 3rd year of study regarding the behavioral management of the pupils with special needs from inclusive classes versus the management of the student' behavior from the traditional classes

To verify the study hypothesis 2: If there exist different opinions of the pre-service teacher in the 3rd year of study regarding the behavioral management of the pupils with special needs (from inclusive classes) compared with the behavioral management of the pupils of the traditional classes, this fact is due to pedagogical practice stage, we present the results obtained at t paired test in Table 2.

Table 1. Results obtained in the t test on paired samples in the working instrument, in the group of pre-service teachers from the 1st year of study. (Source: Authors)

Variables	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavioral management of the pupils with special needs in inclusive classes - Behavioral management of the pupils from traditional classroom	3,424	29	0,002	3,32	0,504
				3,78	0,581

From the data observed in table 2, we concluded that there are statistically significant differences regarding the way in which the management of the pupils' behavior is performed in the traditional class compared with the management of the pupils with SEN in the inclusive class ($t=7,124$, $p < 0.01$), with higher averages to the traditional class.

The effect size is $d=1,381$, the value being a very high one, which means that the study hypothesis is supported and the study has practical implication. According to the research hypothesis, the management of pupils' behavior in the lessons, by the pre-service teachers from the 3rd year, will be performed differently in the pupils with SEN, compared to the pupils in the traditional class, due in large part to pedagogical practice. The data obtained reflect that the pre-service teachers of the 3rd year consider that a lower control in the management of the behavior in the pupils with SEN of the inclusive class is necessary.

Study 3. The attitude of the pre-service teacher from 1st and 3rd year of study regarding the behavioral management of pupils

To verify the study hypothesis 3: If there are differences between the attitude of the pre-service teacher from 1st and 3rd year of study regarding the behavioral management of pupils in the classroom, this is largely due to the experience gained during the pedagogical practice carried out in primary school, we present the results obtained at t independent test in Table 3.

From the data observed in table 3, we conclude that there are statistically significant differences, regarding the attitude of the pre-service teachers according to the year of the study, on the way in which the management of the behavior of pupils with SEN, from inclusive classes is obtained ($t=-2,207$, $p < 0,05$), with higher averages in 3rd year pre-service teachers and average effect size, according to Cohen ($d=0,523$).

Table 2. Results obtained in the t test on paired samples in the working instrument, in the group of pre-service teachers from the 3rd year of study. (Source: Authors)

Variables	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavioral management of the pupils with special needs in inclusive classes	7,124	41	0,000	4,01	0,437
Behavioral management of the pupils from traditional classes				3,56	0,455

Table 3. Results obtained in the t test on independent samples in the working instrument, in the group of pre-service teachers from first and third year of study. (Source: Authors)

Variables	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavior management of the pupils with special needs in inclusive classroom	2,324	0,132	-2,207	71	,030	3,3210	,50498
						3,5660	,45507
Behavior management of the pupils in traditional classroom	1,871	0,175	-1,956	71	,054	3,7847	,58148
						4,0123	,43743

At the same time, there is a tendency to achieve a management of the behavior of the pupils in the class, different from the pre-service teachers from 3rd year, compared with those from 1st year, with slightly higher average in 3rd year ($t=-1,956$, $p \geq 0,05$) and effect size around the mean $d=0,464$.

Conclusions

From the data obtained we can conclude that the attitude of the pre-service teachers regarding the behavioral management of the pupils in classes differs depending on the category of pupils: with SEN or with normal development, but also according to the year of study of the pre-service teacher. According to the obtained results, the behavioral management of the pupils with SEN in classes is based on a lower control, compared to that achieved in the pupils from the traditional classes. The highest levels were obtained for the pre-service teachers of 3rd year, who consider that a more rigorous control of the behavior of the pupils is needed during the lessons, as compared to those of 1st year. This fact is due to the experience accumulated in the specialized pedagogical practice, from the primary education, attended by the pre-service teachers from the third year, knowing more than their colleagues from the first year, about the necessity of a classroom climate based on the respect of certain rules of discipline in the classroom, both for pupils from traditional classes and for pupils with SEN integrated into inclusive classes. However, both group, the pre-service teachers of the 3rd year and the pre-service teachers of 1st year, consider that the behavioral management of the pupils in the classroom, must also take into consideration certain particularities in the development of the pupils, especially those with SEN.

The attitude of the pre-service teachers regarding the lower control, in the aspect of the behavior of the pupils with SEN in lessons, can be due not

only to social prejudices, but they can be reinforced by the educational practices used in inclusive classes. An explanation for this could be related to the fact that, in schools in Romania, the emphasis in the education process is placed on pupils with typical development and less on the activity with the integrated pupil with SEN. Another explanation is that the behavioral management of the pupils with SEN, during the didactic activity, can be carried out by means other than those that the working tool allows to be analyzed, depending on the type and degree of disability of the pupils with SEN, of which pre-service teachers can be aware that it is necessary to be implemented in class.

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