

## Attitudes towards pupils with disabilities to physical education teachers in the Arab sector after a years long health education intervention- Results intervention

The effective inclusion of pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools is a social issue which continuously preoccupies education systems across the world for about four decades. Consequently, In Israel and particularly in the Arab sector education policy makers have affirmed a commitment to reducing the numbers of pupils educated in segregated special schools and to moving more of these pupils into the mainstream of education. Although the important integration issue had become imperatory within the mainstream school challenging the education system to address it, children with disabilities must still face impeding barriers which are directly related to their disability but not less to the stigmatic attitudes of their new surrounding, including teachers, which should assume the responsibility to integrate them. The barriers of participation in physical activity or the exclusion of children from it are the practical outcome of physical education teachers' lack of coping resourses and pedagogical strategies in dealing with the inclusion problem, although they may have the awareness and the will to do so [1].

At the implemental level, the inclusion education stream although highly recognized faces various transitional and strategic problems, including stigmatic attitudes and insufficient of unexperienced physical education teachers. Being aware of the students with disabilities rights to be an integral part of school and be included as far as possible in different school activities, careful attention should be devoted to the required strategic steps since only a careful professional implementation of the inclusion policy, can ensure its wishful success[2].

Students with disabilities have specific problems that are connected to their particular disability which must be curageously faced by society overall and particularly at school. When we focus on the more persisting challenging problem of implementing inclusion namely with the issue of stigmatic attitudes to children with disabilities, we find serious existing studies in the field mostly focusing on peers' attitude, respectively the attitude of ordinary students without disabilities toward their peer students with disabilities. However as far as we are concerned, we did not find any research dealing with teachers stigmatic attitudes toward the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in regular contexts let alone in the context of physical education behind some articles about the importance of the problem. According to these realities which are also confirmed by our experience, we maintain that physical education lessons can constitute an adequate container of coping with inclusion problems effectively; students with disabilities want to be a part of society instead of the default traditional option of feeling lonely and rejected. For this reason, teachers have to prepare themselves to contain, include and practically accept all students in their lessons, and also to be copotent in preparing their regular students to understand how to include their different colleagues as equal pals[3].

Since teacher's present role has changed from that of merely conveying knowledge or constituting the exclusive source of knowledge to a most challenging role of being rather a guide or facilitator for seeking for relevant information and ways of self-development new ways of forming demanding unfamiliar competences must be found; It must be mentioned that students with disabilities who enter the regular system as it has justly been decided by educational policy makers are often not only unprepared for the challenging process of integration but they are also still at risk with their characteristic emotional and learning difficulties, having experienced failures during their years in elementary and middle schools, unsurprisingly holding low self-images and as a result find it hard to integrate in the regular high schools[4].

The vital part of *teachers' attitudes to inclusion* in the context of different educational domains is addressed by: Morely et al), Hutzler, Triandis, H.C, Block, M.E, Florian, V.

The *re-framing of the subject* of physical education with *an emphasis on health and a physically active lifestyle* rather than mere competition has been addressed by Corbin, C.B, and named as: "**new** physical education. So the premises and the contradictions which have been mentioned in this context have generated the **research**

**problem** which consists in determining what should be the optimal emotional distance between a physical education teacher and a student with disabilities to allow a significant motivation increase and to encourage the inclusion process[5].

Thus we can consist that the goal of the research is consists in the theoretical and practical conceptualization of strategies for improving physical education teachers attitudes towards children with disabilities inclusion and creating effective inclusive lesson plans and to offer a theoretical and praxiological model of including students with special needs in PE lessons; the participation of students with disabilities in physical education lessons; to examine whether the complexity of correlations between the attitudes of physical education teachers and between the variables of: participation in an academic course, experience in integrating students with disabilities, gender, years of work experience( in teaching); to increase the participation of students with disabilities in physical education lessons.

The research had been carried out from September 2013 to January 2015 and included 4 periods:

1. The first pre-training stage was– ( October2012-August2013) orientational/including ascertaining the relevant details : examining and analysing literature related to physical education teacher's attitudes, designing the model which provided the basis for projecting the methodological program for physical education teachers negative attitudes prevention and facilitated further elaboration of adequate strategies designed for the prevention of physical education teachers negative attitudes which had been implemented and validated during the formative stage of the experiment.
2. The second stage (Devember2012-April2014) –included the formative implementation of the experimental research: fulfilling the ascertaining experiment which defined the current situation related to physical education lessons within the Arab sector of Israel, and putting the implications into practice.
3. The third stage (May2014) –included the evaluation and validation of the formative stage: working out the research findings, i.e. analysis, generalization, systematization, summary, and description of the experimental research results; studying connections between the theoretical and empirical conclusions, elaborating perspective directions for further scientific researches in the domain.

The scientific problem solved in the research consists in elaborating, implementing and the multi-diversity PE inclusion model- for increasing physical teachers inclusion abilities of students with disability in the context of elementary school in the Arab sector of Israel ,ensuring the decreasing of prejudices to students with disabilities, stressing the coping undamaged abilities which can be used for their own growth as well as for benefit of the inclusive environment[6].

the formative program “ *sport is for everyone*” that can serve as an example of good practice for PE attitude and the attempt to increase the inclusion process towards students with disabilities at school, through activities similar to those promoted under the program, can help improve their performance of those students and their participation in the activities, and thus can reduce rejection phenomenon rate among students with disabilities from Israeli Arab sector and the strategies, principles and methods of increasing positive PE attitude and increasing inclusion process, valued in the experiment, may serve as a incentive for reviewing education policies of fighting rejection towards students with disabilities at ministerial, school and community levels and the activities stipulated by the multicultural educational methodology system can be applied in developing a

comprehensive plan for increasing inclusion towards students with disabilities in all the PE class at all the schools of Israel, in partnership with school, community and family[7].

Our sample in the current research focused on two major groups of similar initial essence: the control and the experimental group. There were 90 respondents who agreed to take part in the sample, (40 females and 50 males). The participants' ages ranged from 23 to 54 years. Teachers experience ranged from 5—24 years. The category of teachers was classified according to each five years of seniority. In order to validate the formative stage two groups were used- the findings of the experimental /intervention group who received a specific plan in order to succeed in the integration of students with disabilities ( N=43), were compared to those of the other group who did not receive any session or program( N=47, control group). Then again, we performed interviews with those students of the two groups, and we saw the ratio and the teachers attitudes towards the integration of children with disabilities. The same questionnaires which were distributed to the teachers in the pre-training stage, were re-distributed at the post-training stage, to see the difference in the results. Collecting all the data regarding all the teachers was conducted in person through the department of education in the local authority to which the schools belong.

According to the results and also through the interviews held with those students whose teachers have passed an academic specific plan adapted to PE curricula, the increase of positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in PE was clearly validated and we could also conclude that the specific model that had been elaborated during this research was an effective base for the formative experiment implementation and one of the main factors of the successfully including children with disabilities in the regular PE lessons.

As we can see, although the movement toward “inclusive education” is anchored in the broad human rights agenda which has become a global issue influencing countries that are committed to democracy like Israel including the Arab sector, when coming to the practical implications it is easy to realize that many educators have still serious reservations about supporting the widespread placement of students with disabilities in their lessons within mainstream schools. ]. In accordance with this notion, our findings indicate that PE teachers within the Arab Israeli sector had mixed attitudes about the inclusion issue: The scores on the emotional subscale (social effects and feeling) in our study were relatively positive. In contrast, the teachers experienced moderate degrees of difficulty and barriers. According to previous research equivocal findings had been reported; The current research is in strong concordance with the existing research findings that PE teachers might have negative attitudes toward inclusion itself and its challenges which are probably derived from their fear that they did not have adequate training and might be lacking the experience and knowledge to successfully include students with disabilities in the general school system. Some researchers argue that most PE teachers may have mixed feelings and express obvious reluctance to the practical inclusion claiming simultaneously that their general attitude toward inclusion is positive; teachers may also vary according to the type of disability, Obrusnikova (2008). The same author found that PE teachers' beliefs were favorable toward teaching children with specific learning disabilities and less favorable toward teaching children with emotional and behavioral disorders.

The Multi-diversity PE model for increasing inclusion towards students with disability in PE lessons in Israeli schools was put in practice throughout the *intervention program* “*Sport is for everyone*” in the frame of the

formative experiment which involved 43 PE teachers, defined as teachers with negative attitudes towards inclusion students with disabilities.

Participants were assigned into two groups, the first (N=43) went through the intervention while the other (N=47) was a control group which didn't experience any program. The intervention program "Sport is for everyone", included 10 meetings, 2 hours each. The objectives of the program were:

1. Enhance student with disability engagement to PE lesson and to the school.
2. Increase education aspects of all the teachers-students in regard to inclusion, such as participation in PE lessons and all the activities, motivation, self-efficacy for both teachers-students and also sense of belonging to school.
3. Reduce risk factors such as discipline problems and involvement at violence.
4. Reduce risk social factors such as develop a sense of social rejection.

After the intervention we check the attitudes for PE teachers, and we noticed that the model and the intervention has improve their attitudes: teachers that take a part in the program improve their attitudes more than teachers that did not participate in the program.

The statistic values derived from the pedagogic experiment confirmed the research hypothesis:

- The multicultural educational methodology model for increasing inclusion towards students with disabilities will be efficient if: The PE teachers will be ready for their lessons, and if the PE teachers recognize the factors that determined participation students with disabilities, performance indicators of students with disabilities at rejection risk are delimited.

In summary, The aspects of the experimental research followed the increasing of inclusion process towards students with disabilities from schools of Israeli Arab society through the valuation of a Multi-diversity PE model elaborated on the basis of ascertaining experiment results.

In this context, the data provided by ascertaining experiment showed the correlation existing between background factors and the coping abilities of physical teachers to include students with disabilities in their lessons. The model helped us decide about those factors that could be influenced through a pedagogic experiment and consequently prevent failure inclusion process in the PE class. It was concluded that gender, PE teacher participate in an academic course, experience in including students with disabilities, have a significant impact over inclusion they can be exposed to a formative intervention[8].

The assessment of these indicators level in both groups showed the necessity of an intervention that could improve them and served as a criterion in elaborating the formative program, in choosing the issues addressed during the intervention, and subsequently in elaborating and adapting the educational forms, strategies and methods with a formative perspective[9].

The efficacy of the formative program, activities and methods aimed at increasing inclusion process towards students with disabilities in PE class depends on the degree of involvement of the educational factors concerned: family, school (PE teachers as a part of them), community and the students themselves. The relationships

established among the different components of the Multicultural Educational Methodology Model proposed positively influenced the intervention and the formative process as a whole.

All activities within the intervention program "sport for everyone", the partnership school- family-local community had as a result the melioration of performance indicators, whose low value represents a certain way to increase inclusion procees towards students with disabilities.

The actions stipulated by the Multi-diversity model and the issues addressed during the intervention program stages: Promoting equipments school , Enhancing cognitive and psychological engagement, Information processing, Situational influences through teaching strategies; Acknowledging students' voice/ The role of pupils' councils, had as a result the following important phenomena, teachers awerness towards inclusion students with disabilities- improvement at attitude's PE teacher- increasing participation students with disabilities in PE class.

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