

Analysis of Examination System for Visually Impaired Children

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Abstract

Examination system in special education sector is the grim mechanism in order to gauge the academic extent of any educational institution. Moreover, it is ascertained that the standard of achievement of the students is particularly depends upon well sustained examination system. Accordingly, researcher conducted a survey research to see the analysis of examination system for visually impaired children. This research design was a survey. Five point Likert scale type a questionnaire was constructed and managed through personal visits of the researcher. The responses ratio was satisfactory. The sample for the study involved visually impaired students and teachers who teach in such institutions. It was purposively sampled. As far as population of this research work is concerned, it encompasses special education educators and visually impaired students in Punjab. The data retrieved from the teachers was analyzed by using SPSS software. The major objectives included: to investigate the defects of the existing examination system for visually impaired children, to review the difficulties in the existing marking system and to identify the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination of visually impaired children. The main findings were: approximately, most of the respondents endorsed that removal of writer and Brail system can improve the quality of examination system for students with visual impairment. It was concluded that the majority of the respondents replied that Writer and Braille system are commonly used for children with visual impairment.

Keywords: Assessment, Examination system, Visually Impaired, Special Children, Braille system.

Introduction

Special education is a sector for the future sustainability of exceptional students. The grave and grim archives of the nation are its educational institutions. The prime intention of special education is multipronged. In the present scenario of the country, it holds ideological and constitutional connotation annexed to its purpose as well. The aim of special education is also to fulfill socio-cultural and scholastic requirements of the exceptional children. Special education bestows an opportunity of empowerment to an

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individual. The objectives of special education are so nearly attached to the requirements of the community. Special education refers to specially designed instructions to meet unusual needs of sensory impaired individuals. It is also defined as any instructional program or educational initiative which aims at educating individuals who are mentally, visually, or emotionally disabled. The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) manages and monitors mostly pronged of the special education (Khatoon, 2003).

It is immensely obligation of Government educational institutions and public schools to impart and make provision of special educational services for all impaired children from three to twenty-one years old free and compulsory education along with family support under IDEA. Whereas individual with sensory disability aging from birth to two are provided such services through an early intervention system organized by a state or local government. The main and prime purpose of special education which is imparted to these children is to help them not only in schooling but also in daily living skills. Accordingly, the special education encompasses everything from instructional work to inculcating daily living skills, like managing a check book or backing a meal. These children are provided and communicated multipronged concerned services, which include an aid and help them during the working hours, if required. The individuals who are physically or/ and sensory impaired are entitled for special education under IDEA, in addition to that his or her impairment may suffer and impede academic performance or major daily routine work. Although special education acknowledges that each student is different in terms of ability and daily living skills, IDEA categories special children instantly into fourteen exceptional groups (Mason & McCall, 1997).

Davis and Vicky (2002) revealed in his literature review that some barriers exist for students with visual impairment. The assistant educators and specialist visually impaired teachers, as well as others assessment experts exclusively feel difficulty in making provision of contextual environment for the teaching and learning in special educational institutions and examination rooms. Mitigating the difficulties and inadequacies in the environment of students with visual impairment spiked up as: the bestowing of appropriate additional help; participating in the prime teaching learning processes, occurring in the exam room and good communication between the teacher and taught during supervision and invigilation.

In the scenario of special education, Examination is one of the chronic issues and since several years it has been under the severe criticism of the community, the media, the teachers, and non- government organizations. It has been described as a mechanism and program of ascertain the degree to which the learning outcomes are acquired by the learners. It is also described as an assessment tool, aiming in order to ensure both a student's worth and the competency of the teaching which a teacher has taught. Examination is organized in order to assess the syllabus and curriculum which was completed during the period of study, to measure every student's acquired learning

achievement and evaluate his competency. So it is a tool of appraisal and evaluation to which instructional strategies, pedagogical procedures and methods of preparation are liked and embedded (Aggrawal, 1997).

Public Examinations are carried out in a myriad of countries of the world and are deemed to have an essential and pivotal role in ensuring what is being carried out during the class room in terms of teaching and learning process which students learn. This examining process may have a significant effect on pedagogical skills teacher and learner processed in the class rooms (Gipps, 1994 in little and Wolf Assessment Reform Group ,1999) recommends that the prime and fore most objective of evaluation and assessment is to strengthen the teaching and learning process but a few types of appraisal may identically have adverse impact upon teaching and learning program (Rehmani,2003).

The current evaluative mechanism endorses sluggishness in students. The influence of teachers is overlooked by the students through this assessment system and is deliberately accountable and liable for indiscipline. It squeezes and freezes curriculum. It is responsible for restricting cognitive flexibility, investigation and curiosity for inquiry. It inspires of acquiring memorization. It administers a host of standard of appraisal. The prevailing examining procedure may not measure the effective domain and behavioral changes in a learner. It restrains the precious and costly time that can be accommodated in the instructional program. It tremendously encourages to malpractices, hoodwink, cheating, unfair means, deceit and fraud (Mirza, 1999).

It was considered by the scholars and the researcher necessary to conduct research because of feeling in deterioration of the quality and standards of education. Accordingly, the existing examination mechanism should be upgraded and in betterment for special education. The implications and recommendations of the new proposed model may become the source of validity, reliability, practicability and credibility of the examinations. With such a back ground the researchers conducted an empirical research on examination related concepts partaking to poor Public examination performance amongst candidates with visual impairment in Pakistan special schools (Mirza, 1999).

Interest in the present study was popped from consultative meetings that researcher has been having with other stakeholders, especially on the education of learners with visual impairments. The paper is divided into sections: background, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion, conclusion and recommendations. The examination enjoys a high status and is regarded by many as a fair means of making decisions about student's educational achievement. However, this seems not going well with students with visual impairment, as they have continued to perform poorly in Public examinations (Cole, &, Vale, 2000).

In Pakistan, this examination system has affected their progress on to tertiary education and later alone to employment opportunities. While it is in public knowledge

that candidates with visual impairment are not performing well in public examinations, it is not known why these candidates have continued to perform poorly. To achieve desired results in upgrading the standards of education there is a dire need to focus on examination systems for visually impaired and partially sighted pupils. The study was planned to investigate the analysis of examination system for visually impaired children in Punjab.

Methodology of the Study

The present empirical study was descriptive with survey method to explore the defects, the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination, the marking procedure for candidates with VIC and other components of examination system for students with visual impairment. Five point Rickert scale a questionnaire was developed by researcher himself. Validation of the questionnaire was carried out through the opinion of the assessment experts, and its reliability was 0.86 on Crohn's back Alpha. A Questionnaire consisting of 50 items for the teachers of special education institutions was developed. The instrument was developed with the help of supervisor and other consultants. Researcher personally visited the institutions of students with visual impairment in two districts Lahore and Okara in order to collect data from the special education teachers. Five-point rating scale was formulated to explore the convergent point of the teachers about the defects, the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination, the marking procedure for candidates with VIC and other components of examination system for students with visual impairment. Random sampling was utilized to obtain the sample from the special education institutions of District Lahore and Okara in Punjab. One hundred (100) teachers were with equal allocation randomly selected from elementary and secondary schools/Centres at district Okara and Lahore. The grim objectives of the research were: to explore the defects of the present examination system for VIC, identify the inadequacies in the conduct of Braille examination for VIC, assess the marking procedure for candidates with VIC and suggest modification in already developed model examination system for VIC.

The data was retrieved from the teachers. The response rate was satisfactory. The data retrieved from the teachers was analyzed by computing through SPSS software. Descriptive as well as inferential tests were used to explore the variation in the responses of the teachers about the components of examination system for visually impaired children. The results of tests were exhibited in table and subsequently interpretations of the tables were elaborated.

Researchers, administrators, education managers, evaluators and assessment experts endorse that the standard of education is deteriorating day by day in Pakistan. Evaluation and measurement are vital and radical instruments to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of any program. In our country, the autonomous body which makes provision of certificates from matriculate to intermediate and secondary education level

are FBISE and BISEs. Examination system in Pakistan is administered on diagnosing the rote memory or cramming skill of candidates with visual impairment at all educational level which is challenging conjunction in our special educational centers. Tests and other tools are conducted to gauge the learning achievement of the students with visual impairment. Keeping in view these aspects, it was noticed that an empirical research to observe the different ingredients and phases of the examination system for visually impaired children is exclusively imperative.

Discussion and Interpretation of Results of the Study

The existing mechanism of assessment and evaluation of visually impaired children is written and oral exam based concentrating on rote learning and memorization overlooking higher cognitive abilities. Data was processed and interpreted through using SPSS. The Questionnaire for teachers was developed on five- point likert scale. The weight age given to each point was as below;

Strongly Agree (SA) = 5 Agreed (A) = 4 Undecided (UN) = 3
 Disagreed (D) = 2 Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1

Table 1

Teachers’ Responses on defects in present examination system for visually impaired children

Statements	S.A %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Examination enhances teacher’s command over his subjects.	38	37	5.0	10.	10.0
It gives feedback to the teachers for their improvement.	64.	27.	5.0	0.0	3.0
It does not measure cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains.	36	38	15	15	8.0
It focuses the preparation for exam instead of giving knowledge.	28	40	6.0	26	0.0
It promotes the unfair means for getting marks.	18	34	17	25	4.0
Some teachers may not cover the prescribed syllabus.	32	30	17	16	5.0
Examination staff is incompetent.	27	27	19	20	4.0
Papers are not properly checked and evaluated.	26	33	13	22	4
Weakness of teachers is also measured more effectively through examination system.	21	60	6	10	3
The VIC can also be evaluated with the normal children.	12	35	32	16	4
Existing examination system just labels the pass and fail.	21	47	12	14	5
It fosters good study habits among the teachers and students.	30	49	6.0	9.0	6.0
Teachers are influenced in this system.	21	67	5.0	7.0	0.0
Existing examination system is more reliable and valid to content.	20	32	31	10	5

Existing examination system of VIC should be the combination of external60% and internal40%.	48	17	24	4	4
It maintains a uniform standard in all the institutions	17	47	4	26	6
It develops the healthy competition and comparison among the institutions.	38	42	2.0	9.0	6.0
Teachers cover the syllabus urgently and speedily in this examination system.	32	30	17	16	5
It is time consuming procedure and takes much time of result.	28	31	16	10	14
Existing examination system for VIC is appropriate.	29	30	19	16	3

Now it is interpreted that how the teachers are providing their responses about the analysis of examination system for visually impaired children. The data was collected through questionnaire from teachers of special education institutions. The information reveals the following result regarding the above mentioned question.75% responses endorsed that existing examination system enhances the command of teachers over their subjects whereas 20% disagreed.74% pointed out that prevailing examination system did not measure all the psychomotor domains of personality.59% pin pointed that this exam system was time consuming procedure and took much time from starting to the announcement of result. 68% of participant endorsed that existing examination system just labels the pass and fail whereas 19% disagreed with the statement. 59% of teachers revealed that Papers are not properly checked and evaluated whereas 26% disagreed with the statement.57% special education teachers gave opinion that Examination staff is incompetent whereas 24% disagreed with the statement. 52% of participant endorsed that It promotes the unfair means for getting marks whereas 29% did not supported the statement. 68% suggested that existing examination system of VIC should be the combination of external 60% and internal 40%. Whereas 19% did not endorse the statement.

Table 2

Teachers' Responses on inadequacies in present examination system for visually impaired children

Statements	S.A %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
It is difficult to score.	17	32	10	24	14
Essay type tests are difficult to score.	17	32	10	24	14
Through Essay type tests, broader area of subject matter can be covered.	37	42	6	4	10
It enhances the mal-performances, bias and favouritism among the teachers and students.	45	20	20	10	5
Objective type assessment does not affect the marking.	28	36	18	10	6
Objective type assessment is easy in marking and scoring.	26	26	21	14	11
It covers the whole syllabus.	32	30	17	16	5
Objective type assessment takes less time in conducting and marking.	28	33	11	16	11
Objective type assessment lessens the pressure of the external factor in marking.	27	37	17	10	11
Existing examination system of VIC expensive in conducting and marking.	44	16	11	24	2
Existing examination system of VIC is appropriate.	29	30	19	16	3.0
Appointment of examiners is not made on merit	42	24	23	8	3

A questionnaire was distributed among the special education teachers of different institutions. In response, following teachers responded with following opinions.49% of participant endorsed that Essay type tests are difficult to score whereas 38% did not support the statement.60% of the teachers favoured that Existing examination system of VIC expensive in conducting and marking whereas 26% did not agree with the statement. 65 % supported the question that It enhances the mal-performances, bias and favouritism among the teachers and students whereas 15% did not favour the statement.

Table 3

Teachers' Responses on the marking procedure for candidates with VI evaluated by VI specialized teachers

Statements	S.A %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Effective supervision and monitoring is not involved in aural assessment system.	40	37	10	10	12
The reports are sent to parents after the end of academic year regularly.	33	39	9	8	5
Visually impaired children are taught and assessed through IEP system in special schools.	19	39	17	12	12
The evaluation of visually impaired children for academic achievement is carried out through written and oral tests.	29	45	7	8	8
The teachers have competence to evaluate the performance of the students in different areas.	30	45	11	2	10
Examination staff does not have specialized specific coaching in the area of guidance and paper setting.	40	32	11	10	5
The visually impaired children are allowed to have a writer for him/her in the examination room.	30	47	15	2	4
The abilities of visually impaired can be assessed more accurately as the writer is eliminated.	35	25	12	20	6
The visually impaired children have shown better results in some areas than the mainstream students.	23	41	14	11	6
Existing examination system for VIC is developed in accordance with their needs.	26	48	12	11	2

Most of the teachers from a variety of special institutions participated in this questionnaire, the researcher distributed the instrument and requested to share the opinions about the concept under discussion, majority of the teachers exhibited their inclination towards this statement that Visually impaired children are taught and assessed through IEP system in special schools as well as about special technical training in the area of guidance and paper setting. It seems that existing examination system for VIC is developed in accordance with their needs. 60% of the participant pointed out that the abilities of visually impaired children can be assessed more accurately as the writer is eliminated. 74% of participants endorsed that the evaluation of visually impaired children for academic achievement is carried out through written and oral tests whereas 16% were disagreed with the statement.

Table 4

Teachers' Responses on present examination system for visually impaired children need modification for improvement

Statements	S.A %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
The examination in Braille leads to segregation.	28	37	15	14	3
The writer and Braille system are commonly used for VIC, s examination.	30	46	6	2	6
Existing examination system places stress to evaporate the memorized material.	22	33	28	6	5
Examination staff does not have specialized specific coaching in the area of tabulation and analysing results.	40	32	11	10	5
It encourages the use of guess paper and supporting material instead of syllabus.	24	30	25	10	11
Arrangements for exam are ineffective.	26	39	9.0	22.	1.0
This examination system does not measure all the personality traits of the students.	40	25	20	10	3
Existing examination system for VIC is not accordance with continuous assessment system.	64	23	4	6	3
Short answers don't express the students, knowledge accurately.	33	29	9	15	12
Existing examination system for VIC expensive in conducting and marking.	19	53	12	6	9

It is common practice that normal students who are studying under mainstream institutions are better in presentations and management skills than students of special visually impaired centres. Participants have exhibited their consents and opinions. 76% of participants revealed that writer and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children's examination whereas 24 % was denoyed with the statement. 87% have agreed that existing examination system for VIC is not accordance with continuous assessment system whereas 09% were opposed of the statement.

Braille is a main system of communication for visually impaired students. Write and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children's. This study showed that Braille system was commonly used for visually impaired students. The study justified that female teachers were more concerned than male teachers about the examination system for visually impaired children. The researcher considered that this was a general view of the study. It is expected that this study will provide a base for future researchers (Joseph, 2011).

Major Findings

Objective # 1

- The most of the respondents endorsed that existing examination system enhances the command of academicians over their subjects whereas 20% disagreed.
- Most of the participants pointed out that prevailing examination system did not measure all the psychomotor domains of personality.

Objective # 2

- The majority of the teachers favoured that existing examination system of VIC is expensive in conducting and marking.
- Majority of the participants supported the statement that it enhances the mal-performances, bias and favouritism among the teachers and students whereas 15% did not favour the statement.

Objective # 3

- Majority of the participants pointed out that the abilities of visually impaired children can be assessed more accurately as the writer is eliminated.
- Pretty much of respondents endorsed that the evaluation of visually impaired children for academic achievement is carried out through written and oral tests whereas 16% were disagreed with the statement.

Objective # 4

- Majority of the participants revealed that writer and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children's examination
- Most of the teachers agreed that existing examination system for VIC is not accordance with continuous assessment system.

Conclusion

The statistical analysis supported the research objectives and questions. The formal assessment is done just at the end of schooling and no mechanism exists at other levels where attendance and other critical educational components serve as the only criteria. The current system of examination for visually impaired conducted by the BISE and FBISE is only in terms of percentage of marks in each subjects. Hence, it is concluded that the mostly respondents agreed with improving the examination system for visually impaired children to a more logical grading system than the current percentage of marks. On the whole there appears a majority of positive opinion for modifying the examination system preferably with continuous assessment system.

Recommendations

There should be properly teacher training workshops for teaching faculty of exceptional students for the sake of imparting technical skills regarding examination system for students with visual impairment under the close monitoring and surveillance of the higher management. There should be continuous assessment system in special education sector because appropriate feedback to both teachers and taught in continuous assessment system improves student's cognitive level. Writer and Braille system are commonly used for visually impaired children's examination. It should be replaced with Amanuensis. The examination model for students with visual impairment should be revamped.

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