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IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' EFFICACY BELIEFS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study was carried out to find out the role of demographic variables in the development of efficacy beliefs of prospective teachers enrolled in a teacher education program towards inclusion. The sample consisted of 194 prospective teachers enrolled in a one-year teacher education program at a government university in Pakistan. A standardized instrument measuring efficacy towards inclusive practices was employed to gather data from prospective teachers enrolled in a teacher education program. Prospective teachers enrolled in special teacher education program held more efficacious views on using inclusive and collaborative instructions in managing disruptive classroom behaviour of students with disabilities. In the same way, prospective teachers with high levels of training, experience, confidence and a high degree of knowledge about policies relevant to disabled children had a stronger sense of efficacy towards implementing the inclusive practices on each of the three factors: efficacy for inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration and efficacy in managing behaviour.

Keywords: Efficacy beliefs, inclusive instruction, collaboration, behaviour, prospective teachers, tecaher education program

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1. Introduction

Pakistan is an agricultural country in South Asia. It has a total surface area of approximately 796,096 square kilometres with three provinces, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. (Khan, 1998). It is predicted that Pakistan will become the fourth largest nation in 2050. Annually, Pakistan spends only 2.1% of its GDP on education Literacy rates are higher (74%) in urban areas of Pakistan compared to (48%) in rural areas (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2009-10).

In Pakistan, the Ministry of Education is responsible for providing the facilities for regular education. The Ministry formulates new educational policies, and coordinates the implementation of the policies. Every province has its own Education Minister who looks after the matters of Educational Departments. The establishment of schools is the task of provincial governments (Sultana, 1993).

Government schools are poorly funded in Pakistan. Over 60% of the schools lack basic facilities such as drinking water facilities, latrines and electricity. In spite of this, the Ministry of Education is striving to achieve the target of achieving millennium development goals up to 2015. Similar to the Ministry of Education, there is also a Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, which is especially responsible for educational provisions for children with diverse needs.

The general Directorate of Special Education was established in 1985 as a part of Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for planning, coordinating, and implementing services for people with diverse needs. In the beginning these Directorate's programs related to special education but later on they expanded their services to early detection, treatment and rehabilitation. The Government wants to ensure the facilities of educational and rehabilitation to all persons with disabilities (Khan, 1998). But the administrative organizational structure of special education is unique in Pakistan. The reason behind this dilemma may be associated with a lack of financial support, administrative support and resources distribution for inclusive education in Pakistan.

There is no doubt that the Ministry of Health is providing its assistance to the Directorate of Special Education and Social Welfare organizations but in reality the people who are working under the Ministry of Health do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to appropriately allocate funds to inclusive education. The Ministry of Health is also catering for the needs of Special Education programs with medical related tasks rather than educational ones.

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Special teacher education and regular teacher education programs are working separately in Pakistan. The regular teacher education program is under the Ministry of Education and special teacher education program is working under the administrative body of Ministry of Health (Sultana, 1993). Although inclusive education is also a significant part of education and special measures should be adopted to ensure inclusion of special persons in mainstream education (National Education Policy, 2009). The Directorate of Special Education is formulating a national plan of action for the implementation of National Policy for persons with disabilities approved by Government in 2002 in collaboration with the consultants of World Bank (Year Book, 2004-2005).

The major role of teacher education programs is to prepare prospective teachers for inclusion with both theoretical and practical knowledge to understand the diverse need of children with disability (Booth et al., 2003). Rogers (1993) explains that inclusion is "the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend" (p. 1). There is some evidence that successful implementation of inclusion reforms mostly depends on the benevolence of the educators (Sharma et al., 2008). Teachers with low teaching efficacy beliefs tend to ignore the special and educational needs of children (Baines et al., 1994). Therefore, it is essential to measure the perceived sense of efficacy of prospective teachers before joining the teaching profession (Forlin, 2010).

Teacher self-efficacy has been defined by Tschannen-Moran,Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998, p. 207) as the 'teacher's beliefs in his or her own capability to organize and execute courses of action required to effectively attain the specific teaching tasks in particular situations'. Teacher efficacy has been proved to be an important variable in teacher education over many years (Cakironglu, 2008). Teacher efficacy has been related to teacher effectiveness, teacher effort and teacher determination in the face of difficulties (Soodak & Podell, 1993). Teacher self-efficacy has been found to be related to the well-being of the school organizational climate (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993), to classroom based decision-making (Moore & Esselman, 1992), to teachers' eagerness to raise probing questions and to students' achievement and affective growth (Shaukat, 2011).

Furthermore, teacher education plays a significant role in developing teacher efficacy beliefs regarding the implementation of inclusive practices. Training of inclusive practices at a preservice level may better prepare prospective teachers for the challenge to teach in inclusive classrooms, and contribute to greater levels of efficacy (Hsien, 2007). Teacher efficacy in implementing inclusion directly influences teachers' practice toward children with disabilities in their classrooms (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Jordan et al, 1993; Soodak et al, 1998).

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Important features of teacher efficacy in an inclusive classroom comprise adequate knowledge and the capability to realize diverse needs, as well as the ability to adapt curriculum and instructional approaches to assist learning outcomes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin 1998; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). There is some research that has looked at factors that might shape educators' efficacy beliefs to teach in inclusive classrooms. Baker (2005) found that prospective teachers enrolled in primary teacher education were found to be more efficacious to teach children with disabilities than those prospective teachers who were enrolled in secondary teacher education programs. Similarly, prospective teachers who had no prior experience teaching with special children showed lower efficacy beliefs as compared to those prospective teachers who had some level of experience. Male prospective teachers reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs regarding inclusive education than female prospective teachers prior to special education practicum (Main & Hammond, 2008). Conversely Romi and Leyser (2006) reported that female pre-service teachers had more positive outlook and higher efficacy towards inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

2. Problem Statement

Training regarding inclusion is also an important element in shaping self-efficacy beliefs of prospective teachers. Thus, there is a need to measure the efficacy beliefs of prospective teachers towards inclusion before entering the teaching profession.

3. Research Aims

For a sample of prospective teachers enrolled in teacher education programs, it is intended;

I. To determine the role of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs towards inclusion.
II. To determine the role of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs on each of the three factors:
    i. efficacy to use inclusive instructions,
    ii. efficacy in collaboration, and efficacy in managing behaviour towards inclusive practices

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4. Research Methods:

4.1. Participants

Data were collected from 194 prospective teachers enrolled in teacher education programs from a government university in Pakistan. Participants were from one of the five programs offered to prospective teachers in a teacher preparation program. These programs were Bachelor of Education (BEd-G), Master of Education (M.Ed-G) in the regular education stream or Bachelor of Education (B.Ed-SE) and Masters of Education in special education (M.Ed-SE) streams. The number of prospective teachers studying in each stream was as follows: B.Ed, n = 66 (G), B.Ed, n= 37 (SE), M.Ed, n= 38 (G) and M.Ed, n=53 (SE) programs. All participants were in their final semester of their teaching preparation program.

4.2. Instrument

4.2.1. Part one: Demographic information

Part one of the survey instrument sought information about demographical variables (e.g level of training for teaching at school level, gender, age, highest level of qualification, documented disability, interaction with people with a disability, previous training, knowledge of disability legislation/policies and level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities) of the survey participants.

4.2.2. Part two: Teacher Efficacy in Inclusive Practice (TEIP)

The TEIP Scale (Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2011) measures prospective teachers' teaching efficacy beliefs towards inclusive practice. Sharma et al. (2011) describe the scale development procedures along with its validity and reliability. This scale has a total of 18 items along three factors: Efficacy to use inclusive instruction, Efficacy in collaboration and Efficacy in managing behaviour. Each item can be responded to on a six point Likert type classification, with responses ranging from strongly agree (6), agree (5), agree somewhat (4), disagree somewhat (3), disagree (2) to strongly disagree (1). It was found to be 0.84. Alpha coefficients for the three previously mentioned factors were above 0.61 (Efficacy to use inclusive instructions = 0.73, Efficacy in collaboration = 0.74, Efficacy in managing behaviour = 0.61) suggesting that they had adequate reliabilities for the sample.

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4.3. Procedure

Following consent from the education authorities the survey questionnaires were distributed in class to the prospective teachers. The participants were given a choice not to complete the survey if they did not wish to do so. They were also told about the anonymous nature of the survey. Five questionnaires were discarded before data entry because the questionnaires were incomplete. Data were collected from only those prospective teachers who were in their final phase of training as the purpose of this study was to determine how well the teachers felt prepared to teach in an inclusive classroom just before leaving the university environment.

5. Results

A total of 194 prospective teachers participated in this research study. Of the total data set a large number were female 62% (N= 121) and 37% were male (N= 73). Prospective teachers with the majority of (N= 173, 89%) aged 29 years. A considerable number of participants had already completed a bachelor's degree (69%, N=135) with 26% (N= 51) holding a Master's degree. Participants were asked to indicate if they had a family member or a close friend with a disability Sixty four percent of the participants indicated that they did not have any contact with a friend with a disability (N= 126). Regarding previous training pertaining on the education of students with disabilities the majority (50%) had not obtained any (N=98) such training although a small number (14%; N=29) declared that they had received some previous training in this area. In regard to their knowledge about National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (NCRDP) ordinance 1982 in Pakistan, a number of participants indicated having average (N= 66, 34%), none (N=56, 28%) or poor (N= 18, 9%) knowledge. Regarding students' level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities, a large majority indicated having average (N= 77, 39%), low (N=32, 16%) or very low (N= 23, 11%) confidence. While 41% (N=81) of prospective teachers had not previously taught a student with a disability and 66% had done so (N= 34).

5.1. Teacher Efficacy beliefs towards Inclusive Practice

Table 1 presents significant mean score differences about the influence of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs towards inclusive education. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to see the significant demographic

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difference among prospective teachers who are being trained to teach at elementary, secondary and special education level.

Table 1. Analysis of Variance for variables significantly related to the Inclusive Practice mean scores

Demographic Variable	*n*	M (SD)	*F*	*p*
I am training to teach in				
Elementary /Primary	51	4.59 (0.32)		
Secondary	68	4.42 (0.48)	59.68	0.000***
Special education	74	5.12 (0.36)		
Nature of program				
B.Ed general Education	66	4.44 (0.41)	95.97	0.000***
M.Ed general Education	53	5.15 (0.38)		
B.Ed special Education	37	4.26 (0.39)	35.45	0.000***
M.Ed special Education	38	4.80 (0.39)		
Documented disability				
Yes	11	4.35 (0.25)	6.92	0.00**
No	183	4.76 (0.51)		
Level of training to teach students in inclusive classroom				
None	98	4.50 (0.44)		
Some	67	4.86 (0.45)	37.03	0.000***
High	29	5.25 (0.36)		
Knowledge of local policies/legislation relevant to disable children				
None	56	4.52 (0.47)		
Poor	18	4.49 (0.37)		
Average	66	4.80 (0.49)	8.01	0.000***
Good	48	4.93 (0.49)		
Very good	6	5.20 (0.51)		
Confidence in teaching students with disabilities				
Very low	23	4.53 (0.41)		
Low	32	4.52 (0.49)		
Average	77	4.70 (0.46)	9.17	0.000***
High	49	4.89 (0.48)		
Very high	13	5.29 (0.51)		
Level of experience for teaching students with a disability				
Nil	81	4.47 (0.41)		
Some	47	4.67 (0.48)	42.95	0.000***
High (at least 30 full days)	66	5.11 (0.39)		

*p<0.01, ***p<0.001

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Prospective teachers who were being trained to teach in special school held significantly high efficacy beliefs (Mean=5.12) towards inclusive education as compared to those prospective teachers who were taught to teach at elementary and secondary level in regular schools (F= 59.68, p=0.000). Regarding the nature of teacher education programmes, prospective teachers enrolled in M.Ed general (Mean=5.15) had significantly more efficacy beliefs to teach in inclusive classroom than B.Ed general (F= 95.97, p=0.000), in the same way prospective teachers enrolled in M.Ed special education program were significantly more efficacious (Mean=4.80) than B.Ed special teacher education programme towards inclusive education (F=35.45, p=0.000). Similarly, those prospective teachers who did not have a documented disability were significantly more efficacious (Mean=4.76) to teach students in inclusive classroom as compared to those prospective teachers who indicated no disability (F= 6.92, p= 0.00). However, prospective teachers with high level of training showed significantly high efficacy beliefs (Mean=5.25) to educate students with a disability than those prospective teachers who had no training (F=37.03, p=0.000). Likewise prospective teachers with 'very good' level of knowledge (Mean=5.20) about policy or legislation pertaining to children with disabilities were significantly more efficacious compared to those prospective teachers who had average, poor and nil level of knowledge (F=8.01, p=0.000) . In the same way prospective teachers with a "very good" level of confidence (Mean=5.29) had significantly "high" sense of efficacy in teaching students with disabilities comparatively "poor" or "very low" level of confidence of prospective teachers (F=9.17, p=0.000). Regarding the prior level of teaching experience to teach students with a disability, prospective teachers with high level of teaching experience (Mean=5.11) were significantly more efficacious towards inclusive education rather than prospective teachers with no level or some level of teaching experience prior to enrolling in teacher education program (F=42.95, p=0.000).

Table 2 explains significant mean score differences about the influence of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy to use inclusive instructions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to see the significant demographic difference among prospective teachers who are being trained to teach at elementary, secondary and special education level. Prospective teachers who were being trained to teach in special school held significantly high efficacy beliefs (Mean=5.10) towards inclusive education as compared to those prospective teachers who were taught to teach at elementary and secondary level in regular schools (F= 32.75, p=0.000). Regarding the nature of teacher education programmes, prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed special education (Mean=5.26) had significantly more efficacy beliefs to teach in inclusive classroom than M.Ed special and B.Ed general and special group (F= 27.21, p=0.000). Similarly, those prospective teachers who did not have a

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documented disability were significantly more efficacious (Mean=4.72) to use inclusive instructions to teach students in classroom as compared to those prospective teachers who indicated no disability (*F*= 65.24, *p*= 0.02). However, prospective teachers with high level of training showed significantly high efficacy beliefs to use inclusive instructions (Mean=5.27) to educate students with a disability than those prospective teachers who had no training (F=23.54, p=0.000). Likewise prospective teachers with 'very good' level of knowledge (Mean=5.22) about policy or legislation pertaining to children with disabilities were significantly more efficacious to implement inclusive instructions compared to those prospective teachers who had average, poor and nil level of knowledge (F=8.01, p=0.000) . In the same way prospective teachers with a "very good" level of confidence (Mean=5.20) had significantly "high" sense of efficacy in teaching students with disabilities comparatively "poor" or "very low" level of confidence of prospective teachers (F=6.49, p=0.000). Regarding the prior level of teaching experience to teach students with a disability, prospective teachers with high level of teaching experience (Mean=5.12) were significantly more efficacious towards inclusive instructions rather than prospective teachers with no level or some level of teaching experience prior to enrolling in teacher education program (F=28.97, p=0.000).

Table 2. Analysis of Variance for variables significantly related efficacy to use inclusive Instruction

Demographic Variable	*n*	M (SD)	*F*	*p*
I am training to teach in				
Elementary /Primary	51	4.59 (0.45)		
Secondary	68	4.33 (0.78)	32.75	0.000***
Special education	74	5.10 (0.42)		
Nature of program				
B.Ed general Education	66	4.28 (0.71)		
M.Ed general Education	53	4.65(0.55)		
B.Ed special Education	37	5.26(0.38)	27.21	0.000***
M.Ed special Education	38	4.95(0.40)		
Documented disability				
Yes	11	4.26 (0.53)	5.24	0.02*
No	183	4.72 (0.66)		
Level of training to teach students in inclusive classroom				
None	98	4.44 (0.69)		
Some	67	4.82 (0.50)	23.54	0.000***
High	29	5.27 (0.44)		

Knowledge of local policies/legislation relevant to disable children				
None	56	4.47 (0.76)		
Poor	18	4.45 (0.56)		
Average	66	4.76 (0.62)	8.01	0.000***
Good	48	4.91 (0.51)		
Very good	6	5.22 (0.70)		
Confidence in teaching students with disabilities				
Very low	23	4.65 (0.80)		
Low	32	4.35 (0.73)		
Average	77	4.62 (0.60)	6.49	0.000***
High	49	4.93 (0.53)		
Very high	13	5.20 (0.55)		
Level of experience for teaching students with a disability				
Nil	81	4.37 (0.70)		
Some	47	4.66 (0.55)	28.97	0.000***
High (at least 30 full days)	66	5.12 (0.43)		

*p<0.05, ***p<0.001

Table 3 explains significant mean score differences about the influence of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy to use collaborative instructions in the classroom. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to see the significant demographic difference among prospective teachers who are being trained to teach at elementary, secondary and special education level. Prospective teachers who were being trained to teach in special school held significantly high efficacy beliefs (Mean=5.23) towards collaborative inclusive education as compared to those prospective teachers who were taught to teach at elementary and secondary level in regular schools (F= 59.56, p=0.000). Regarding the nature of teacher education programmes, prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed special education (Mean=5.27) had significantly more efficacy beliefs to use collaborative approach in inclusive classroom than B.Ed general and M.Ed general and special group (F= 38.42, p=0.000). Similarly those prospective teachers who did not have a documented disability were significantly more efficacious (Mean=4.77) to use collaborative methodology to teach students in classroom as compared to those prospective teachers who indicated no disability (F= 6.17, p= 0.01). However, prospective teachers with high level of training showed significantly high efficacy beliefs to use collaborative instructions (Mean=5.29) to educate students with a

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disability than those prospective teachers who had no training (F=35.12, p=0.000). Likewise prospective teachers with 'very good' level of knowledge (Mean=5.31) about policy or legislation pertaining to children with disabilities were significantly more efficacious to implement collaborative instructions compared to those prospective teachers who had average, poor and nil level of knowledge (F=10.69, p=0.000). In the same way prospective teachers with a "very good" level of confidence (Mean=5.46) had significantly "high" sense of efficacy in collaboratively teaching students with disabilities comparatively "poor" or "very low" level of confidence of prospective teachers (F=12.44, p=0.000). Regarding the prior level of teaching experience to teach students with a disability, prospective teachers with high level of teaching experience (Mean=5.20) were significantly more efficacious towards collaborative instructions rather than prospective teachers with no level or some level of teaching experience prior to enrolling in teacher education program (F=40.79, p=0.000).

Table 3. Analysis of Variance for variables significantly related to efficacy in collaboration

Demographic Variable	*n*	M (SD)	*F*	*p*
I am training to teach in				
Elementary /Primary	51	4.52 (0.52)		
Secondary	68	4.36 (0.54)	59.56	0.000***
Special education	74	5.23 (0.44)		
Nature of program				
B.Ed general Education	66	4.47 (0.47)		
M.Ed general Education	53	4.39 (0.61)		
B.Ed special Education	37	5.27 (0.45)	38.42	0.000***
M.Ed special Education	38	5.18 (0.44)		
Documented disability				
Yes	11	4.29 (0.47)	6.17	0.01*
No	183	4.77 (0.63)		
Level of training to teach students in inclusive classroom				
None	98	4.44 (0.54)		
Some	67	4.94 (0.59)	35.12	0.000***
High	29	5.29 (0.42)		
Knowledge of local policies/legislation relevant to disable children				
None	56	4.37 (0.67)		
Poor	18	4.53 (0.41)		
Average	66	4.90 (0.59)	10.69	0.000***

Good	48	4.96 (0.58)		
Very good	6	5.31 (0.45)		
Confidence in teaching students with disabilities				
Very low	23	4.25 (0.57)		
Low	32	4.49 (0.59)		
Average	77	4.75 (0.58)	12.44	0.000***
High	49	4.92 (0.55)		
Very high	13	5.46 (0.49)		
Level of experience for teaching students with a disability				
Nil	81	4.42 (0.54)		
Some	47	4.65 (0.59)	40.79	0.000***
High (at least 30 full days)	66	5.20 (0.48)		

*p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 4 explains significant mean score differences about the influence of demographic variables in the development of prospective teachers' efficacy in managing behaviour problems in inclusive classroom. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to see the significant demographic difference among prospective teachers who are being trained to teach at elementary, secondary and special education level. Prospective teachers who were being trained to teach in special school held significantly high efficacy beliefs (Mean=5.04) towards managing disruptive behaviour as compared to those prospective teachers who were taught to teach at elementary and secondary level in regular schools (F= 18.56, p=0.000). Regarding the nature of teacher education programmes, prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed special education (Mean=5.09) had significantly more efficacy beliefs to manage behavioural problems in inclusive classroom than M.Ed special and B.Ed general and special group (F= 12.64, p=0.000). However, prospective teachers with high level of training showed significantly high efficacy beliefs to manage disruptive behaviour (Mean=5.17) to educate students with a disability than those prospective teachers who had no training (F=12.99, p=0.000). Likewise prospective teachers with 'very good' level of knowledge (Mean=5.08) about policy or legislation pertaining to children with disabilities were significantly more efficacious to manage troublesome behaviour compared to those prospective teachers who had average, poor and nil level of knowledge (F=3.09, p=0.01) . In the same way prospective teachers with a "very good" level of confidence (Mean=5.23) had significantly "high" sense of efficacy in behaviour management of students with disabilities comparatively "poor" or "very low" level of confidence of prospective teachers (F 3.12, p=0.01). Regarding the prior level of

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teaching experience to teach students with a disability, prospective teachers with high level of teaching experience (Mean=5.02) were significantly more efficacious towards managing behaviour rather than prospective teachers with no level or some level of teaching experience prior to enrolling in teacher education program (F=12.30, p=0.000).

Table 4. Analysis of Variance for variables significantly related to the efficacy in managing behvaiour

Demographic Variable	*n*	M (SD)	*F*	*p*
I am training to teach in				
Elementary /Primary	51	4.66 (0.43)		
Secondary	68	4.56 (0.55)	18.56	0.000***
Special education	74	5.04 (0.48)		
Nature of program				
B.Ed general Education	66	4.56 (0.48)		
M.Ed general Education	53	4.66 (0.53)		
B.Ed special Education	37	5.09 (0.51)	12.64	0.000***
M.Ed special Education	38	4.99 (0.45)		
Documented disability				
Yes	11	4.29 (0.47)	6.17	0.01*
No	183	4.77 (0.63)		
Level of training to teach students in inclusive classroom				
None	98	4.63 (0.49)		
Some	67	4.81 (0.60)	12.99	0.000***
High	29	5.17 (0.37)		
Knowledge of local policies/legislation relevant to disable children				
None	56	4.71 (0.47)		
Poor	18	4.49 (0.52)		
Average	66	4.76 (0.53)	3.09	0.01*
Good	48	4.93 (0.61)		
Very good	6	5.08 (0.23)		
Confidence in teaching students with disabilities				
Very low	23	4.68 (0.42)		
Low	32	4.70 (0.59)		
Average	77	4.72 (0.49)	3.12	0.01*
High	49	4.83 (0.57)		

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Very high	13	5.23 (0.60)		
Level of experience for teaching students with a disability				
Nil	81	4.61 (0.45)		
Some	47	4.70 (0.57)	12.30	0.000***
High (at least 30 full days)	66	5.02 (0.53)		

*p<0.01, ***p<0.00

6. Discussion

Teacher education plays a significant role in developing positive attitudes toward inclusive education, and affects the level of confidence and knowledge which teachers regard as essential for them to better cater for the needs of diverse learners (Hsien, 2007). The aim of pre-service teacher education in preparation for inclusion should definitely emphasis on improving the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers by increasing their understanding and selfconfidence in meeting the needs of diverse learners. The challenge to include pre-service teachers in reflecting on their own personal beliefs and attitudes and then to help them in developing a more constructive approach towards inclusion is certainly a difficult one for training institutions (Forlin, 2010). The current research provides an initial understanding of how pre-service teacher education for inclusion has different levels of impact depending upon a variety of demographic variables and thus, how teacher preparation courses must reveal these needs in planning and executing suitable training for preparing teachers for inclusion (Sharma et al., 2008).

Teacher efficacy and training are substantial variables which have been recognized to affect teacher receptiveness toward inclusion (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Jordan et al., 1993; Soodak et al., 1998). In this paper, teacher efficacy is taken to mean the confidence, knowledge, and training associated with the extent of implementing inclusive practices within the regular education classroom. Initially, results were determined on the composite scale of teacher efficacy towards inclusive practices. It was found in this research study that that prospective teachers who trained to teach in special school held significantly higher efficacy beliefs towards inclusion as compared to those prospective teachers who being trained to teach at elementary and secondary level in regular school. Qualification plays a significant role in the development of efficacy beliefs towards inclusion (Forlin, 2010). In this study prospective teachers with higher education of M.Ed general education and M.Ed special education had greater efficacy beliefs to teach students with disabilities rather than prospective teachers with B.Ed general and B.Ed special education. Prospective teachers who indicated that they had no disability were

significantly efficacious to teach students in inclusive classroom than those prospective teachers who had disability. Similarly, prospective teachers with higher level of training, knowledge, confidence and experience showed significantly more efficacy towards inclusive education.

It is surprising, on each of three factors (efficacy to use inclusive instruction, efficacy in collaboration and efficacy in managing behaviour) of teacher efficacy towards inclusive practices, prospective teachers showed the same findings like on the composite scale. Prospective teachers enrolled in special (B.Ed and M.Ed) teacher education programme held more efficacy beliefs to use inclusive instructions and to manage collaborative inclusive learning. They held considerable beliefs fort managing behaviour of students with diverse needs than prospective teachers enrolled in (B.Ed and M.Ed) general teacher education progarmme. This research finding is consistent with the previous researches, it was found in those studies that general education teachers usually find themselves lacking in knowledge and skills deemed required for teaching in an inclusive classroom as compared with their special education counterparts (Buell et al., 1999; Pace, 2003; Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). The current study reported that higher qualification is a significant aspect of efficacy development, prospective teachers with M.Ed qualification were found more efficacious on the teacher efficacy towards inclusive practices composite scale and each of its three factors. This finding relates to the study of Sharma et al. (2006) he reported that prospective teachers with advance level of qualifications (e.g. an undergraduate or postgraduate degree) were more confident about students with disabilities in their classrooms as compared with their counterparts with lower level of qualifications (e.g. matriculation).

Similarly, special teacher educators were found more efficacious to teach and use inclusive instructions for managing disruptive behaviour of students in inclusive classroom than elementary and secondary teacher educators, research has also revealed that special education teachers observe and perceive themselves to be more capable, well trained, more effective, and more talented to implement teaching strategies and adaptations for children with diverse needs in their classrooms (Buell et al., 1999; Minke et al., 1996). The greater efficacy levels of special education teachers in the exercise of inclusion within the regular classroom show that precise training to cater for children with disabilities is substantial to improving teacher efficacy (Brownell, Ross, Colon & McCallum, 2005).

Higher level of training, experience to teach students with disabilities plays an important role to bring about a change in inclusive classroom learners. The present study supports the findings of past researches which emphasized that previous training and participation in teaching students with disabilities resulted in more constructive attitudes, higher efficacy

beliefs and in specifically empowered pre-service teachers to respond better to their concerns (Forlin et al., 2007). In the same way prospective teachers with higher level of knowledge relevant to disable children and higher level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities held more efficacy to use inclusive instructions, they were more confident to use collaborative learning and showed greater efficacy to manage children with diverse needs. Increased information about inclusion brings about higher levels of confidence (Avramidis et al., 2000) gaining of knowledge about disabilities develops self-confidence, and contributes to higher levels of teacher efficacy regarding inclusion of children with disabilities.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated the prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs towards inclusive practices. This study consisted on a small sample, there is a need to conduct a study on a large scale sample by adopting observational techniques. Before entering in the teaching profession, prospective teachers might have greater efficacious beliefs towards inclusion because they have impractical realities towards teaching profession. Further researches need to be conducted to determine the prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs towards inclusion during their teaching practice or in their real classroom teaching situation. In future it is also aimed to address this positive aspect by keeping in view the views of in-service teachers while also recognizing the gains to be made during inclusion.

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