

THE PARENT' S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract: *The present article is a quantitative research which it responds to the following question: what is parent's attitude towards the integration of the students with special needs. The attitudes were measured using a scale designed for this purpose. The results showed the degree of proximity to this category of students influenced the attitude positively.*

Key words: *parent's attitude; integration; special needs*

1. Introduction

What is parents' opinion on the integration of students with special needs in mainstream schools? Lupu (2018) answered this question using the group interview method. Ten respondents, parents of typical urban school students, secondary school, participated in the focus group. The results showed a positive attitude towards people with disabilities in general, but the degree of tolerance and acceptance of parents decreases when it comes to integrating students with special needs with their own children. Based on these results, it was intended to develop a scale to investigate the attitude of parents in greater numbers, in a shorter time and respecting the principle of anonymity.

This study is part of the doctoral thesis entitled "Educational Implications of Game in students with Special Educational Needs from the Inclusive Schools" and responds to this goal.

The main concepts that formed the basis of the research are synthesis in the following table:

Table no. 1 *Conceptual delimitations*

Attitude	Allport (1959) apud Lupu (2017a) defines the attitude towards the subject's stance as another subject, object, or situation. Larousse (1998) apud Lupu (2017a) explains that the concept of attitude is covering various meanings. There are personal attitudes that do not put in question than the individual and social attitudes that have an impact on the groups, both having in common a set of personal reactions toward an object determined: animal, person, idea, or thing.
Integration	According to Verza (1998) apud Lupu (2017a) integration represents a way of achieving normalisation. Normalisation means ensuring conditions for children with special needs similar to those of normal children. Gherguț (2001) apud Lupu (2017a) recalls about a functional normalisation (ensuring specific conditions persons with deficiencies), a social normalisation (membership of a small group) and a societal reconstruction (widening social group towards public life). School integration according to the same author involves the inclusion of student with special needs and school participation, depending on the potential, along side other children in learning activities.
SEN	Vrăsmaș, Daunt, and Mușu (1996) apud Lupu (2017b) considers the “special needs” those requirements in relation to education, which are additional and complementary to the general objectives of education. The following categories are included in this syntagm: emotional and behavioural disorders, mental/retardation disabilities, physical/motor disabilities, sight impairment, hearing impairment, language disorders, learning difficulties.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research objectives

The objective of the study is to investigate the attitudes of parent's of typical students towards the integration of students with special needs in mass education. Parent's attitudes influence the process of integration of the pupil with special needs, knowledge of this attitude by allowing the elaboration of programmes to change attitudes and hence favouring integration.

2.2 Research hypothesis

Starting from this objective, the following **assumptions** are formulated:

Hypothesis I: The attitude of parents is influenced by the degree of proximity to the people with special needs.

Hypothesis 2: There are significant correlations between attitude and the socio-professional characteristics.

2.3 Research method

The research was carried out in several inclusive schools in Braşov City, during the school years 2016-2017 / 2017-2018. The overall design of the research is the descriptive, correlational design.

The attitudes of parents were measured using a scale designed for this purpose.

The scale of measuring the attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs is addressed to the teachers, the students in inclusive schools and their parents.

The scale of measuring the attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs is a Likert scale. The answers are graded from 1 to 5 where: 1 - expresses total disagreement, 2 - partial disagreement, 3 - neutral, 4 - partial agreement, 5 - total agreement.

The measurement scale of the teachers' attitudes towards integration (Lupu, 2020)

The scale is made up of 40 items distributed in three sub-scales, of which 15 items are items with reverse scoring: Subscale I - General attitude towards people with deficiencies and their integration in mass education, Subscale II - Attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs in the school where the teacher teaches, Subscale III - Attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs in the class where the teacher teaches.

The parents' attitude measurement scale regarding the integration of the students with special educational needs.

The scale of measuring the teachers' attitudes towards the integration of the students with special educational needs was adapted to parents. The parent scale is made up of 29 items distributed in three sub-scales, of which 14 items are items with reverse scoring: Subscale I - Overall attitude towards people with deficiencies and their integration in mass education (6 items), Subscale II - Attitude towards integrating the students with special educational needs in the school where their own children learn (14 items), Subscale III - Attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs in the class where they their own children learn (9 items). The scale has an internal consistency coefficient of .79. The first subclass has an Alpha coefficient of .66, the second a coefficient of .43, and the third subclass a coefficient of .84, which shows an average internal consistency

(tab. No 2). There are strong correlations between the scale and its subscales at a $p < .01$ (tab. No 3).

Table no. 2 *Internal consistency coefficient*

Subscales/Scale	Alpha Coefficient	Number of items
Subscale 1	.66	6
Subscale 2	.43	14
Subscale 3	.84	9
Scale	.79	29

Table no 3 *Correlations between the scale and its subscales*

		Scale III	Scale II	Scale I
Scale	Pearson Correlation	.83	.80	.66
	Sig.	.00, $p < .01$.00, $p < .01$.00, $p < .01$
	Number of participants	92	92	92

2.4. Research group

The participants are 92 parents. 34 are male and 58 female, from urban area and are between the ages of 29 and 60, as follows: 27 parents are aged 29-34 years, 26 parents are aged 35-38 years, 18 of them between 39-41 years, and 21 parents between 42-60 years. 40 respondents have higher education, 33 of them have high school education, 12 middle education, and 7 parents post-secondary education. 15 of the participants are parents of a child with SEN.

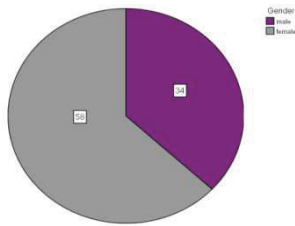


Figure 1 Distribution of participants participants after gender

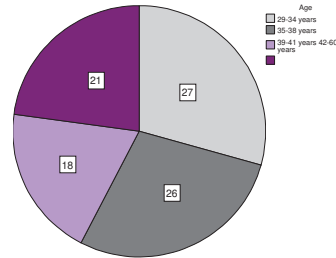


Figure 2 Distribution of participants after age

3. Results

Hypothesis I: *The attitude of parents is influenced by the degree of proximity to the people with special needs.*

The attitude variable has three dimensions: the attitude towards the integration of people with deficiencies in society, the attitude towards the integration of students with special educational needs in the school where their own child learns, the attitude towards the integration of students with special educational needs in their own child's class.

The attitude towards the integration of people with deficiencies in society

The overall attitude was measured through the first subscale of the questionnaire. The "general attitude" variable was created by adding the gross scores obtained in this subscale, and the variable "general attitude by classes" was created after recoding to a new variable.

The census method shows that most parents have a neutral attitude towards the integration of people with special educational needs in society and in mass education (62 neutral attitudes, 10 negative attitudes and 20 positive attitudes) (fig.3)

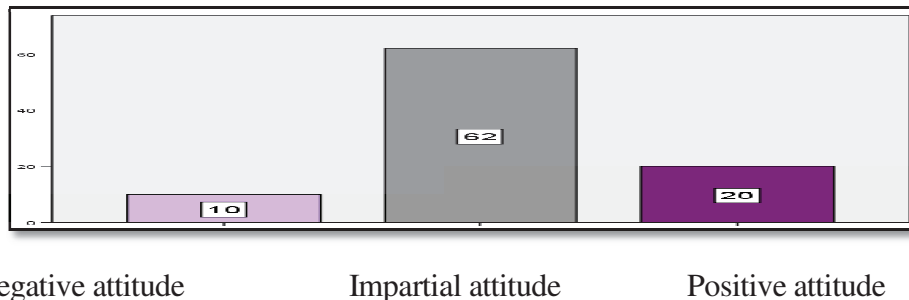


Figure 3 The attitude of parent's towards the integration of people

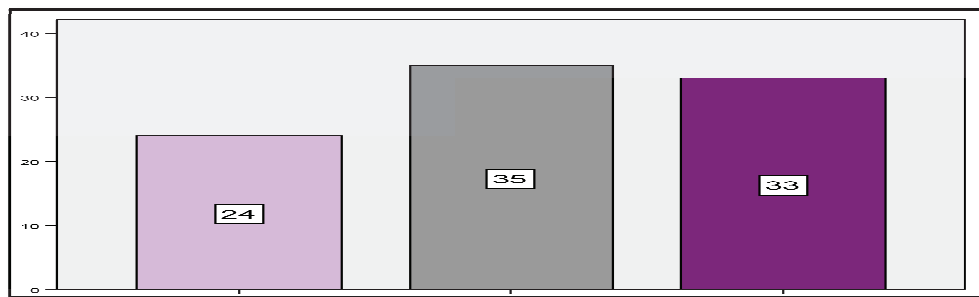
with deficiencies in society

The attitudes towards integrating students with special educational needs into school where their own children learn.

The results show a neutral attitude of parents towards the integration of students with special educational needs in school (35 parents show a neutral attitude, 33 a positive attitude and 24 a negative attitude) (fig. 4)

The attitude of parents towards the integration of students with special educational needs into their own children's class

The results show a positive attitude of parents towards the integration of students with special educational needs into their own children's class (28 parents show a neutral attitude, 35 a positive attitude and 29 a negative



attitude).

Negative attitude Impartial attitude Positive attitude

Figure 4 *The attitudes of parent's towards integrating students with special educational needs into school where their own children learn*



Negative attitude Impartial attitude Positive attitude

Figure 5 *The attitudes of parent's towards integrating students with special educational needs into their own children's class*

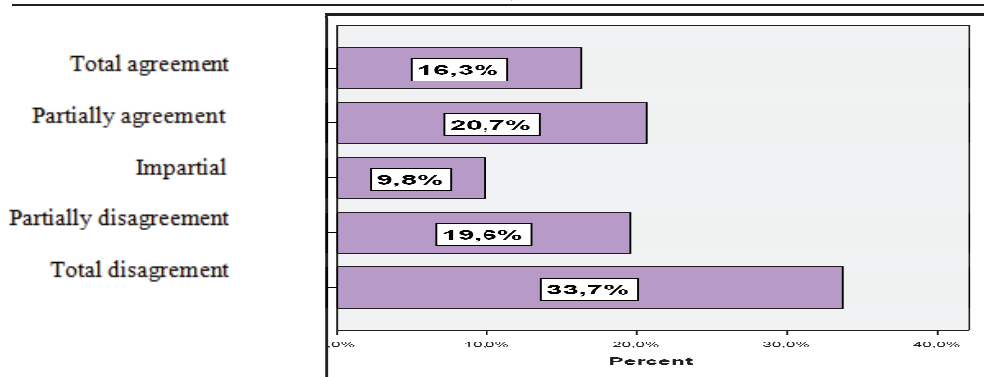


Figure 6 „People with special educational needs have the right to education”.

For a better analysis of the results, the parents' answers to some key questions in the questionnaire are presented below, using the census method.

It is noted that the majority of parents (91.3%) fully agree with the statement "People with special educational needs have the right to education" (fig. 6)

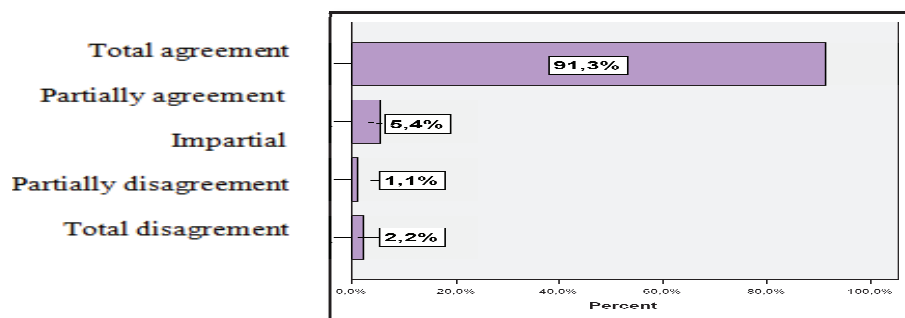


Figure 7 The attitudes of parent’s regarding the form of education

Regarding the form of education, 33.7% of the interviewed parents do not agree that the place of students with special needs is in special education institutions. Instead, 16.3% consider that students with special educational needs should be educated in special classes and institutions, regardless of their disability (fig. 7)

Concerning integration in mass education, depending on the severity of the deficiency, 30.43% and 27.17% of the parents totally and partially agreed that students with severe disabilities should only be partially integrated into the mass education. In addition, most parents surveyed are more tolerant of moderate impairments, 60.9% and 25% totally and partially agreeing that

moderately impaired students can make progress in a class with typical students. Parents have a high degree of tolerance towards students with physical deficiencies, with 82.6% agreeing with the acceptance in mass education of students with such disabilities.

Hypothesis 2

There are significant correlations between attitude and the socio-professional characteristics. The data obtained do not support the hypothesis. There is no statistically significant correlation between the three dimensions of attitude and the socio-professional characteristics such as age, gender, and studies (tab. No. 4)

Table no. 4 *Correlations between attitude and the socio-professional characteristics*

		Gender	Age	Studies
Attitude	Pearson	-,14	,03	-,03
	Sig.	,17, p>.05	,77, p>.05	,71, p>.05
	N	92	92	92
Attitude_school	Pearson	-,08	,14	,11
	Sig.	,43, p>.05	,17, p>.05	,27, p>.05
	N	92	92	92
Attitude_class	Pearson	-,12	,11	-,11
	Sig.	,22, p>.05	,26, p>.05	,26, p>.05

Regarding the conditions offered by the integrative school for the students with disabilities, 79.3% of the participating parents fully agree with the adaptation of the institution to meet the needs of these children (access ramps, adapted toilets, resource rooms), a percentage 62% strongly agree that the image of the inclusive school is not affected by the presence of students with special needs. As for the class attendance, 27.2% and 34.8% of parents totally and partially disagree that students with special educational needs monopolize the teacher's attention, to the detriment of the other students.

As regards the attitude towards the integration of the students with special educational needs according to the type of disability, parents show a language disorders, with the most rejected categories being severe mental disabilities, associated disabilities and hearing impairment. The data obtained do not support the hypothesis. There is no statistically significant correlation between the three dimensions of attitude and the socio-professional characteristics such as age, gender, and studies (tab. No. 4)

4. Conclusions

It was assumed that the attitude of community members towards the integration of people with deficiencies in society would be a positive one, as the integration into society and mainstream education of these people does not necessarily require contact with this category.

The integration of students with special educational needs into school where their own children learn and into their own children's class will change attitude, from a positive attitude towards integration in general to a negative attitude, as contact with this category becomes inevitable. This hypothesis was based on studies (Clough, Lindsay, 1991, Norwich, 1994, Fritz, Millo, 1995 apud Subban, Sharma, 2005) which showed a negative attitude of teachers towards the acceptance of students with SEN in the classroom, despite claims that people with disabilities have the right to education. It is inferred from this that "these people have the right to education, but not in my school and in my class".

The census method showed that most parents have a neutral attitude towards the integration of people with special educational needs in society and in mainstream schools (62 parents with a neutral attitude, 10 with a negative attitude and 20 with a positive attitude). The results show a impartial to positive attitude of parents towards the integration of students with SEN into school where their own children learn (35 parents show a impartial attitude, 33 a positive attitude, and 24 a negative attitude). Compared to the integration of students with SEN into their own children's class, the results show a predominantly positive attitude of parents (28 parents show a neutral attitude, 35 a positive attitude, and 29 a negative attitude).

The degree of proximity to this category of students influenced the attitude positively. The closer they approached, the more the parents participating showed a greater degree of tolerance and acceptance. The impartial and positive attitude of parents can be explained by appealing to the two functions of attitude: the function of adaptation - expressing attitudes to receive the approval of others and the function of defending the ego - a declared positive attitude protects the individual's self-esteem against internal conflicts.

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