

# Enhancing Higher Education Opportunities for Special Needs Students in Malaysia: A Case Study

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## Abstract

Higher education in Malaysia encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate studies offered by a variety of public and private universities. With 20 public and 47 private universities, Malaysia boasts a well-structured higher education system that provides a wide array of educational choices. Inclusive education is a fundamental right for all, including individuals with special needs, who exhibit unique talents and capabilities. Despite initial challenges, many special needs individuals have successfully pursued higher education, showcasing inspiring success stories. Parents of special needs children, though initially faced with acceptance challenges, ultimately embrace and support their children's unique educational journeys.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, Special Needs Students, Inclusive Education, Educational Choices, Success Stories, and Parental Support

## Introduction

This study is a case study of special education possibilities for students with disabilities at a private institution in Selangor. Students with exceptional needs who began their higher education at a private university are the study's target population. In addition, I will discuss what previous research in the subject has to say about those who thrive despite being underqualified in order to pursue further education. The study's conceptual framework will also be briefly described. I will go over the methodologies utilised, and then go over some of the early trends that the research has uncovered so far. The study will investigate what options are available to students with exceptional needs in higher education. In terms of education, completing tertiary education will serve as a springboard for some students with special needs to pursue further study. Higher education, according to Myklebust et al. (1999), is an extremely unlikely option for the vast majority of these young people. This is evidenced by earlier diagnoses, study branch selection, and a series of interrupted courses of study. What are the opportunities for special needs students to seek higher education? will be the topic of my research project. Aside from that, I'd like to know what options exist for special needs students in higher education from the standpoint of academics and administrators. Finally, what are the problems that parents experience while sending their special needs children to school?

Lastly, it will be what are the challenges faced by parents to send their special need child for higher education. In Solvang's study (1994) of the experiences of the disabled in the arenas of education and work in Scandinavia, he pointed to school as a problem arena when it comes to dyslexia. The institution which socially establishes them as disabled (Solvang, 1994, p. 288). The job market on the other hand is stressed as the arena of opportunity for those suffering from dyslexia. Dyslexics are almost an excluded group when it comes to the education arena, judging by the results of Solvang's study. According to this study, the physically disabled manage well at school, but proportionately poorer in the labour market.

### **Background of the Study**

Generally, may focus on higher education being offered in Malaysia for normal students. However, we often missed out to focus on special need student that also deserve a chance to pursue their higher education. Special need student is defined as student with disability, impairment and need extra care. Special education, also called special needs education, the education of children who differ socially, mentally, or physically from the average to such an extent that they require modifications of usual school practices. In Malaysia, we do have a Special Education Department, Ministry of Education Malaysia, hold the responsibilities in providing educational services to students with special needs. These special educational services cover the needs of school aged children with visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning disabilities and remedial education. The Education Ministry has registered a total 87,574 special education needs (SEN) students in Malaysia in the year 2019. Of the total, about 2,492 SEN students are currently under Special Education School (SES) and 68,874 SEN students in the Special Education Integrated Programme (SEIP); (967 students in preschool, 38,710 in primary schools and 29,197 SEN students in secondary schools).

### **Research Problem Statement**

Despite significant progress in the field of education, higher education institutions continue to face challenges in providing adequate support for special needs students. The primary research problem addressed in this study is the lack of comprehensive, inclusive, and effective educational opportunities for special needs students in higher education. This issue is significant because it impacts the academic success, social integration, and overall well-being of these students. Higher education is a critical stage in a student's academic journey, and inadequate support can hinder their ability to achieve their full potential.

Special needs students face a variety of barriers in higher education, including limited access to tailored academic support services, insufficient accommodations for physical and digital accessibility, and inadequate psychological and counselling services. Furthermore, career and transition services are often not sufficiently equipped to prepare these students for successful integration into the workforce. These gaps highlight the need for a more robust framework of support that addresses the diverse needs of special needs students.

The current research on special needs education in higher education has primarily focused on identifying the challenges faced by these students. However, there is a significant gap in research related to the specific programs and strategies that are most effective in addressing these challenges. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the programs and accommodations offered by higher education institutions and comparing

the opportunities available in different types of institutions, such as public versus private universities.

By examining the existing support systems and identifying areas for improvement, this study seeks to contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective educational practices. This research will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and institutions, enabling them to create better educational environments for special needs students. Addressing these gaps is crucial for ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities, have equal opportunities to succeed in higher education and beyond.

### **Purpose of the Research Study**

The primary purpose of this research study is to explore and analyse the opportunities and challenges faced by special needs students in higher education. This study aims to identify the specific programs, accommodations, and support services provided by higher education institutions, and to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of these students. Additionally, the study seeks to compare the opportunities available in different types of institutions, such as public versus private universities, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and challenges faced by special needs students in higher education, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the findings. First, the data collection process may be subject to bias, particularly if participants self-report their experiences. Social desirability bias could influence respondents to provide answers they perceive as favorable rather than completely accurate. Second, the findings of this study may have limited generalizability due to the sample size and geographic focus. The research may primarily reflect the experiences of students in specific regions or institutions, which might not be representative of the broader population of special needs students. Third, interpreting qualitative data from interviews and surveys can be challenging and subjective. Different researchers may draw varying conclusions from the same data set, potentially affecting the study's reliability and validity.

Additionally, the variability in practices and policies among different institutions can make it difficult to draw general conclusions. What works well in one institution might not be applicable or effective in another due to differences in resources, student demographics, and institutional culture. Time constraints also pose a limitation; the time frame allocated for this study may limit the depth of investigation. Comprehensive longitudinal studies could provide more insightful data on the long-term impacts of educational support for special needs students. Finally, resource limitations, such as limited access to detailed institutional data or specific support services, could constrain the scope of the research. Financial constraints may also limit the ability to conduct extensive fieldwork or longitudinal studies. By acknowledging these limitations, this study aims to provide a balanced and transparent discussion of its findings, encouraging further research to address these areas.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the specific academic support services available to special needs students in higher education institutions?
2. How do higher education institutions ensure physical and digital accessibility for special needs students?
3. What psychological and counseling services are provided to special needs students?
4. How do career counseling and transition services support special needs students in preparing for the workforce?
5. What are the differences in support services and opportunities for special needs students between public and private higher education institutions?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify and evaluate the academic support services available for special needs students in higher education institutions.
2. To analyze the physical and digital accessibility services provided by higher education institutions for special needs students.
3. To assess the availability and effectiveness of psychological and counseling services for special needs students.
4. To examine the career counseling and transition services available to special needs students and evaluate their effectiveness.
5. To compare the support services and opportunities available for special needs students in public versus private universities.

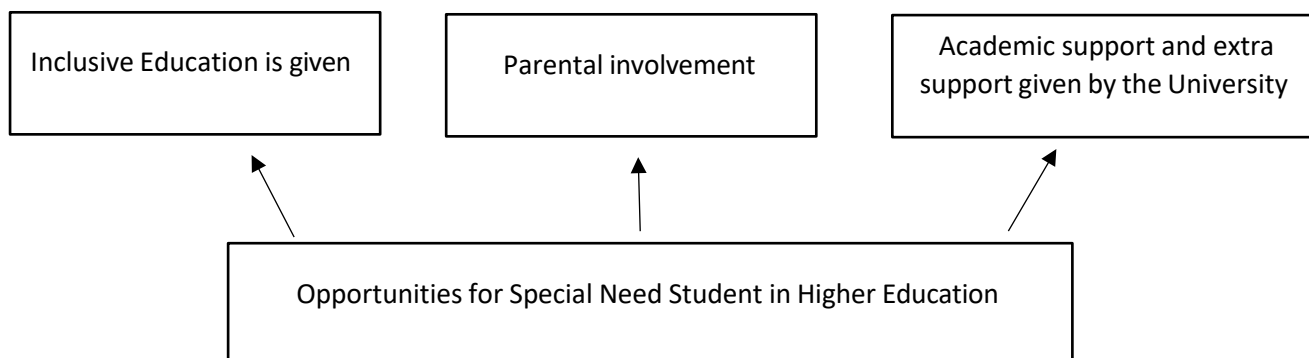
### **Significance of the Study**

This research on enhancing higher education opportunities for special needs students in Malaysia holds several key implications and contributions to the field of special needs education. Firstly, it adds to the existing body of knowledge by providing a detailed case study that explores the challenges and successes of special needs students in accessing and thriving in higher education. By documenting these experiences, the research offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of current policies and practices in supporting special needs students.

Secondly, the study has implications for policy-making in Malaysia. By highlighting the experiences of special needs students, policymakers can gain a better understanding of the barriers these students face and develop more inclusive policies to address these challenges. This could lead to improvements in the higher education system that benefit not only special needs students but also the wider student population.

Finally, the research has practical applications for educators and support staff working with special needs students. By identifying successful strategies and interventions, the study can inform best practices for supporting special needs students in higher education settings. This can lead to improved outcomes for special needs students and a more inclusive and supportive higher education environment overall.

### Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the principles of inclusive education, the critical role of parental involvement, and the necessity of academic support for special needs students in higher education. This framework aims to elucidate how these elements contribute to creating equitable educational opportunities and successful outcomes for special needs students.

Inclusive education refers to an educational setting where all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, learn together in the same environment. This approach promotes diversity and ensures that students with special needs are not segregated but are part of the general education system. Inclusive education fosters a sense of belonging and community among students. It encourages the development of social skills, peer support, and a broader understanding of diversity and empathy among all students. For instance, the University of Cape Town has implemented an inclusive education model where students with disabilities are integrated into mainstream classrooms. This approach has resulted in improved academic performance and social integration for special needs students. The university provides tailored support services, such as note-taking assistance and accessible learning materials, to ensure that all students can participate fully in the academic experience.

Parental involvement encompasses the active participation of parents in their child's education, including collaboration with teachers, involvement in school activities, and support at home. Parental involvement is crucial for the academic and emotional development of special needs students. Engaged parents can advocate for their child's needs, ensure that appropriate accommodations are made, and provide the necessary support and encouragement at home. A case study from the United States highlights the impact of parental involvement on the success of special needs students. In this study, parents who actively participated in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and maintained regular communication with teachers observed significant improvements in their children's academic achievements and self-esteem. These parents also facilitated additional tutoring and therapy sessions, which further supported their children's educational progress.

Academic support includes a range of services and accommodations designed to help students with special needs succeed academically. This can include tutoring, mentoring, assistive technologies, and personalized learning plans. Academic support is vital for levelling the playing field and providing special needs students with the resources they need to succeed. These supports can address specific learning challenges and help students develop

effective study strategies and organizational skills. The University of Melbourne offers a comprehensive support program for students with disabilities, including academic coaching, specialized software, and adaptive learning resources. A case study of a student with dyslexia at the university demonstrated that with the right support, including the use of text-to-speech software and regular sessions with a learning coach, the student was able to achieve high grades and complete their degree on time.

## Literature Review

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize existing research on the education of special needs students in higher education, focusing on inclusive education practices, parental involvement, and academic support. By examining these areas, this review aims to highlight the challenges and opportunities faced by special needs students and to identify effective strategies for enhancing their educational experiences and outcomes. This section will discuss specific research studies and their findings relevant to the topic, providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of special needs education in higher education institutions.

### *Background of Context*

Special needs conditions encompass a broad spectrum of physical, cognitive, emotional, and learning disabilities. These conditions can significantly impact a student's educational experience and require tailored interventions and supports. Examples of special needs conditions include;

- a) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Students with ASD may require structured environments and social skills training.
- b) Dyslexia: A learning disorder characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and spelling. Students with dyslexia often benefit from specialized reading programs and assistive technologies.
- c) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A neurodevelopmental disorder marked by persistent inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Support for students with ADHD may include behavioral interventions and organizational skills training.
- d) Physical Disabilities: Conditions such as cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy that impact mobility and physical functioning. Accessibility accommodations, such as wheelchair ramps and adapted seating, are essential for these students.

The impact of special needs conditions on education varies widely depending on the nature and severity of the condition. Some students may require minimal accommodations, while others need extensive support. The variation in needs necessitates a flexible and individualized approach to education. For instance, students with mild dyslexia may succeed with simple reading interventions, whereas students with severe autism might require a comprehensive support plan involving speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral interventions. Recent research has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of various educational strategies for special needs students. Notable studies include:

- a) Inclusive Education Practices: A study by Smith et al. (2020) found that inclusive classroom practices, such as cooperative learning and differentiated instruction, significantly improved the academic performance and social integration of special needs students. The



study emphasized the importance of teacher training in inclusive education methodologies.

- b) Parental Involvement: Research by Johnson and McGuire (2019) demonstrated that active parental involvement is strongly correlated with improved educational outcomes for special needs students. The study highlighted the need for schools to foster strong partnerships with parents and provide resources to support their involvement.
- c) Academic Support Programs: A comprehensive review by Brown and Clark (2021) evaluated the impact of academic support programs, including tutoring and assistive technologies, on the academic success of special needs students. The review concluded that personalized academic support is critical in addressing the unique challenges faced by these students.

This research builds on the findings of previous studies by focusing specifically on higher education contexts. While many studies have examined special needs education at the primary and secondary levels, there is a growing need to understand the unique challenges and opportunities within higher education. Preliminary findings from this study suggest that higher education institutions often lack the comprehensive support systems found in K-12 settings, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and policy changes.

Recent statistics indicate that the enrollment of special needs students in higher education is increasing. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), approximately 11% of undergraduate students in the United States reported having a disability. However, these students often face significant barriers, including inadequate support services and inaccessible campus facilities. This study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to address these challenges and improve the higher education experience for special needs students.

#### *Opportunities for Higher Education for Special Needs Students*

Higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of providing tailored support and accommodations to special needs students. Academic support services play a crucial role in this regard. Many institutions offer personalized tutoring and mentoring programs that help students navigate their coursework and develop effective study strategies. For instance, the University of Washington's Disability Resources for Students (DRS) program provides one-on-one tutoring and peer mentoring to support students in their academic pursuits. Additionally, assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice recognition software, and text-to-speech tools are commonly provided. The University of California, Berkeley, offers a comprehensive suite of such technologies through its Disabled Students' Program (DSP). Specialized workshops focusing on skills like time management, organization, and stress reduction are also beneficial, often tailored to address the unique challenges faced by special needs students.

Accessibility services are another critical area of support. Ensuring both physical and digital accessibility is essential for accommodating students with physical disabilities. Many universities have made significant modifications to their campuses, including wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and adapted classrooms. For example, the University of Michigan's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) ensures that all campus facilities are

accessible. Digital accessibility is equally important, with institutions like Harvard University implementing policies to ensure all online content is accessible to students with disabilities.

Psychological and counseling services are vital for addressing the mental health needs of special needs students. Many universities offer Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) programs that provide individual and group therapy sessions. Stanford University's CAPS, for instance, offers tailored counseling services to support the mental health and well-being of special needs students. Stress management programs that teach techniques such as mindfulness training, relaxation techniques, and cognitive-behavioral strategies are particularly helpful for students with anxiety or ADHD.

Career and transition services prepare special needs students for successful transitions into the workforce. Personalized career counseling helps students explore career options, develop job search strategies, and prepare for interviews. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Career Services Center, for example, offers specialized career counseling for students with disabilities. Internship and job placement programs, such as the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), which partners with colleges and universities to provide internships and job placements for students with disabilities, are essential for bridging the gap between education and employment.

When comparing the opportunities available in public versus private universities, both types of institutions offer unique advantages. Public universities often have access to state and federal funding, which supports a wide range of services for special needs students. These universities typically serve a more diverse student population, fostering a more inclusive environment. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for example, has a well-established Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) program that offers comprehensive support to a diverse group of students. Public universities are also required to comply with federal regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, ensuring necessary accommodations are provided.

On the other hand, private universities may offer more tailored and individualized programs due to their smaller student populations. Institutions like Gallaudet University, which specializes in education for the deaf and hard of hearing, provide highly specialized support and services. Private universities often have the flexibility to implement innovative practices and pilot new programs. Landmark College, dedicated to students with learning disabilities, ADHD, and autism, is known for its pioneering approaches in special needs education. Additionally, private universities may have substantial endowments and offer scholarships specifically for special needs students, enhancing the range and quality of services provided.

In conclusion, while public universities benefit from greater funding and regulatory oversight, private universities can provide more personalized and innovative support. The key to success for special needs students in higher education lies in the availability of comprehensive support services and accommodations tailored to their individual needs, regardless of the type of institution. By understanding and leveraging the strengths of different educational environments, higher education institutions can create more inclusive and supportive experiences for special needs students.



*What Teachers Understand and Their Perception Towards Implementing an Effective Career Transition Program*

This article examines Special Education Teachers' perceptions of the Career Transition Program's execution. The cluster sampling method was used to choose 64 Special Education Teachers from six Special Education Integrated Programs (SEIP) in Johor, Malaysia. A quantitative descriptive analysis of data collected from a 1 to 5 Likert scale questionnaire was used in this study. The findings revealed that a Career Transition Program's effectiveness is dependent on collaboration and support from all stakeholders, including schools, communities, businesses, government agencies, and teachers. Furthermore, a teacher's attentiveness during the execution of a Career Transition Program would most likely assist students in overcoming the program's hurdles. The aspects that influence the success of a Career Transition Program are examined. Thousands of students with special needs graduate each year with the knowledge that they will not be hired. [1] emphasized that the transition from school to employment provides special needs students with an opportunity to get work experience. A Career Transition Program has long been explored as a method of preparing special needs students, particularly those with higher functional disabilities, to enter the workforce.

In Malaysia, the majority of Career Transition Programs are carried out by teachers on an individual basis with little systematic preparation. Even though there have been a handful of successful transition programmes, the majority of special needs students in Malaysia's Special Education Integrated Program (SEIP) are still struggling to generate employable graduates. A Career Transition Program is a step-by-step set of skill training and development procedures. It is understood that in this literature review, find out from the teacher's perspective on the career pathway for student with special need.

*Challenges Faced by Parents to Send Their Special Need Child for Higher Education?*

The Salamanca Statement of 1994 described children with special needs as "children or youth whose needs originate from impairments or learning challenges." Children with disabilities, also known as anak kurang upaya (OKU) or anak istimewa in Malaysia, are defined as any child (under the age of 18) who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that, when combined with various barriers, prevents them from fully participating in society (Siti Nor Ismalina et. al. 2016). According to the Social Welfare Department (2015), Malaysia has 105,174 children with disabilities aged 0-18. However, in 2016, the number of children with disabilities in Malaysia increased by 8.5%, and statistics show that children with disabilities account for 28% of the disabled Welfare Department. In addition, about 10-16 children have a disability. data source, the Social Welfare Bureau Malaysia reported the highest disabilities registered as learning disabilities, the lowest was mental illness (Department of Social Welfare, 2016).

In addition, a recent , shows that about 47,000 people in Malaysia have autism. It is estimated that 1 in 600 children However, the current data is still being collected to determine the total number of children with disabilities in Malaysia (UNICEF, 2017).

## Research Methodology

### *Introduction*

Research methodology is the cornerstone of any study, providing the framework for collecting and analyzing data to answer research questions effectively. In this study, we aim to explore the opportunities and challenges faced by special needs students in pursuing higher education, as well as identify ways to support them better. To achieve this, we have chosen a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of special needs students, parents, academics, and counselors.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of our study is to investigate the opportunities available to special needs students after secondary school, particularly in pursuing higher education. We also aim to identify the challenges faced by parents in sending their special needs children to higher education institutions. Additionally, we seek to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field by providing evidence for theories related to special needs education.

### *Research Design*

The research design adopted for this study is qualitative, utilizing a case study approach. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of special needs students, parents, academics, and counselors. By focusing on a single case, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and nuances of the issues faced by individuals involved in the special needs education system.

### *Respondents and Sampling Decision*

Four participants were selected for this study, representing different stakeholders in special needs education: one special needs student, one academic, one university counselor, and one parent of a special needs child. The selection of participants will be based on their direct involvement and experience with special needs education, ensuring that the perspectives gathered are relevant and insightful.

Data collected through in-depth interviews with each participant. The interviews conducted semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in the discussion while ensuring that key topics related to special needs education are covered. The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data capture and will be transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### *Instruments*

The research employed open-ended questionnaires to collect data from participants, divided into two sets: one for academics and university counselors, and another for special needs students and parents. These questionnaires aimed to gather detailed insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding special needs education and higher education opportunities.

The questionnaires were structured differently for each group of participants. Academics and university counselors responded to 16 questions, while students with special needs and parents of special needs children answered 17 questions.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data gathered from the questionnaires. This method involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the dataset. Through thematic analysis, the study aimed to uncover common themes and patterns related to the opportunities and challenges encountered by special needs students in their pursuit of higher education.

In summary, the research methodology aimed to provide a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by special needs students in higher education. The qualitative approach and case study design enabled the collection of detailed and nuanced data, contributing to the existing knowledge in special needs education.

## **Results & Findings**

### *Introduction*

The findings of this study highlight the limited yet significant opportunities available for special needs students to pursue higher education. These opportunities are often constrained by various factors, predominantly financial challenges faced by parents. The data collected suggests a correlation between the socioeconomic status of the family and the likelihood of special needs students continuing their education in private universities. Families from well-educated backgrounds appear more capable of supporting their children through higher education, indicating that socioeconomic disparities play a crucial role in educational accessibility for special needs students.

## **Research Questions & Objectives**

### *Research Question 1: Opportunities for Special Needs Students to Pursue Higher Education*

The research findings indicate multiple opportunities for special needs students within higher education. These opportunities not only enhance their educational experience but also contribute significantly to their personal and professional development.

One of the most notable opportunities is the increased likelihood of employment post-graduation. Higher education equips special needs students with the necessary skills and qualifications required in the job market, thereby improving their employability. Employers are increasingly recognizing the value of diversity and inclusion, leading to better job prospects for graduates with special needs.

Continuing education also plays a critical role in the personal development of special needs students. Higher education provides a structured environment where students can engage in academic and extracurricular activities. This engagement helps in building their confidence and self-esteem. Special needs students benefit from the routine and stability that higher education offers, which can be particularly beneficial for those with developmental disabilities.

Higher education institutions provide a platform for special needs students to enhance their social interaction skills. Many special needs students struggle with communication and social interactions. Participating in group work, collaborative projects, and social events on campus can significantly improve their social skills. This interaction is crucial for their overall

development, as it prepares them for real-world scenarios where effective communication and teamwork are essential.

Higher education fosters a sense of independence and self-reliance among special needs students. Living away from home, managing their schedules, and handling academic responsibilities contribute to their growth as independent individuals. This independence is a critical aspect of their development, enabling them to navigate the complexities of adult life more effectively.

*Research Question 2: Opportunities in Higher Education from Academic and Administrative Perspectives*

The perspectives of academics and administrators provide valuable insights into the opportunities available for special needs students in higher education. Academics acknowledge that special needs students require additional support to thrive in higher education. This support includes tailored teaching methods, extended deadlines, and the availability of specialized resources such as tutoring and counseling services. These accommodations are designed to create an inclusive learning environment where special needs students can succeed alongside their peers.

Academics also observe positive behavioral changes in special needs students who engage in group projects and assignments. Initially, these students may struggle with adapting to the new environment and interacting with peers. However, over time, their participation in collaborative activities leads to improved social interactions and communication skills. These changes are indicative of their growing confidence and ability to work effectively within a team.

Administrators emphasize the importance of inclusive policies that support special needs students. These policies ensure that students receive the necessary accommodations and support services. For instance, universities may offer specialized programs, accessible facilities, and trained staff to assist special needs students. These measures are essential for creating an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Higher education institutions also provide career services specifically designed to assist special needs students in their transition from education to employment. These services include career counseling, internship opportunities, and job placement assistance. By offering these resources, institutions help special needs students navigate the job market and secure meaningful employment.

*Research Question 3: Challenges Faced by Parents*

The challenges faced by parents of special needs students are multifaceted, with financial difficulties being the most prominent.

Raising a child with special needs is often associated with substantial financial costs. These costs begin at a young age, with expenses related to specialized early childhood education, therapy, and medical care. As children grow, the financial burden continues with the need for specialized educational programs and support services. For many families, the cost of higher education is an additional financial strain that can be difficult to manage.

Another challenge is the accessibility and availability of support services for special needs students. Parents often struggle to find institutions that offer the necessary accommodations and resources. This lack of availability can limit the options for higher education, making it challenging for parents to find suitable programs for their children. Parents also experience significant emotional and psychological stress in supporting their special needs children through higher education. They must navigate a complex system of educational requirements, support services, and financial planning. The pressure to ensure their child receives the best possible education and support can be overwhelming.

Advocacy and awareness are crucial in addressing the challenges faced by parents. Increased awareness and understanding of the needs of special needs students can lead to better support and accommodations within higher education institutions. Advocacy efforts can also drive policy changes that improve access to education and reduce financial barriers for families.

## **Conclusion Discussion & Recommendation**

### *Conclusion*

The research emphasizes the critical importance of special education, highlighting that children with special needs can thrive and become productive, happy, and fully functional members of society with the right support. However, without proper support, they may struggle and be left behind. Inclusion is paramount for developing long-lasting relationships, experiences, and cognitive and social skills. Both academics and parents play pivotal roles in students' academic performance and competency. It is essential for students' success to have accredited and well-trained educators who understand that learning problems manifest differently in each student. Considering inclusion in terms of success is crucial when evaluating its role in mainstream education. Successful inclusion, as defined by Fisher et al. (2002), is measured by its efficacy and efficiency in enhancing both the learning outcomes of students with disabilities and the general learning of the class. According to Fisher et al., the inclusive approach, when implemented as defined, significantly benefits students with disabilities by improving their learning outcomes. The outdated practice of isolating students with disabilities at the back of the classroom is no longer acceptable. There are numerous opportunities for students with special needs in higher education, as evidenced by the success stories of those who have completed their higher education journey.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that parents of special needs children be regularly informed of their child's performance in college on a weekly basis. This increased communication could enhance parental involvement in their child's learning journey, ultimately benefiting the child's overall academic experience and outcomes. It is clear that the significance of special education cannot be overstated. Children with special needs have the potential to become productive, happy, and fully integrated members of society. However, without proper support, they risk falling behind and slipping through the cracks. Inclusion plays a crucial role in fostering long-term relationships, experiences, and cognitive and social abilities.

Both educators and parents bear responsibility for a student's academic performance and competency. Therefore, it is essential for students to have access to accredited and well-

trained educators. It is also important to recognize that students with learning difficulties have diverse learning styles. When considering the role of inclusion in mainstream education, it is useful to evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency. Successful inclusion, as defined by Fisher et al. (2002), should enhance the learning outcomes of students with disabilities and benefit the general learning environment of the class. The inclusive approach, as described by Fisher et al., offers significant benefits for students with disabilities, leading to improved outcomes. Gone are the days of isolating students with disabilities at the back of the classroom. There are numerous opportunities for students with special needs in higher education, as evidenced by the success stories of those who have completed their higher education journey.

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