



Strategies to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers of visually impaired learners in Pakistan

Shazia Malik ^a

^a Assistant Professor at Institute of Education and Research, University of Punjab, Lahore Pakista

Abstract

This research seeks to identify strategies to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers of visually impaired learners (VIL) in Pakistan. The design of the study is qualitative case study research design. Five parents and five teachers of VIL were selected as the sample for this study from two government secondary level institutes of visually impaired students in Lahore Pakistan. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique in selecting ten respondents. Interview guide was prepared based on the objectives and research question of the study. Content validity of interview guide was validated by two qualitative experts with their teaching experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the help of an interview guide. Collected data were analyzed with cross case analysis. The findings of the study indicated that daily diaries as a way of communication, increasing parent-teacher interaction, provision of parental assistance and parent-teacher meetings are the strategies to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers of VIL in Pakistan. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made which include that parents should take the responsibility to show their involvement in the school of their VIL that can create communication with teachers. © 2017 IJCI & the Authors. Published by *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction (IJCI)*. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY-NC-ND) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Keywords: Parental involvement, communication barriers, visually impaired learners

1. Introduction

The importance of orientation and mobility (O&M) (Barraga & Erin, 1992; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999) cannot be denied. Effective use of Orientation & Mobility skills enables VIL's to perform better and accomplish their daily routines as independent individuals (Rosen & Joffee, 1999). These skills are needed by VILs in moving towards the targeted goals safely, efficiently and independently (Hill & Ponder, 1976; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999). Moreover, VILs need to perform the required level of mobility skills (Altunay, 2003; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999). For that reason, parental involvement in Pakistan and elsewhere, in O&M for VIL and parent-teacher communication is essential (Ames, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Ho & Willms; Pang & Watkins, 2000).

Parental involvement is explained as, parents, active part to collaborate in their children's development, learning, and ensuring that they are well known about the school lives of their children and a relation of partnership with school (Williams & Ullman, 2002). According to Chan (1995), "parental involvement is not something that is 'done' to parents" (p. 19). It is rather what parents and the school do collaboratively and collectively to ensure effective and adequate policy making and implementation, funding, discipline, staffing and facilities for their children's success. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) identified that to maximize the potential for children from schooling, they require parental involvement.

Parental involvement and collaboration between parents of VIL and teachers contributes to students' academic success (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Several studies showed a connection in exploring parental involvement in educational programs and student academic achievement, cognitive growth, and emotional well-being (Epstein, 2010). In education, parental involvement is part of an educational philosophy advocating a child-centered curriculum in special education practices. Furthermore, International research has emphasized on the involvement of parents in planning and implementing educational programs for disabled students (Angel, Stoner, & Shelden, 2009; Hobbs & Silla, 2008; Hui-Chen & Mason, 2008). Insufficient involvement of parents may result in less responsive to VIL's needs.

Some studies demonstrated a positive and direct association between parental involvement and motivation towards academic achievement (Crozier & Reay, 2005; Henderson & Berla, 1997). Cheeks (2012) adds that parental involvement creates partnerships among schools, parents, and communities. The resulting partnerships develop effective communication among students, parents, and teachers from home to school and school to home. Through ongoing and active communication, teachers and parents share information and resources regarding students' academic and behavioral conduct. Together, these efforts establish a solid foundation for both. The current study addresses the communication barriers faced by parents and teachers of VIL in relation to O&M.

Furthermore, research suggests that without effective hands-on experience and collaboration with each other, parents and educators may experience incompetent partnerships and face communication barriers (Murray et al., 2011). It is imperative that parents and families, communities, and schools work cooperatively and collaboratively with one another to improve upon the learning experience of children within the ECC (Westwood-Robinette, 2014). In the following section, the description of O&M is given before talking about the ECC and implementing strategies.

1.1. Background of the study

Loss of vision can influence an individual's everyday life in all the segments of life and can significantly limit some of its important elements. One of the vital elements for the VIL is the area of O&M (Ruzickova, et al, 2009). Orientation and Mobility (O&M) have been frequently described as "knowing where you are, knowing where you want to go, and knowing how to get there ((Sapp & Hatlen, 2010)". O&M is the ability to move safely, efficiently, and gracefully through all environmental conditions and situations with as much independence as possible. Yet, there is a detachment from social environment with the lack of sight and O&M (Parvin, 2015). Therefore, O&M skills, encourage VIL to develop essential and basic skills, build their ability of confidence to travel within their schools and all other environments, as well as take responsibility for their decisions.

The development of these skills allows VIL to fully participate in the school and community life. The usage and ability of these skills affect access to educational opportunities and it also requires the family support throughout the students' formal training. Most O&M skills are taught within the school setting, with the ultimate goal of the ability to travel independently in all environments. O& M skills need to be a part of the VIL. Parental involvement has been gradually observed as a crucial component which leads to successful education (O'Shea, O'Shea, Algozzine & Hammitte, 2001). In a study conducted by Hansen, Himes and Meier (1990), the involvement of family members' in visually impaired students' learning and educational programming was investigated to identify how it enhances their success both academically and socially (Hansen, Himes and Meier, 1990). Generally, it is believed that in a combined environment VIL, teachers and parents; gain satisfaction and empowerment. The family is considered as the most vital factor that influences the life of a visually impaired child, and such factor is also crucial for VIL to receive O&M (Dean, 1998).

1.2. Problem statement

To date, there are relatively few studies on the above aspects in Pakistan, mainly those that focus on the process, rather than the outcomes, of helping visually impaired learners to excel in the O&M skills (Weissberg, Kasprow, & Michael, 1999). In this case, most parents of VIL fail to fit in with the demanding requirements of the ECC on O&M skills (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010) especially in Pakistan. As the literature indicates, limited research has been conducted to explore parental involvement towards O&M of VIL. Only two studies were found with parental involvement in O&M in western countries (Fernandez, 2004; Dean, 1998). First research by Fernandez (2004) focused on parental involvement in O&M with cultural backgrounds of Puerto Rican families. Second research by Dean (1998) investigated Hispanic parent" perceptions of O&M services with

relevance to ethnicity and culture of this group of population. There is a lack of research with parental involvement in education of VIL in Pakistan (Aziz, 2007) especially in O&M. For these reasons, this study is conducted in detail on parental involvement in strategies to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers of VIL in Pakistan to fill the gap in literature.

1.3. Research Questions of the Study

1. What are the communication barriers that parents and teachers face and perceive to be helpful in communicating visually impaired learners in relation to orientation & mobility practices?

2. What are the solving strategies for the communication barriers between parents and teachers of visually impaired learners in relation to orientation and mobility practices?

2. Literature Review

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), “visual impairment, including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness” (Individual’s Disabilities Education Act, (2004). Blindness, “referring to the absence of usable vision, is often used to describe individuals who may be able to perceive light or images but are not able to use residual vision for functional purposes” (Jan, Freeman, and Scott, (1977). In society, visually impaired persons face many barriers and challenges due to their impairment, which cause isolation (Fatima et al., 2013). VIL need an adapted education for their hidden needs, potentials and capacities (Ajuwon, 2014). This adapted education needs to be a set of O&M skills for the independent movement of VIL. And this set of O&M skills for VIL is required in a developing country like Pakistan.

Parental involvement is explained as, parents and their active roles to collaborate in their children’s development, learning, and ensuring that they are well known about the school lives of their children and a relation of partnership with school (Williams & Ullman, 2002). According to Chan (1995), “parental involvement is not something that is “done” to “parents” (p. 19). It is rather what parents and the school do collaboratively and collectively to ensure effective and adequate policy making and implementation, funding, discipline, staffing and facilities for their children’s success. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) identified that to maximize the potential for children, schooling, they require parental involvement.

Parental involvement and collaboration between parents of VIL and teachers contribute to students’ academic success (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Several studies

showed a connection in exploring parental involvement in educational programs and student academic achievement, cognitive growth, and emotional well-being (Epstein, 2010). In education, parental involvement is part of an educational philosophy advocating a child-centered curriculum in special education practices. Furthermore, International research has emphasized on the involvement of parents in planning and implementing educational programs for disabled students (Angel, Stoner, & Shelden, 2009; Hobbs & Silla, 2008; Hui-Chen & Mason, 2008). Insufficient involvement of parents may result in less responsiveness to VILs' needs.

Furthermore, the research by Murray suggested that without effective hands-on experience and collaboration with each other, parents and educators may experience incompetent partnerships and face communication barriers (Murray et al., 2011). It is imperative that parents and families, communities, and schools work cooperatively and collaboratively with one another to improve upon the learning experience of children (Westwood-Robinette, 2014). This observation offers a vital set to unveil a useful understanding from the parents and teachers of VIL in respect of the involvement of parents in O&M and to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers.

Collaboration between school staff may also influence collaboration with parents. In schools advocating partnership and dialogue as part of the school culture, parents felt accepted and free to share their wishes and opinions in school meetings (Ritchey, 2007). In contrast, in schools that do not advocate collaboration with staff as part of the school culture, parents reported negative feelings during their meetings. Furthermore, parents play a major role in their children's education as they act as the first teachers for their children. Despite this, parents tend to not be actively engaged in their role as educators or provide cooperation with the child's school. Hence, it is beneficial for parents to have an excellent relationship with the school as it will not only provide positive effects for both parents and school but also for the children (Loudová et.al, 2015).

The school and home partnership is so important that teachers instantly must strengthen the relationship with parents (Epstein, 2001; Kuykendall 2004). Teachers should create some ways to keep parents encourager, empowered, excited, and informed about school activities about the developmental learning of their children. When parents and teachers are involved at every stage the student's results improved in the shape of their achievement in the education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Some inhibiting factors are linked to parental occupation and education level (Murray et.al, 2015).

Hebel (2014), explored parental involvement in the individual education plan (IEP) using the phenomenology qualitative research approach in Israel with the purpose to achieve parents of students with severe disabilities an understanding, perceptions and

experiences about their involvement in the Individual Education Program (IEP). Data was collected from 20 parental interviews in special education schools in Israel. In addition, the two main themes of the analysis of data were parents' self-efficacy and child-centered focus. Furthermore, collaboration between parent and teacher was enhanced in the sense of parents' efficacy related to the IEP process and individualized plans were settled with the student's needs. The study revealed that parental involvement and parent-teacher collaboration is a process that must flourish with relationships of trust and positive communication.

Several parents experience communication barriers that hinder their involvement in their children's schooling (Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005; Klimes-Dougan et al., 1992; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992). These barriers included the lack of material resources (e.g., transportation, childcare), and many parents feel unprepared to talk with the teachers or administrator to gain their assistance in completing school work of their children at home (Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2013). Constantino (2003) conveyed that parental involvement is a strong segment to teacher because when parents are more involved with the school it will positively affect the attitudes of their children. Hence, when children have positive attitudes and belief about school, the children will gain more learning and be exposed to different interaction in the school context (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996). And parent-school engagement is extensively accepted as a course of action, (Saltmarsh & Chapman, 2015).

Moreover, if parents get involved in their children's education the issues of low communication between parents and teachers, parental fear and misinterpretation of teachers will disappear (Measuring Up, 1999). In addition, parents tend to hesitate when helping school this is due to the fact that they do not like criticism from school administration and teachers, therefore it will make them more hesitant to communicate with the teachers (Measuring Up, 1999). School plays an important role in parental involvement, whereas for the children's learning process the teachers are the important force behind the school context (Epstein, 2001). Teachers help the students to make decisions that motivate the learning of children. These teachers are caring and friendship and use their effort and time to help the students for their school work (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000). A sense of ownership and pride is developed within the students with the help of teacher's made differences and efforts (Epstein, 2001).

It reaffirms the importance of education when families share their dreams, desires, and goals with their children. Additionally, parents assist their children to develop the positive relationships with their schools (Henderson et al., 2007). Children will learn that school is important, and this goal can be achieved through collaborative working of parents and teachers together in the future whereby there will be a better chance to obtain a successful life (Epstein, 2001; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).

To shape a connection between family and school, parental involvement is essential, but it is not the same for all children (Constantino, 2003; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000). Progress has been made in some areas of family, school and also community to connect all as one unit. (De Carvalho, 2001). Parents will become more active in the community when they are involved in their children's school (Henderson et al. 2007). In this case, parent's self-confidence also increased, and parents express their interest to pursue their higher education and additional training.

Epstein (1995) informed that the relationship between parents and teachers will provide an outcome of successful children. However, there are some doubts on how parents should be involved (Measuring up, 1999). Some of the methods suggested for parental involvement are traditional parental involvement methods such as volunteering at school events, but some parents want academic success for their children and the quality of education (Batey, 1996). To sum up the whole discussion in parent teacher communication related to O&M, from the literature review the following barriers were identified. The following descriptions situate the theoretical underpinnings of the present study.

2.1. Theoretical framework of the study

Epstein (1995) work is remarkable and well recognized to develop new approaches for family, school and the partnership of community. Based on the approaches and models, it is appropriate to develop new approaches for parent and school partnerships. In her research, there is a need for leadership in schools that should develop practices and the parents need to be involved and remain associated with the education of their children with the help of those practices. Moreover, the results of her research indicated that the school and parent partnership can be developed through partnership programs. Parents tend to appreciate those assistance and when many parents are involved the student outcomes will be demonstrated in the shape of their good behaviors, attitudes that will certainly improve their educational achievement (Davies, 1991; Epstein, 1987). Epstein's described six types of parental involvement that is the basis of this study that includes: 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) decision making, 4) volunteering, 5) home making and, 6) community collaboration. The present study is also based on the parent-teacher communication and to solve the communication barriers between the parent and teacher, therefore, this study will focus on the six types of parental involvement as described by Epsteins.

3. Methodology

According to Willig (2001), qualitative research seeks to understand the experiences from the respondent's perspective, and acknowledges that the researcher's

experiences and being bias are inseparable parts of the analysis process, and thus lead to better interpretation of the participants' responses. To deal with the research problem, the study also incorporates a case study method. The two cases, where parents and teachers of VIL from two government secondary level institutes of VIL, from Lahore Pakistan. In the case studies when (why) or (how) questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. The data are collected through interviews, and the mode of analysis is inductive. Merriam (2009) explained that purposive sampling is based on the assumption when one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; he needs to select a sample from which he can get the most (p. 48). To this aim, the respondents of this study were selected through purposeful sampling by drawing on five interviews with parents and teachers of VIL. The data used in this study were generated from an interview guide prepared by the researcher.

The interviews were conducted with five respondents. The interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. The advantage of semi-structured interview is, it helps to facilitate empathy and rapport which lead to gaining rich and interesting data (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The in-depth interviews dealt with broad and open areas such as asking participants about being leaders and also help them find a way to express their thoughts. In this study, the interview guide provided a consistent framework. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim from Urdu to English language. The process of qualitative data analysis often begins from the early stages of data collection. Field notes and coding are considered as the most important techniques of qualitative data analysis. The coding process in qualitative data analysis involved organizing them with data reduction with drawing a link between themes to arrive at possible conclusions.

Finally, some ways were adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. For this purpose, some techniques were incorporated, including the compilation of a triangulation, the researcher as primary instrument, field note and member checking (Merriam, 2009) by summarizing the key points of discussions, confirmation, and completion. Ethical consideration includes designing informed consent procedures to provide parents and teachers of VIL with sufficient information to increase their awareness towards the potential risks and benefits of participation in the interviews.

4. Results

In this section, the strategies that parents and teachers of VIL find helpful in solving the communication barriers are discussed. These strategies are identified from the perspectives of parents and teachers of VIL and perceived to be helpful for effective communication from the interview data. The important themes were repetitively

emerged and traversed across all parents and teacher respondents To highlight the prominent themes, a cross case analysis is carried out with the shared views of parents and teacher respondents. The following themes are discussed separately according to the parents' and teachers' perspectives in the next section on parent-teacher communication barrier with identifying the strategies to solve those barriers.

- A) Daily Diaries, a way of communication
- B) Provide parental assistance
- C) Parent-teacher communication with meetings

Some themes were found unique to parents and teachers. These themes are discussed in the section of research question two, communication barriers between parents and teachers in relation to O&M. Although the themes were not derived from all of the parents' and teachers' interviews, findings and interpretations were presented since these themes are unique the teachers and parents under study. The findings of each theme are also presented. In this study, the strategies are worthy as they achieved with results to solve communication barriers. And the summary of each theme is presented to provide a detailed review.

Interpretation of data is also provided with further explanation and meaning of each theme. The teacher communication barriers which they faced and perceived with communicating with the parents of visually impaired learners based on the primary data of interviews. In the context of the present study, strategies are referring to the ways in which teacher respondent employs and perceived to be helpful in assisting to the parents of VIL. These themes are illustrated according to their frequency of occurrence.

4.1. Daily diaries

Parents' views: Incorporating to enhance the communication ways between parents and teachers of VIL, it's better to use the daily diaries of the VIL. The data from all parent respondents revealed that all parent respondents expressed their views related to the theme daily dairies. The evidences from field notes are presented in table 4.1.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..1: Excerpts from parent interviews on 'daily diaries'

Theme: Daily Diaries

P1: I am not educated, but I get the help of my sighted and educated daughter to help my visually impaired daughters. I ask them to read the classwork and homework on daily diaries of my daughters. In this way, I remain in touch with their studies. I have no knowledge of braille but my other daughters know braille. (INT1 P1: 15.10.2016)

P2: In my opinion, there should be a communication between parents and teachers to share the problems of

children. The basic purpose of communication is to solve the problems of child. The teacher writes in the diary of my child and I my daughter to complete those tasks. (INT2 P2: 16.10. 2016)

P3: My daughter wants my concentration upon her studies, I am already teaching to my daughter so that she learns good and nobody complaint about her. I request to teacher to write a diary of student about the class and homework for the student. In this way, parents know about what to study and learn our child at home. (INT3 P3: 22.10.2016)

P4: I check daily the classwork of my two blind children. I also check the daily work on daily diary. (INT4 P4: 24.10.2016)

P5: I also communicate with the teacher through daily diary. The teacher writes all school day work with homework on the diary, I help my daughter to do her homework. I help her in learning at home and I also read out her lessons. If I need any holiday for my daughter, I write a request on the diary of my child and teacher gives me her comments. (INT5 P5: 25.10.2016).

Source: Field Data

Solely knowing the involvement of the parent respondents in the education of their VIL. It is most pertinent that parents cope with the challenges about their involvement in the education of their children. They help and support VIL to make them independent. Teaching to their visually impaired children may help the parents to gain their successful involvement in the O&M to make their children more independent in the environment.

In this particular topic, the input was on sharing of communication between parents and teachers with daily diaries of the learners with visual impairment. Parent participants helped their children with knowing their classroom and home activities and helping them in their studies. P2 added more her comments in this way:

I want to remain in touch with the studies of my daughter because my daughter has an inferiority complex, she does not like to share. She is dependent upon me and need my help in every field. I discuss these issues with her teacher. Her teacher writes everything in the diary of my daughter and I know everything about her on the daily basis.

(INT2 P2: 16.10.2016)

Teachers' views: Parent and teacher respondents shared their some strategies for effective communication between them. One of the most important face, that was being used in the premises was daily diaries. Both teacher and parent respondents discussed their views. Here are the excerpts from teacher respondent views.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..2: Excerpts from teacher interviews on 'Daily Diaries'

Theme: Daily Diaries

T3: Parents do not come into schools, I write some notes on the daily diaries of the students. And advise the student to discuss with parents. (INT3 T3: 19.10.2016).

T4: Currently, in our school the link is daily diaries of children. In these diaries, a teacher mentions all the school

and homework of the child, that he has completed this work today. If a teacher wants to put anything special as note for parents, then he writes in student diary. (NT4 T4: 20.10.2016).

T5: In our school, we teachers mostly send message to parents with the help of daily diaries of the students. We write important notes on the dairy and communicate with parents in something important. (INT5 T5: 23.10.2016)

Source: Field Data

In revealing description about the current status of parental involvement and the communication way, rout of five teacher respondents shared their views that mostly they use to write some notes on the student daily diary. Parents get the message from that diary and they try to fulfill the required task. If they are called by teachers, then they try to come and meet the teacher as early. But mostly, teachers are using this method of conversation to communicate between them.

Parent and teacher respondents indicated the ways of communication between them. In this communication, they discuss all the problems of their VIL with each other. All parent respondents were seen to incorporating the ways to remain in touch with teachers and the source was daily diaries of their children. The use of daily diaries in teaching to their children was explained by all parent respondents. In this way, both parents and teachers communicate with each other and solved the issues of VIL. This theme is in line with the suggestions for parents to gain a successful parental involvement in O&M. Parents respondents emphasized on the ways of communication in the context.

4.2. Need to provide parental assistance

Parents' views: Parental assistance at home refers to parental help and learning to VIL at homes. When parents meet with the challenges of disability among their children, then first they help, support their disabled child. Before going to any institution, parents learn them some ways. This may be an informal way of O&M but parents try their best to give an independent movement to their VIL. Table 4.3 communicates with the excerpts from interview data with parent participants.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..3: Excerpts from parent interviews on 'need to provide parental assistance'

Theme: Need to provide Parental assistance

P1: I help my daughters at home to make them independent. For example, I do not hold them, but I verbally instruct them time by time. I explain to them how to move ahead and what's next to them. (INT1 P1: 15.10.2016)

P2: I help and support to my daughter like when she gets up from sleep, then I remove all hurdles from her way. If any day I could not remove those hurdles, then I verbally instruct to my daughter to save herself from them. (INT2 P2: 16.10.2016)

P3: I assist and help my daughter with describing her everything at home, when she moves around at home. I orientate her about everything and when my daughter started crawling and walking, from that time I removed all obstacles from her way. (INT3 P3: 22.10.2016)

P4: Whenever, I see something as a hurdle in the way of my daughter, I removed all those hurdles to save her from any injury. I there were some dangerous or hot things, I look after my daughter with movement in the surroundings. By providing guidance again and again, I provide assistance to my daughter. (INT4 P4: 24.10.2016)

P5: I assist my daughter in such a way, that I verbally instruct and explain everything to her. I tell her how to move and how to walk and how to recognize your environment. I have trained my daughter about basic needs and how to fulfill those needs. (INT6 P6: 25.10.2016)

Source: Field Data

In the present study, parent respondents were interviewed to explain the ways to cope with their parental challenges as they face in handling their VIL. Parents provided their comments about how they provide assistance to their VIL at home. How they recognize their needs and how they instruct them. In this way, parents shared their own experiences to cope with parental challenges. Parents facilitate their VIL in understanding their surroundings by providing them a verbal instruction that what is this, what is next, how to move, how to recognize and familiar with the things and the environment.

Parent respondents explained to their VIL about how to move and walk. The parent respondents could perhaps understand what is needed to help VIL as to move them in the environment safely. Their work and way to cope with parental challenges on this particular challenge for this topic showed that they were able to provide independent movement to VIL. Data showed that parent respondents provide verbal instructions to VIL, which are the skills of orientation.

Teachers' views: Teacher respondents are also concerned with communication barriers to bring effective communication with parents. Parents of VIL need to provide assistance from teachers to help in O&M. The following part presents teachers' comments in favor of parental assistance.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..4: Excerpts from teacher interviews on 'Need to provide Parental Assistance'

Theme: Need to provide parental assistance

T1: First of all, parents' involvement is very less. Parents should come into schools and then we teachers can assist them about O&M practices. (INT1 T1: 17.10. 2016)

T2: Educated parents' performance is better towards understanding their responsibilities, they come into school. But for illiterate parents, they need our help and assistance. (INT2 T2: 18.10.2016)

T3: There are very few parents who are helped and supported by their relatives and educated family members. (INT3 T3: 19.10.2016)

T4: I want to share some suggestions for parents, first, parents should be guided for O&M and secondly, there is a need to conduct seminars in schools for parental help. (INT4 T4: 20.10.2016)

T5: Need to increase parental awareness, through teachers help, administrative steps and with the help of the media. So, parents can be supported and understand their own responsibilities towards disability. (INT5 T5: 23.10.2016)

Source: Field Data

The teacher respondents in the study used some ways and assistance to help VIL. Teacher respondents explained some ways to help and to cope with parental challenges of disability of VIL. By providing the explanation in a comprehensible way, parent and teacher respondents provided their information and views. Both parent and teacher respondents revealed that with the help and assistance of teachers, they can be helped in making needed help for VIL to move around in their environment. The findings of the present study, may helpful in solving the challenges faced by the parent and teacher respondents in handling VIL The next segment presents the cross case analysis on the theme ‘communication is needed with parent-teacher meetings’.

4.3. Parent-teacher communication with meetings

Parents’ views: Parent respondents were requested to share their views about solving their parental challenges. In the context of the present study, when parents face the challenges about VIL, then they are suggested with some ways to cope with those challenges. In this way, parents want communication with teachers of VIL. They want to discuss the issues of VIL in parent teacher meetings. They wish to conduct such meeting in the schools to discuss about the issues and problems of the disability of their children. Table 4.5 illustrates excerpts from interview data from parent respondents.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..5: Excerpts from parent interviews on ‘Parent-teacher communication with meetings’

Theme: Parent-teacher communication with meetings

P1: If teachers call us, discuss the issues of our children, then we can feel that these challenges are little bit reduced. (INT1 P1: 15.10.2016)

P2: We parents need to communicate with the teachers of VIC. Teachers should conduct parent-teachers meetings in schools to invite parents to discuss and to solve their problems. (INT2 P2: 16.10.2016)

P3: It is a truth that with parental help from teachers, parental challenges can be reduced. The parent should attend parent teacher meetings and discuss their child issues with communication with the teacher. (INT3 P3: 22.10.2016)

P4: This is important for the solution of parental challenges that there should be parent-teacher meetings. This is needed to guide parents. (INT4 P4: 24.10.2016)

P5: There should be parent-teacher meetings in school to bring awareness for parents. (INT5 P5: 25.10.2016)

Source: Field Data

The parental challenges with handling their VIL were seemed to solve with some ways which could help both parents and teachers to cope with those challenges. Parents need to discuss the issues of VIL in parent-teacher meetings, and they should attend these meetings. From the field data, it was noted that parental challenges, which parents face in handling VIL were particularly important as many learners with visual impairment have attention to their issues related to their independence. According to the interviews and transcripts, in school, there is a need to conduct parent-teacher meetings upon the approval from parents either weekly or monthly. Then, there should discuss educational issues of VIL.

Although all parent respondents described their views on the importance of parent-teacher meeting, and they also emphasized on their own involvement in those meetings with teachers. These meetings would carry the discussion about important issues of VIL like their independence in the environment. These meetings would help the parents to learn more effective skills to their VIL from teachers. On the other way, these meetings would help the teachers to understand the problems of VIL and to figure out the solutions of those problems.

Teachers' views: Teacher respondents shared their perspectives about better communication with parents of VIL. These perspectives are very important to solve parental issues regarding their barriers. In the next section, teacher respondents' comments are described in a table with shedding light on the importance of parent teacher meetings through a meeting between both of them.

Table Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı..6: Excerpts from teacher interviews on 'Parent-teacher communication with meetings'

Theme: Parent-teacher communication with meetings

T1: Parents are uneducated and lessaware about O&M, there is need to guide and support parent. There should conduct some workshops and seminars to interact with parents. (INT1 T1: 17.10.2016)

T2: In my opinion, there is need to conduct some evnts and celebrate some days like mother say, father day. So, parents come and interact with us. (INT2 T2: 18.10.2016)

T3: For the blind child parent-teacher communication is good and important. In this way, we teachers get more motivation. (INT3 T3: 19.10.2016)

T4: For effective parent-teacher communication, there need to be conducted weekly or monthly parent-teacher meetings. Like, if any child is absent from school, then parents should inform about the absence of their child in school. (INT4 T4: 20.10.2016)

T5: The two way communication between parents and teachers are thebest for interaction between them. (INT5 T5: 23.10.2016)

Source: Field Data

The improved discussion and interaction between parents and teachers could enhance the understanding both of them to solve less communication challenges. In the context of the present study, parents need to learn some ways from the teachers to provide them for the independence skills of VIL. It could be perhaps solved with parent-teacher meetings with improved communication between both of them. The following section describes the summary of the themes on effective parent-teacher meetings.

5. Discussion

The study found that with provision of parental assistance and with application of parent-teacher meetings, was used as the source to enrich respondents conception of mutual understanding between them towards successful parental involvement. Three important factors that shape the views and practices of hoe O&M teachers and parents of VIL consider effective communication between them to attain parental involvement. In turn, these three factors encompass the following nuances:

5.1. Daily diaries as a way of communication

Supportive communication strategy shared by the respondents was student daily diaries. The dialogue aspect of effective communication is favorable shaped by the level of credibility that parents and teachers described. There is also congruence between the perspectives of teachers and parents of VIL in terms of aspects of communication ways that they deem necessary for supporting mutual trust between them. This finding corroborates the ideas of Angel et al. (2009), who suggested that the trust is required for effective communication between parents and teachers., as the mutual understanding between them recognize in the presence of VIL daily diaries. This finding opens widely the strategies of solving the communication barriers to create a mutual conversational trust as for as communication is the important part of the Epstein (1995), theory. Whose work is remarkable and well recognized to develop new approaches for family, school and community. Her approaches are appropriate to develop new practices and parents need to involve and remain associated with them. Moreover, she indicated partnership of parents and teachers to develop partnership programs. This in turn affects the extent to which the respondents trust each other as they interact.

Inquiring about potential or perceived communication barriers with solving strategies, respondents had strikingly similar answers. Teacher respondents suggested that parents time constraints, and lack of transportation prove to be barriers to active involvement. Respondents of the study acknowledging that the strategies have best met with the students' daily diaries, which is a most common way of communication between parents and teachers of VIL to solve communication barriers. In this way, the teacher writes some notes on student daily diaries and parents are required for further discussion to

solve the problem. Finally, respondents mirrored the aforementioned way of communication as a way to attain successful parental involvement.

5.2. Provide parental assistance

The evident barrier as regard to respondents' provision of parental assistance is that the needed help, guidance and assistance towards child's disability to make him independent in his environment. In the current study, teacher respondents shared their experiences towards parental assistance such as; few uneducated parents get the help and support of their educated relatives. In addition to this, one more teacher shared some suggestions to guide parents of VIL like, need to conduct seminars in the school boundaries. Teacher respondents actively tried to bring forward this concept, they often did so in a simplistic manner, especially the blind teacher respondents focused more on this issue. These expectations of blind teachers were communicated in the respective institutes, but there is need some practical implications towards the issue raised. Results from this study are consistent with a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2006), that teachers should conduct some ways to keep parents encouraged, empowered, excited and informed about school activities for students better learning and parental assistance. Teacher respondents in the study appeared to emphasize their recommendations to conduct seminars and workshops in school boundaries and through media to provide parental assistance. However, this might have been similar to parent respondent expectations as they require assistance from O&M teachers to get mastery in O&M practices for independent movement of their children. Parents believed appreciating assistance and encouragement are important factors for effective communication between them. The above assertion is bolstered by the fact that teacher respondents are aware of parents needs to customize some activities by engaging parents. However, school administration needs to apply the teacher's suggestions in their respective institutes.

5.3. Parent-teacher communication with meetings

Lacking a consistent interaction was a major issue respondent mentioned. The identified supportive strategy that can promote effective communication between parents and teachers of VIL is meetings between them. All respondents suggested interaction and communication between them are meetings as the best educational opportunity for their disabled children to support. Frequent interaction and communication allowed teachers and parents to create an effective context for comprehensive discussion benefiting their VIL. The value of these meetings between teacher is supported in the existing body of research on parental involvement; particularly Epstein's theory types parenting and communicating (Becker & Epstein, 1982; Epstein et al, 2002).

The dialogue aspect of effective communication is favorably shaped by the level of credibility that parents and teachers trust each other. This in turn affects the extent to which the actors trust and respect each other as they communicate with each other. Teacher respondents shared their level of information in the ideas of celebrating mother's day and father's day at school to make sure active parental involvement. Furthermore, teacher respondents expressed their motivations for parent-teacher meetings for effective communication. Therefore, it is possible that such an expectation implies that parents want to discuss, share and solve their problems with teachers' meetings through interaction. In short, teachers were found more interested in school-initiated communication and they want parents to be supportive about such meetings with their involvement. Based on this observation, it can be reasoned out that, ignoring the parent teacher communication barriers leads to an incomplete conception of mutual understanding between them.

6. Conclusion

A conclusion to be drawn from the findings is that parents and teachers need to communicate with their meetings in school boundaries. The barriers and strategies perceived by the parents and teachers of VIL discussed in the present study. There are the evidences with teacher interviews to put more emphasize on parent-teacher meeting to solve the communication barriers between both of them. Parents who are less educated mostly belong to poor families and they further cannot concentrate on the education of their children. There are some suggestions from teacher respondents to conduct seminars and workshops to interact with parents. In these interactions, there is a need to discuss parental issues and make sure their involvement in O&M practices. Parents should learn more about O&M practices. From the parents' perspectives, it was suggested to solve issues of VIL with the help of teachers in improved meetings. In the context of the present study, parents are illiterate, uneducated and busy with some other responsibilities like working on daily wages and to handle other their children, they do not come to school. In this way, parents want the independent movement of their VIL, but they cannot communicate with teachers. These barriers hinder their own involvement in the study of their children.

7. Implications for improving implementation of practices

The findings of the current study were expected to figure out some important guidelines to improve O&M practices within the ECC. Based on the parental involvement in O&M, these findings are able to show the importance of parental involvement in the special education department, especially with some of the suggested guidelines for O&M practices within the ECC. Some concepts like, strategies to improve effective communication between parents and teachers used as essential findings for the

administrations of special education. The provided knowledge can offer the administration of special education a certain focus to improve the communication between special education teachers and parents of VIL. Secondly, from the findings of the study, the ECC implementing strategies can improve the practices of O&M with the provision of refresher courses to the teachers of O&M in their training programs. These findings could improve the O&M practices, which O&M teachers' practice to VIL in their respective institutes.

Determining the effective communication strategies between parents and teachers in relation to O&M may help to the O&M teachers in general and the administration of special education in particular. Moreover, the study further offers practical suggestions to the administration of special education on how to involve parents of visually impaired learners in their O&M with coping their parental challenges and how effective communication strategies could be employed between parents and teachers for the purposes of effective O&M. In other words, the findings of the study offer necessary grounds for proper practices of O&M with the guidelines of ECC among visually impaired learners with the help of O&M instructors who can better practice. In addition, the findings of the study can be used as a forward step to involve parents in O&M with coping their parental challenges in general and to develop O&M practices in line within the ECC in the context in particular.

References

- Ames, C., Khoju, M., & Watkins, T. (1993). *Parent involvement: The relationship between school-to-home communication and parents' perceptions and beliefs*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.
- Anderson, K., & Minke, K. (2007). Parent involvement in education: Toward an understanding of parents' decision making. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(5), 311-324.
- Anyikwa, N., & Obidike, N. (2012). Mothers' constructions of their roles in the literacy education of their children. *Africa Development*, 37(3), 57-67.
- Aziz, H., & Madani, M. (2007). Parental involvement in the education of their school going disabled children: *Reflexions; Journal of Studies and Research in Islam*: Pakistan Al-Suffah Centre of Education and Research Trust, Karachi, 7, 26-28.
- Barraga, N., & Erin, J. (1992). *Visual handicaps and Learning*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- Batey, C. (1996). *Parents are lifesavers: A handbook for parent involvement in schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Becker, H. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1982). Parent Involvement: A study of teacher practices. *Elementary School Journal*, 83, 85-102.

- Chan, W. (1995). *The impact of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) on a secondary school in Hong Kong*. Unpublished Dissertation University of Hong Kong.
- Comer, J.P. & Hymes, N. M. (1991). N. M. Parent involvement in schools: An ecological approach. *Elementary School Journal*, 91 (3), 271-277.
- Constantino, S. (2003). *Engaging all families: Creating a positive school culture by putting research into practice*. Lanham, MA: Scarecrow Education.
- Dean, T. L. (1998). *Hispanic Parents' Perception of Their Visually Impaired Children's Orientation and Mobility Training Program* (Doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University, Dissertation (EdD)).
- Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 701-712.
- Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press.
- Epstein, J. L. (2010). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 701-712.
- Fatima, G., Akhter, M. S., Malik, M., & Safder, M. (2013). Difficulties Encountered by Students with Visual Impairment in Inclusive Education at Higher Education Level. *Journal of Educational Research*, 16 (1), 62.
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2011). *Foundations of early childhood education: Teaching children in a diverse setting*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hatlen, P. (1996). The core curriculum for blind and visually impaired students, including those with multiple disabilities. *Review*, 28 (1), 25-32.
- Hebel, O., & Persitz, S. (2014). Parental Involvement in the Individual Educational Program for Israeli Students with Disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, 29(3), 58-68.
- Henderson, A., Mapp, K, Johnson, V. & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C., 1401 § 3 (2004).
- Loudová, I., Havigerová, J. M., & Haviger, J. (2015). The communication between schools and families from the perspective of parents of high school students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 1242-1246.
- Measuring Up (1999). The state of Texas education: *Parental involvement in education*.
- Murray, E., McFarland-Piazza, L., & Harrison, L. J. (2015). Changing patterns of parent-teacher communication and parent involvement from preschool to school. *Early Child Development and Care*, 185(7), 1031-1052.

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). School and parental interaction by household Language and poverty status: 2002-03. U.S. Department of Education.
- National Parent Teacher Association. (2000). *Building Successful Partnerships: A guide for developing parents Family involvement programs*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.
- O'Shea, D. J., O'Shea, L. J., Algozzine, R., & Hammitte, D. J. (2001). *Families and teachers of individuals with disabilities*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson Education Co.
- Pang, I. W., & Watkins, D. (2000). Teacher-parent communication in Hong Kong primary schools. *Educational Studies*, 26 (2), 141-163.
- Parvin, S. (2015). Social Inclusion of Visually Impaired Students Studying in a Comprehensive Secondary Mainstream School in the South of England. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*.
- Reece, C. A., Staudt, M., & Ogle, A. (2013). Lessons Learned From a Neighborhood-Based Collaboration to Increase Parent Engagement. *School Community Journal*, 23 (2), 207.
- Rosen, S., & Joffee, E. (1999). Motor development. In K.M. Huebner, J.G. Prickett, T.R. Welch, & E. Joffee (Eds.), *Hand in hand: Essentials of communication and orientation and mobility for your students who are deaf-blind* (pp. 493-520). New York: AFB Press.
- Ruzickova, K., & Hordejckova, T. (2015). Modern devices to support early development of children with visual impairment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 950-960.
- Saltmarsh, S., Barr, J., & Chapman, A. (2015). Preparing for parents: How Australian teacher education is addressing the question of parent-school engagement. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 35(1), 69-84.
- Sapp, W., & Hatlen, P. (2010). The Expanded Core Curriculum: Where we have been, where we are going, and how we can get there. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 104 (6), 338-348.
- Tuncer, T., & Altunay, B. (1999). Görme engelli öğrencilere yönelim ve bağımsız hareket öğretiminde rota analizi. (Route analysis for the instruction of orientation and mobility skills to the visually impaired students). 9. *Ulusal Özel Eğitim Kongresi'nde sunulmuş bildiri*, Eskişehir.
- Weiss, HB, Bouffard, SM, Bridglall, BL, & Gordon, EW. (2009). Reframing family involvement in education: supporting families to support educational equity (Equity Matters: Research Review No. 5).
- Westwood-Robinette, N. M. (2014). *Parental involvement in special education curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Williams, B., Williams, J., & Ullman, A. (2002). *Parental Involvement in Education*. London: Queen's Printer.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the Journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (**CC BY-NC-ND**) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).