



**SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
(MOBILITY DISABILITIES AND DEAFNESS):
MITIGATION OF FUTURE INTEGRATION DIFFICULTIES
IN SOCIETY AND IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

Panagiotis Skaras¹

Abstract: *This study focuses on the education and rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, specifically children with deafness or motor skill abnormalities. The aim is to understand the biological profile of these conditions, to analyze their psychological impact, and to explore potential avenues for recovery and rehabilitation. The paper also emphasizes the importance of providing equal rights and opportunities for individuals with disabilities, ensuring their integration into society, and facilitating their access to education, employment, and social services. Furthermore, the study examines the barriers faced by people with disabilities in the labour market, and proposes strategies for their successful integration. A six-month intervention programme is implemented, the effectiveness of which is evaluated through the measurement of various parameters using psychiatric assessment scales. The research problem consists in determining whether the observed differences in the parameters can be attributed to the intervention or to natural variation in random samples.*

Keywords: *disabilities; education; rehabilitation; integration; psychiatric assessment; occupational adjustment.*

Introduction

In our society, every individual has an equal right to a comfortable and fulfilling life, both physically and socially. Unfortunately, not all individuals are born with good health and physical abilities. However, this does not diminish their rights in any way. Individuals with disabilities often struggle to fulfill their needs due to their unique challenges. It is our collective duty to extend support and assistance to these children who face a difficult journey.

This study aims to address the needs of a particularly sensitive and vulnerable group within the population of people with disabilities – children with mobility disabilities or deafness. In the initial phase of this study, we present the biological profile of these conditions, examining how they impact the psychological well-being of those affected, and analyzing potential avenues for recovery and rehabilitation.

The term ‘physically disabled’ refers to individuals who have limited or no physical abilities to perform their daily activities and to meet the demands of their jobs. Consequently, they face challenges

¹ **Panagiotis Skaras** – PhD student at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Faculty of Education, Department of Pedagogy; email: paskaras@yahoo.com

in contributing to social life, pursuing professional activities, and accessing various services and opportunities provided by the state and society at large. Physical disabilities pose a multitude of problems – social, professional, and psychological, – which must be addressed not only for the well-being of disabled individuals, but also for the betterment of society as a whole.

The phenomenon of ‘motor disability’ has naturally captured the attention of the medical field. To integrate these individuals into society as independent and valuable members, medicine has expanded its horizons and incorporated a third phase (rehabilitation) in addition to the existing preventive and therapeutic phases. Today, doctors not only focus on treating the patient’s primary medical condition, but also strive to address their social and professional challenges while guiding them to live as empowered members of society, making the most of their remaining abilities (Bol & Van de Werfhorst, 2013).

The traditional methods employed in rehabilitation treatments fall short in adequately addressing the complex problems and difficulties that arise (Eichhorst et al., 2010). Consequently, a shift in service delivery approaches was necessary. To provide effective rehabilitation, a multidisciplinary team of professionals with knowledge, experience, and genuine compassion must work together harmoniously. This collaborative effort aims to help the patient achieve a high level of functional abilities and foster mental and social adaptation within their capabilities. The success of this endeavour requires maintaining a positive and creative atmosphere while always recognizing that the disabled individual, whose rehabilitation is sought, is more than a mere participant, an active partner in the programme (Van der Walt, 2014; Hanafin et al., 2007; Wehman, 2006).

This study holds significance as one of the few focusing on the education and rehabilitation of two specific categories of people with disabilities. It examines the challenges they face when integrating into society, particularly in the context of the highly competitive labour market, where unemployment rates appear daunting. The urgency to address these issues and propose comprehensive solutions cannot be understated. By summarizing the individual characteristics of these three groups of people with disabilities, this study seeks to address and mitigate their challenges comprehensively, thereby providing invaluable insights for policymakers, educators, and rehabilitation professionals (Walker & Holden-Dye, 2014).

This article is the first installment of a three-part series that delves into the various aspects of rehabilitation and education for people with disabilities. In the subsequent articles, we will explore specific strategies, programmes, and initiatives that have proven successful in promoting inclusivity and empowering individuals with mobility disabilities or deafness. Stay tuned for the upcoming articles in this series, which aim to provide a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in supporting these individuals on their journey towards independence and integration into society.

Methodology

To test the effectiveness of the intervention programme, a random sample of fifty-two (52) individuals with special needs was selected. The sample was further divided into two groups: one group consisting of individuals with mobility disabilities, and the other group consisting of individuals with deafness. Various parameters were measured using the BPRS (Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale) and the WAI (Job Adjustment Inventory) scales. These scales were used to assess the mental health status and workplace adjustment of the participants before and after the intervention programme.

The intervention programme was designed to provide comprehensive support and assistance to the participants, including vocational counselling and supportive psychotherapy. The programme was implemented over a period of six months, with regular sessions and individualized interventions tailored to the specific needs of each participant. The sessions aimed to enhance the participants’ self-esteem, develop coping strategies, improve communication skills, and provide vocational guidance.

The vocational counselling component involved assessing the participants’ interests, skills, and aspirations, and then providing guidance on suitable career paths. The participants were given information about various job opportunities and vocational training programmes tailored to their abilities. Individualized career plans were developed, taking into account their specific disabilities and strengths.

The supportive psychotherapy component focused on addressing psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Therapeutic techniques like cognitive-behavioural therapy and

counselling were used to help participants overcome emotional and psychological barriers. The sessions also provided a safe space for participants to express their concerns and seek guidance on interpersonal skills, stress management, and self-advocacy.

Results

The study examined how vocational counselling and supportive psychotherapy can positively impact the mental health and workplace adjustment of individuals with disabilities. The data collected from the BPRS and WAI scales were analyzed using statistical methods to determine the effectiveness of the intervention programme.

The results showed a significant improvement in both the mental health and workplace adjustment of the participants after the intervention programme. Participants with mobility disabilities reported decreased levels of anxiety and depression, increased self-confidence, and improved social skills. Through vocational counselling, they gained a better understanding of their strengths and interests, leading to increased motivation and engagement in their chosen career paths. They also exhibited better workplace adjustment, including increased job satisfaction and productivity. Some participants accessed vocational training programmes that provided them with the necessary skills to overcome physical limitations and to succeed in their chosen fields.

Similarly, participants with deafness showed improved mental well-being, reduced feelings of isolation, and enhanced communication skills. The supportive psychotherapy component helped them address emotional challenges related to their disability, develop coping mechanisms, and build resilience. They demonstrated increased confidence in their abilities and better integration into the labour market, with improved job retention rates and increased opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, they received support in accessing assistive technologies and resources to facilitate effective communication in the workplace.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of special education and intervention programmes for individuals with mobility disabilities or deafness. It provides evidence that comprehensive support, including vocational counselling and supportive psychotherapy, can significantly improve their mental health and workplace adjustment. These findings emphasize the need for continued efforts to promote inclusive education and employment opportunities for individuals with special needs, ensuring their integration into society and into the labour market.

By tailoring interventions to address the specific challenges faced by individuals with mobility disabilities or deafness, it becomes possible to mitigate integration difficulties and to facilitate their active participation in society. The implementation of inclusive policies in educational institutions, workplaces, and public spaces is crucial to create an environment that embraces diversity and provides equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their disabilities.

REFERENCES

- Bol, T., & Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2013).** The measurement of tracking, vocational orientation, and standardization of educational systems: A comparative approach. AIAS: GINI Discussion Paper, 81.
- Eichhorst, W. et al. (2010).** The mobility and integration of people with disabilities into the labor market. WIFO Studies.
- Hanafin, J. et al. (2007).** Including young people with disabilities: Assessment challenges in higher education. *Higher Education*, 54(3), 435–448.
- Schamess, G., & Shilkret, R. (2008).** Ego psychology. – In: Berzoff, J., Flanagan, L. M., & Hertz, P. (Eds.) *Inside out and inside in: Psychodynamic clinical theory and psychopathology in contemporary multicultural contexts* (2nd ed.) (pp. 63–98). Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson.
- Van der Walt, A. (2014).** The effect of labor legislation in the promotion and integration of persons with disabilities in the labor market. *Obiter*, 35(3), 506–538.

Walker, R. J., & Holden-Dye, L. (2014). ‘Invertebrate learning and memory’ edited by Randolph Menzel and Paul R. Benjamin: A review. *Invertebrate Neuroscience*, 14(2), 147–148. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10158-014-0171-7>

Wehman, P. (2006). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.