

Factors Influencing Social Work Communication in Preventing Discrimination and Stigmatization Against Students with Disabilities in General Education Schools

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19147026>

Published Date: 21-March-2026

Abstract: In the 21st century, an era of rapid development and global integration - ensuring equity and social inclusion has become a critical priority. However, alongside this progress, vulnerable groups still require attention and support, including children with disabilities. In inclusive educational settings, students with disabilities have opportunities to access education alongside their peers. Nevertheless, in practice, they continue to encounter prejudice, stigmatizing attitudes, and discriminatory behaviors from others, which can have long-term negative impacts on their psychological well-being and social development.

This article focuses on analyzing the factors influencing social work communication in preventing discrimination and stigmatization against students with disabilities in general education schools today.

Keywords: factors, social work communication, prevention, discrimination, students with disabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although inclusive education has received increasing attention in recent years, awareness of this issue remains uneven across communities. Many students and parents do not fully understand the specific needs of children with disabilities, which can lead to stigmatizing attitudes and discriminatory behaviors.

Researching and implementing social work communication activities to prevent stigma and discrimination is a practical approach that contributes to building a healthy, equitable, and humane educational environment. Communication not only raises awareness but also fosters empathy, respect, and mutual support among students, thereby promoting more effective inclusion for students with disabilities.

2. CONTENT

2.1. Conceptual Framework

Communication is the process of exchanging information and knowledge among individuals, groups or organizations with the aim of enhancing awareness and influencing attitudes and behaviors toward specific issues. In the field of education, communication plays a crucial role in improving community understanding of social issues, including inclusive education and the prevention of stigma and discrimination against students with disabilities.

Preventive communication against discrimination aims to enhance awareness, promote understanding, and foster respect for students with disabilities. Its main content includes:

- **Understanding students with disabilities:** Providing information on different types of disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, speech, autism spectrum disorders, etc.), their causes, and the challenges faced by students in learning and social integration.

- **Psychological characteristics of children with disabilities:** Helping students, teachers, and parents understand the emotions, thoughts, and special needs of children with disabilities in order to provide appropriate support.
- **Rights of students with disabilities:** Introducing policies and legal frameworks related to persons with disabilities, such as the Law on Persons with Disabilities (2010) and the Education Law (2019), to ensure equal learning and development opportunities.
- **Identifying stigmatizing and discriminatory behaviors:** Helping teachers, students, and parents recognize stigmatizing behaviors (mockery, exclusion, denial of participation opportunities) and discrimination (unfair evaluation, restricted access to learning opportunities, limited access to educational resources).
- **Promoting inclusive education:** Conveying messages about the importance of inclusion and how to build a friendly and diversity-respecting learning environment.

2.2. Current Situation of Communication Activities for Raising Awareness Communication Methods

General education schools have implemented various communication activities such as school broadcasting, flag-raising sessions, and video-based communication. Among these, school broadcasting and flag-raising sessions are the most commonly used methods.

School broadcasting programs, typically conducted during break time, deliver concise messages about inclusion and share inspirational stories of students with disabilities overcoming challenges. These programs also guide students toward positive behaviors in supporting peers with disabilities, encouraging solidarity and mutual assistance within the school environment.

Additionally, inclusive education content is integrated into classroom meetings. Homeroom teachers often organize discussions on appropriate ways to interact with students with disabilities, thereby guiding students to develop empathy and supportive behaviors. These sessions create opportunities for students to express their perspectives in a natural and open manner.

Another widely used approach is video-based communication. Short films on inclusion are shown during lessons or school events. Through vivid and visual storytelling, students can better understand the lives and challenges of students with disabilities, leading to more positive changes in perception and attitudes.

Schools also organize thematic sessions during flag-raising ceremonies to raise awareness among the entire student body. These sessions may include role-plays, real-life stories, or direct sharing from students with disabilities, providing authentic insights and fostering empathy.

Furthermore, schools facilitate interactive exchanges and experiential activities, allowing students to participate directly in activities with peers with disabilities. These experiences deepen understanding and encourage compassion and sharing among students.

Effectiveness and Limitations of Communication Methods

Although these communication methods have contributed to raising awareness, their effectiveness varies significantly and remains limited overall.

The most effective methods are experiential activities and video-based communication. Experiential learning allows students to engage directly in simulated situations, such as using wheelchairs, being blindfolded, or participating in interactive activities with students with disabilities. These experiences enhance empathy and provide a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by their peers.

Video communication is also highly effective due to its vivid and emotionally engaging nature. Real-life stories presented through short films are easier for students to absorb compared to theoretical lectures, and they leave lasting impressions that can influence attitudes.

Thematic sessions during flag-raising ceremonies are another effective method, especially when they incorporate storytelling, performances, or personal sharing. These sessions encourage reflection and discussion among students regarding appropriate behaviors.

However, some methods have not achieved the desired outcomes. School broadcasting programs, while easy to implement, often fail to capture students' attention due to their short duration and one-way communication style. During break times, students are often distracted by recreational activities.

Integrating inclusive education content into classroom meetings also has limitations, as it depends heavily on teachers' communication skills and training. Without proper preparation or specialized materials, these sessions may become monotonous and less effective.

Additionally, some thematic sessions lack interactivity, reducing their impact. When students are passive listeners rather than active participants, they are less likely to retain information or change their attitudes.

2.3. Factors Influencing Social Work Communication Activities

Several key factors influence the implementation of social work communication aimed at preventing stigma and discrimination against students with disabilities in general education schools:

- **School policies:** School policies play a crucial role in defining objectives and strategies for communication and inclusive education activities. Although many schools have developed support policies, their effectiveness depends on leadership commitment and implementation consistency.
- **Training in social work:** Training for teachers and school staff is essential to ensure appropriate support for students with disabilities. Well-trained staff can identify and respond effectively to stigmatizing and discriminatory behaviors. A lack of training may lead to inadequate awareness and ineffective interventions.
- **Subjective factors (students, families, teachers):** The attitudes and awareness of students, families, and teachers directly affect the effectiveness of prevention efforts. Students may lack understanding of disability rights, while families need to engage more actively in the inclusion process. Teachers, as key influencers, must demonstrate appropriate attitudes and skills in handling discriminatory situations.

These factors highlight that preventing stigma and discrimination requires not only institutional policies but also active participation from all stakeholders involved in education.

3. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the current state of social work communication activities in preventing stigma and discrimination against students with disabilities in general education schools. The findings indicate that students with disabilities face multiple challenges in learning, collaboration, relationship-building, and social participation. Stigmatizing and discriminatory behaviors persist in various forms, including perceptions, language, actions, and attitudes.

Despite these challenges, schools have made efforts to implement communication and educational activities to improve awareness and skills among students and teachers. These efforts have contributed to reducing discrimination and promoting inclusive environments.

However, several issues remain, including limitations in school policies, insufficient professional training, and the need for stronger engagement from families and students. Addressing these factors is essential to enhance the effectiveness of prevention efforts in the future.

Ultimately, these efforts not only support students with disabilities in achieving better educational and developmental outcomes but also contribute to building a fair and inclusive educational environment for all students.

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