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RESEARCH PAPER

The Relationship Between the Intrinsic Motivation of Special Education Teachers and Their Employment Period

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ABSTRACT

This correlation study aims were to prospect the relationship between intrinsic motivation and the employment period of special education teachers. The study identifies the causes of contracted motivation level and potential solutions to sustain it. The research population involved special education teachers. The research sample was 110 special education teachers was selected from different special education institutions of Punjab, through convenient random sampling and snowball sampling. A data collected through validated self-developed questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis. The results from Pearson Correlation test, independent sample t-test and ANOVA showed weak and negative correlation, there was no significant difference in the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers based on their gender, institution type, age groups and qualification. It was recommended that school administration should create positive and supportive environment, access to resources, trainings, and balanced responsibilities to increase intrinsic motivation of special education teachers.

KEYWORDS Employment Period, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Self Determination Theory (SDT), Special Education Teachers

Introduction

In the realm of education, motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping the teaching practices of educators and impacting their professional engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2014).

Motivation is concerned about all aspects of initiation and intention, e.g., vitality, direction, determination and equitability. In psychology, motivation has been a dominant and perpetual matter. In our world, motivation has extreme value because it has the consequence of 'production'. Therefore, it is a primary and prominent concern for the people in roles that require preparing others to act, such as teachers, managers, religious leaders, coach, health care providers and parents. (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The concept of intrinsic motivation has garnered significant attention in the field of education due to its profound impact on teacher satisfaction, commitment, and overall teaching experiences (Niemiec & Ryan, 2014). Researchers and educational practitioners have recognized the value of fostering intrinsic motivation among teachers to create a positive and enriching learning environment for students.

"Intrinsic motivation has been found to play a crucial role in job satisfaction and well-being among teachers. For instance, a study by Ryan and1 Deci (2000) found that teachers who reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation also reported higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout. Another study by Niemiec, Ryan, and Deci (2009) found that teachers who experienced higher levels of autonomy and competence, two key components of intrinsic motivation, were more likely to remain in the teaching profession and report higher levels of job satisfaction.

In the context of special education, the role of intrinsic motivation is even more critical. Teachers of students with special needs face unique challenges and demands, including increased workload, greater behavioral difficulties, and limited resources (Giangreco & Doyle, 2001). As a result, it is important to understand how intrinsic motivation may change over time among these teachers and what factors may contribute to decreases in motivation.

The relationship between employment years or tenure and intrinsic motivation among teachers has been a subject of interest in educational research. Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between teacher experience and intrinsic motivation (Pekrun et al., 2016). As teachers gain more experience in the profession, they tend to develop a deeper sense of commitment and engagement, driven by the intrinsic rewards of teaching.

Literature Review

The human kind represent itself to the fullest when people are spirited, curious and have self-motivation. They are inspired and self-directed, always willing to learn and grow, acquire new skills and knowledge, and implement their talents with full responsibility, it happens when the people are performing at their best (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

People differ not only in their levels of motivation but also in their kind of motivation. It is essential to recognize that intrinsic motivation can be influenced by various factors, and the relationship between employment years and motivation may not be linear. Teachers' motivation may also be influenced by school climate, administrative support, opportunities for professional growth, and the overall educational context in which they work.

On the other way, research has shown that intrinsic motivation can decrease over time, particularly as teacher's face increasing job demands and burnout (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006). This is a concerning issue, as low levels of intrinsic motivation can have negative impacts on a teacher's well-being, job satisfaction, and, ultimately, the quality of education received by students (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

While the research on intrinsic motivation and teaching is extensive, less is known about how intrinsic motivation may change over time as teachers gain more experience in their jobs. Some studies have suggested that the length of employment may have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation (Van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & Van Dijk, 2001). For example, one study found that teachers who had been employed for longer periods of time reported lower levels of intrinsic motivation compared to their less experienced colleagues (Finn & Rock, 1997). Similarly, another study found that experienced teachers reported lower levels of intrinsic motivation compared to novice teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992).

Several studies have been recently conducted on the motivation of the teachers in Pakistan. A qualitative study was conducted by Yasmeen et al., (2019) to explore the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation of Teachers in Special Education Secondary School. A quantitative study was conducted to analyze the Impact of Intrinsic Motivation, Self- Efficacy Beliefs and Meta-Cognitive Awareness on the use of ICT in Teacher Education Settings in Pakistan (Bakht. M.I., 2021). A correlation study was conducted on Head Teachers' Instructional Supervisory Practices and Teachers' Motivation in Teaching (Ahmad. M., et al, 2021). Another sequential explanatory mixed methods study on the Relationship between Heads' Team Leadership Style and Teachers' Motivation was conducted by Shamimullah and Abid Husain in 2021. A descriptive research on influence of class size on students' and teachers' motivation was also carried out (Amir. S. M., et al, 2021). Numerous studies can

also be found on job satisfaction of the teachers in Pakistan. But the area of research about intrinsic motivation of special education teachers is understudied.

To date, little research has specifically examined the relationship between intrinsic motivation and employment period among special needs teachers. Further exploration of this relationship is needed to support the well-being and job satisfaction of these educators and to ensure that students with special needs receive the best possible education.

The current study aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the relationship between intrinsic motivation and employment period in special education teachers.

Several studies on the job satisfaction and motivation of teachers can be found in the literature. However, to date, no quantitative study has been conducted in Pakistan to explore the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers and its relationship with their employment period. This research study provides in-depth knowledge about the current situation of the teachers in the field of special education in Pakistan and suggests ways to improve their engagement and motivation.

Material and Methods

In this study, a quantitative research design was employed to examine the relationship between the length of employment of special education teachers and their levels of intrinsic motivation, the factors contributing to its decrease, and potential solutions to maintain or increase it. While previous researches on this topic had predominantly utilized qualitative or experimental methods, this study took a different approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by employing quantitative measures.

Population

The population of interest for this study comprised special education teachers from all public and private schools in Punjab. This includes teachers working at various grade levels and across different special education settings within the province. By including the entire special education teacher population in Punjab, this research aims to capture a comprehensive representation of their experiences, perceptions, and levels of intrinsic motivation.

Sample

The sample of the study included 110 special education teachers working in 32 cities of Punjab. The sample was collected using convenient and snowball sampling technique. In snowball sampling technique, the researcher seeks and chooses respondents who are available and meet the requirements for inclusion in his study. After the respondents have provided the necessary information, the researcher asks them to recommend other people who would fit the criteria and reflect the target group. It is said that the sample expands with time like a rolling snowball (Obilor, 2023).

The teachers participated in the study were serving in different public and private institutions in the following cities of Punjab:

Chunian, Rahim Yar Khan, Sheikhupura, Gujrat, Jhelum, Multan, Jahanian, Bahawalpur, Bahawal Nagar, Chakwal, Attock, Layyah, Lalamusa, Muzaffargarh, Mailsi, Mianwali, Gujranwala, Pakpattan, Chichawatni, Faisalabad, Arifwala, Renala Khurd, Baseerpur, Narowal, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Okara, Lahore, Toba Tek Singh, Kamonki, Lodhran, Kharian, Khanewal, Qila Deedar Singh.

Data Collection

The data was collected through social media (Facebook and Whats App) by sending Google forms to the participants. Some of the data was collected by personally visiting the schools of the students with disabilities.

Instrumentation

The data was collected using a questionnaire consisted of 37 items. The researchers added the factors of motivation from IMI (Intrinsic Motivation Inventory). The intrinsic motivation inventory (IMI) is a well-validated, multidimensional measurement device for assessing participants' subjective experience related to intrinsic motivation for a target activity in laboratory experiments. The instrument assesses participants' interest/enjoyment (which is the indicator of intrinsic motivation), as well as perceived competence, effort, value/usefulness, felt pressure and tension, perceived choice, and relatedness while performing a given activity, each providing a subscale score (Moller & Deci, 2020).

Researcher adapted the factors according to the specific research requirements. 16 questions were tailored based on these factors to find out the intrinsic motivation level of special education teachers. It included questions about the teachers' intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, workload, support, and other relevant factors. The questionnaire specifically targeted intrinsic motivation factors and did not include questions related to extrinsic factors. The Likert Scale was used for responses.

To find out the potential causes in the decrease of intrinsic motivation, 11 questions were added. 10 questions focused on the solutions and strategies to maintain or increase intrinsic motivation of special education teachers.

In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 37 items, and the data were analyzed using SPSS software.

The calculated value of Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.83. This indicates a high level of internal consistency among the items in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involves systematically organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the acquired data using appropriate statistical techniques and tools. After collecting the data by using a valid instrument, the researcher examined the variables of interest through meticulous data analysis using different statistical tools on SPSS software. Answers were coded through coding scheme. Responses to each question were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. The results were presented in the forms of percentages and tables.

In this study, the data was analyzed by using frequency distribution, percentage and independent sample t-test. Finding, conclusion and recommendations were made on the basis of results. Aim of this section is to find patterns and relationships within the data, allowing for a thorough understanding of the research objectives and questions.

Table 1
Frequency distribution at the basis of demographics

	Description	Frequency	Percent
	Gender		
1	Male	18	16.4

2	Female	92	83.6
	Ages groups of the teachers		
1	21 to 30 years	29	26.4
2	31 to 40 years	67	60.9
3	41 to 50 years	11	10
4	51 years and above	3	2.7
	Qualification		
1	Bachelor	4	3.6
2	Masters	68	61.8
3	MPhil	32	29.1
4	PhD	6	5.5
	Institutions of the teachers		
1	Public	89	80.9
2	Private	21	19.1
	Total	110	100

Table 1 shows a frequency distribution based on demographics. It includes data on gender, age groups of teachers, their qualifications, and the type of institutions they belong to. The table shows the count and percentage of individuals in each category, representing a total of 110 respondents.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution at The Basis of Employment Periods of the Teachers

Sr. No.	Duration	Frequency	Percent
1	0.08	1	0.91
2	0.25	1	0.91
3	0.33	1	0.91
4	0.5	2	1.82
5	1	4	3.64
6	2	10	9.09
7	3	2	1.82
8	4	6	5.45
9	5	4	3.64
10	6	11	10.00
11	7	12	10.91
12	8	10	9.09
13	9	5	4.55
14	10	9	8.18
15	11	4	3.64
16	12	2	1.82
17	13	4	3.64
18	15	7	6.36
19	16	4	3.64
20	17	4	3.64
21	18	1	0.91
22	19	2	1.82
23	20	2	1.82
24	30	1	0.91
25	33	1	0.91
Total		110	100

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of teachers based on their employment periods, displaying the count and percentage of teachers in each duration category, with a total of 110 respondents.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of the Special Education Teachers' Responses

Sr.#	Questions	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	Level of IM										
1	I feel a strong sense of fulfillment and enjoy my work as a special education teacher?	55	50	49	44.5	2	1.8	4	3.6	0	0
2	I feel competent and capable in fulfilling my job responsibilities.	50	45.5	54	49.1	4	3.6	2	1.8	0	0
3	I've flexibility and choice to adapt my teaching methods and strategies.	36	32.7	64	58.2	9	8.2	1	0.9	0	0
4	I've opportunities to utilize my creativity and potential in my role as a special education teacher.	38	34.5	50	45.5	17	15.5	4	3.6	1	0.9
5	I've a little freedom to make important decisions about my teaching style, classroom routines, and students' learning.	21	19.1	47	42.7	19	17.3	21	19.1	21	1.8
6	There are days when I feel that my job is dull and uninteresting.	13	11.8	31	28.2	14	12.7	46	41.8	6	5.5
7	I feel that I have necessary skills and abilities to effectively teach special students.	29	26.4	65	59.1	9	8.2	7	6.4	0	0
8	I'm continuously learning and growing professionally to improve my teaching	45	40.9	53	48.2	6	5.5	6	5.5	0	0
9	I've positive relationships and a sense of connectedness with my colleagues.	36	32.7	60	54.5	7	6.4	6	5.5	1	0.9
10	I value the relationships I have with my special education students and their families.	50	45.5	55	50.0	5	4.5	0	0	0	0
11	I believe that my work as a special education teacher is valuable and aligned with my values and goals.	44	40.0	61	55.5	5	4.5	0	0	0	0
12	I often perceive lack of support and appreciation from my colleagues and administration.	16	14.5	43	39.1	18	16.4	30	27.3	3	2.7
13	I strongly believe that my efforts as a special education teacher are making a meaningful difference in the lives of my students.	36	32.7	67	60.9	6	5.5	1	0.9	0	0
14	I consistently invest significant effort and energy in my teaching because it holds great importance to me.	45	40.9	59	53.6	5	4.5	1	0.9	0	0
15	Collaborating with other educators is sometimes a source of frustration rather than enjoyment.	8	7.3	37	33.6	33	30.0	31	28.2	1	0.9
16	I often feel that dedicating my full time and resources for a high-quality instruction becomes challenging for me.	19	17.3	50	45.5	18	16.4	20	18.2	3	2.7
	Causes of Decrease in Intrinsic Motivation										
17	The increasing workload and demands make it challenging for me to be motivated.	14	12.7	65	59.1	18	16.4	12	10.9	1	0.9
18	The lack of freedom in decision-making process decreases my motivation.	14	12.7	60	54.5	12	10.9	22	20.0	2	1.8

19	I often feel that my level of self-motivation has decreased over time as a special education teacher.	10	9.1	33	30.0	21	19.1	43	39.1	3	2.7
20	Sometimes I feel disconnected from my students which affects my motivation.	4	3.6	36	32.7	25	22.7	43	39.1	2	1.8
21	The administrative tasks and paperwork negatively impact my motivation.	15	13.6	34	30.9	24	21.8	35	31.8	2	1.8
22	Limited resources and materials make it challenging to deliver effective instruction, leading to decreased motivation.	29	26.4	49	44.5	17	15.5	13	11.8	2	1.8
23	Sometimes I cannot provide individualized attention to my special students because of time limitations and it decreases my motivation.	15	13.6	56	50.9	18	16.4	19	17.3	2	1.8
24	Limited opportunities for professional growth contribute to a decline in motivation.	21	19.1	56	50.9	21	19.1	10	9.1	2	1.8
25	The lack of support and collaboration among colleagues negatively affects my motivation.	15	13.6	34	30.9	27	24.5	30	27.3	4	3.6
26	I sometimes experience a lack of support, appreciation and feedback from my administrators which affects my motivation.	16	14.5	53	48.2	23	20.9	17	15.5	1	0.9
27	I often feel that I have less stamina and patience to teach special students than I had when I started my job.	6	5.5	31	28.2	14	12.7	53	48.2	6	5.5
	Solutions to Sustain IM										
28	Opportunities for regular professional growth including training, workshops, collaboration, regular feedback and evaluation increase my motivation.	32	29.1	73	66.4	4	3.6	1	0.9	0	0
29	Feeling capable and competent in understanding and meeting my students' needs enhances my motivation.	34	30.9	69	62.7	6	5.5	1	0.9	0	0
30	Having freedom in decision-making and classroom practices promotes my motivation.	32	29.1	71	64.5	6	5.5	1	0.9	0	0
31	Building positive and supportive relationships with my students and colleagues enhances my motivation.	40	36.4	64	58.2	4	3.6	1	0.9	1	0.9
32	Having a positive and supportive work environment contributes to my motivation.	43	39.1	63	57.3	3	2.7	1	0.9	0	0
33	Having access to resources, material and support increases my motivation.	42	38.2	65	59.1	3	2.7	0	0	0	0
34	Having clear goals and expectations for my performance and progress increase my motivation.	32	29.1	73	66.4	5	4.5	0	0	0	0
35	Reducing administrative tasks, paperwork, and balancing responsibilities can positively impact motivation.	25	22.7	71	64.5	10	9.1	4	3.6	0	0
36	Establishing a recognition and reward system for my efforts and achievements can increase my motivation.	35	31.8	63	57.3	11	10.0	1	0.9	0	0

37	Having a sense of being productive for society in my role as a special education teacher enhances my motivation.	41	37.3	66	60.0	3	2.7	0	0	0	0

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of the teacher's responses.

Table 4

Correlation was run to see if there is any significant relationship between the intrinsic motivation level of special education teachers and their employment period.

		Total IM Teachers	Total Work experience
Total IM of Teachers	Pearson Correlation*	1	-0.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.729
	N	110	110
Total Work experience	Pearson Correlation*	-0.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.729	
	N	110	110

Table 4 shows a weak negative relationship between the intrinsic motivation level of special education teachers and their employment period. Calculations are (r= -0.033, sig= 0.729). It shows that the correlation is not statistically significant and is likely to have occurred by chance.

Table 5

Independent sample t test was run to see if there is any significant difference between the intrinsic motivation of male and female special education teachers.

Test variable	Gender of the teachers	N	Mean	S.D	t	df	Sig.
Mean Intrinsic Motivation	Male	18	4.0903	0.27969	1.582	108	0.117
	Female	92	3.9504	0.35362			

Table 5 shows that the there is no difference in intrinsic motivation of male and female special education teachers as it does not reach statistical significance at the specified threshold 0.05. Calculations are ((t= 1.582, df= 108, sig=0.117, Mean $_{male=}$ 4.0903, Mean $_{female=}$ 3.9504). It shows that there is no significant difference in the intrinsic motivation of male and female special education teachers.

Table 6

Independent sample t test was run to see is there any difference in the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers serving in public and private schools.

Test variable	*Institution*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D*	*t*	*df*	*Sig.*
Mean Intrinsic Motivation	Public	89	3.9375	0.33815	-2.28	108	0.025
	Private	21	4.125	0.34233			

Table 6 indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the intrinsic motivation scores of public and private school teachers. Calculations are ((t= -2.280, df= 108, sig=0.025, Mean $_{public=}$3.9375, Mean $_{private=}$ 4.1250)

Table 7

ANOVA was run to calculate the Differences in Mean Scores of Percentage of intrinsic motivation of special education teachers on the basis of their age.

Age	Sum of Squares	*df*	*M*	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	.297	3	.099	.826	.482
Within Groups	12.706	106	.120		

Table 7 shows there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of percentage of intrinsic motivation among special education teachers based on their age. The F-value is 0.826 which compares the between-groups and within-groups variation and the sig value associated with the F value is 0.482.

Table 8

ANOVA was run to calculate the Differences in Mean Scores of Percentage of intrinsic motivation of special education teachers on the basis of their qualification.

Qualification	***Sum of Squares***	***Df***	***M***	***F***	**Sig.**
Between Groups	.223	3	.074	0.616	.606
Within Groups	12.781	106	.121		

Table 8 shows is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of percentage of intrinsic motivation among special education teachers based on their qualification. The F-value is 0.616 which compares the between-groups and within-groups variation and the sig value associated with the F value is 0.606. It is evident that there was no difference in the intrinsic motivation level of special education teachers having different levels of qualification.

Table 9

Mean value was calculated to find out the factors that contribute to the decline in the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers

Serial No.	**Potential Causes**	**Mean**
1	Increasing workload and demands	3.7182
2	Lack of autonomy	3.5636
3	Over time, motivation has been decreased	3.0364
4	Feeling of disconnection from students	2.9727
5	Administrative tasks and extra paper work	3.2273
6	Limited resources	3.8182
7	Can’t provide individualized attention to students	3.5727
8	Limited opportunities for professional growth	3.7636
9	Lack of support and collaboration among colleagues	3.2364
10	Lack of support, appreciation and feedback from administrators	3.6000
11	Over time, stamina and patience has been decreased	2.8000

Table 9 shows that the highest mean score was observed for Limited resources (M=3.8182). This was followed by Limited opportunities for professional growth (M=3.7636) and Increasing workload and demands (M=3.7182). Special education teachers reported moderate mean scores for factors such as lack of support, appreciation, and feedback from administrators (M=3.6), can't provide individualized attention to students (M=3.5727), lack of autonomy (M=3.5636), lack of support and collaboration among colleagues (M=3.2364), administrative tasks and extra paperwork (M=3.2273), and over time, motivation has been decreased" (M=3). Additionally, special education teachers indicated lower mean scores for feeling of disconnection from students (M=2.9727) and the lowest mean score was observed for "Over time, stamina and patience have been decreased" (M=2.8).

Table 10
Mean value was calculated to find out the useful strategies or interventions to sustain the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers.

Serial No.	Potential Solutions	Mean
1	Opportunities for professional growth	4.2364
2	Feel competent to understand students' needs	4.2273
3	Having autonomy	4.2091
4	Relationship with students and colleagues	4.2818
5	Positive and supportive work environment	4.3455
6	Having access to resources and support	4.3545
7	Having clear goals and expectations	4.2455
8	Reducing administrative tasks and overwork	4.0636
9	Establishing recognition and reward system	4.2000
10	Having sense of being productive for society	4.3455

Table 10 shows depicts that the highest mean score was observed for "Having access to resources and support" (M=4.3545), closely followed by "Positive and supportive work environment" (M=4.3455) and "Having a sense of being productive for society" (M=4.3455).

Special education teachers also reported high mean scores for "Relationship with students and colleagues" (M=4.2818), "Having clear goals and expectations" (M=4.2455), "Opportunities for professional growth" (M=4.2364). Other factors contributing to sustaining intrinsic motivation among special education teachers include "Feel competent to understand students' needs" (M=4.2273), "Having autonomy" (M=4.2091), "Establishing recognition and reward system" (M=4.2), and "Reducing administrative tasks and overwork" (M=4.0636).

Finding

The research findings indicate that intrinsic motivational level of teachers is high as it contributes in increasing their professional growth positively, because majority of the respondents said they have valued relationship with special need students and their families. On the other hand, teachers were facing many challenges that causes decrease in their intrinsic motivational level, though increase in workload, limitations, lack of freedom and feeling of fatigue bottom their abilities to perform efficiently.

The research reported that there were several solutions for maintaining intrinsic motivation level for healthy professional growth among teachers by providing trainings, workshops, freedom in decision making, by building positive and supportive relationships and work environment and balanced responsibilities.

Lastly the result highlights that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of percentage of intrinsic motivation and their employment period. The highest mean score observed for the factor that contribute to decline in intrinsic motivational level of special education teachers was “limited resources” and the highest mean score observed for useful strategies to sustain intrinsic motivation of special education was for “having access to resources and support.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between intrinsic motivation (IM) and employment period among special education teachers. The results indicate a weak negative correlation between IM and Employment Period ($r = -0.033$, $p = 0.729$). Although

the correlation is not statistically significant, it suggests that as the employment period increases, there is a slight tendency for intrinsic motivation levels to decrease. The finding are aligned with previous studies conducted by Terz and Dulker (2020) and Triyanto, Handayani, and R. A. D., (2016).

In the context of special education, it is essential to recognize that factors other than employment period may be more influential in determining intrinsic motivation levels among teachers. Factors related to the school environment, such as leadership, support, and resources, could still influence intrinsic motivation levels (Belle & Horil, 2020, Bukhari et al., 2023, Kumari & Kumar, 2023). A study conducted by Kumari and Kumar (2023) have highlighted the importance of adequate resources and support for maintaining motivation among teachers. According to their study, school administrations should provide sufficient resources like incentives, rewards, effective communication, emotional assistance, and moral support to promote quality learning and produce high performance from their teaching team. This will strengthen the relevant system of education (Kumari & Kumar, 2023).

Regarding gender differences in intrinsic motivation, the study found no significant difference between male and female special education teachers ($p = 0.117$). This is in contrast with earlier researches that suggests that there was significant differences in motivation factors among employees related to their gender (Hitka et al., 2018, Bentea, 2012, Yee et al., 2015).

Similarly, no significant difference was observed in intrinsic motivation scores between public and private school teachers ($p = 0.025$). This result indicates that the type of school setting may not have a substantial impact on the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers.

The current study also explored the relationship between intrinsic motivation and age, as well as qualification, among special education teachers. In both cases, no significant differences were found (age: $p = 0.482$, qualification: $p = 0.606$).

Most of the findings, except the one about the level of study, contradicted the previous study conducted by Yee et al., (2015). According to the findings of their study, males, in-service teachers and teachers in the public sector scored significantly higher in their motivation levels than their counterparts, no significant difference was discerned between participants' level of study. Moreover, the motivation of teachers was strongly correlated with age (Yee et al., 2015).

Regarding the factors contributing to the decline in intrinsic motivation, limited resources emerged as the highest mean score ($M = 3.8182$), followed by limited opportunities for professional growth ($M=3.7636$), Increasing workload and demands ($M=3.7182$), lack of support, appreciation, and feedback from administrators ($M=3.6$). On the other hand, having access to resources and support was rated the highest among useful strategies or interventions to sustain intrinsic motivation ($M = 4.3545$) followed by Positive and supportive work environment ($M=4.3455$), Having a sense of being productive for society ($M=4.3455$), Relationship with students and colleagues ($M=4.2818$), Having clear goals and expectations ($M=4.2455$), and opportunities for professional growth ($M=4.2364$).

It is essential to consider the limitations of the study. The small sample size might have caused the statistically non-significant findings of the study. Other limitations of the review include the exclusion of qualitative studies, which could be an important source of information about teachers and students' personal experiences, attitudes, and beliefs, all of which could play an important role in their motivation to teach and learn (Suárez-Mesa & Gómez 2021).

Future research should consider longitudinal studies and experimental methods to gain a more in-depth understanding of the intrinsic motivation level and factors influencing it in special education settings. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, researchers can obtain a comprehensive view of the complex dynamics between intrinsic motivation and various contextual factors.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a weak and negative correlation between the intrinsic motivation level of special education teachers and their employment period. There is no significant difference in intrinsic motivation scores among special education teachers based on their gender, school type, age, or qualification. The highest mean score observed for the factors that contribute to the decline in the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers was for “limited resources,” while the highest mean score observed for useful strategies or interventions to sustain the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers was for "Having access to resources and support." It depicts that access of resources, necessary material and support is an important factor that affects the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers.

Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the factors that decrease or enhance the intrinsic motivation of special education teachers and can inform the development of effective interventions to sustain their motivation.

Recommendations

- School administration should create a positive and supportive work environment to increase intrinsic motivation of teachers.
- Schools and districts should provide special education teachers with the necessary resources and support to help sustain their intrinsic motivation.
- There should be sufficient opportunities for regular professional growth including training, workshops, collaboration, regular feedback and evaluation.
- School administration should balance the responsibilities of their staff to equally divide the work load.
- Different professionals serving special children should work on their collaborative skills and learn to be more supportive and open-minded.

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