



PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS TOWARD STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine sociological, psychological, socio-economic, cultural and societal students and instructors perceptions of towards persons with disabilities. This study used a descriptive survey method and a stratified sampling technique. To achieve the purpose of the study, a total of 119(with disability (39), non disabling students (40) and instructors (40), that is m=56, f=63 participants), were included in the study. The participants were selected from the three experienced universities (Addis Ababa, Haramaya & Adama). A three-point attitude scale questionnaire consisting of 20 items with some open -ended items) and a focus group discussion had been used to collect the data. Data analysis was performed using SPSS-version19; and were organized and interpreted by using mean, percentage and t-test. The major perceived challenges to disfavors disability were related to communication problem, perception of the participants about situations in the university and to feeling of incompetence in facing challenges that may be encountered in the instructional process. The relation of the students with disability versus non disabling student to change of attitude was not statistically significant. While the relationship of the independent variables can be seen as interactive, the degree to which each variable has contributed to change of attitude did not appear clearly. It found that issues and challenges include a lack of knowledge about disabilities, instructors and students misconceptions, negative attitudes, and insufficiency of effective educational tools at sample universities. Hence, the result suggests that effective measures need to be taken to reduce challenges and cultivate positive attitudes towards students with disability by establishing a harmonious relationship between and among instructors and students. Further research is also required to examine the relative contribution of the demographic variables to attitudes towards disability. The study further provides suggestions on how the university can enhance equalization of learning opportunities regardless of students with disables.

Key words: Attitudes, challenges, perceptions, people with disabilities, university, instructors, students.

INTRODUCTION

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which came into force in 2008, states that persons with disabilities have the right to participate in all development programmes. In retrospect, the UN General Assembly in 2009 passed a resolution recognizing the importance of including disability in all MDG programmes as an important step for inclusive development (Norad, 2012). In a sense these activities brought the much needed focus on persons with disabilities. World Bank (2008) estimated the number of persons with disabilities at between 10 and 12 per cent of the global population. According to UNESCO (2011) of the 67 million children of primary school age worldwide who are out of school, one-third are children with disabilities. An estimated 186 million children with disabilities worldwide have not completed their primary school education.

While, according to World Health Organization (WHO) (2011), there is more than a billion people or about 15 percent of world's population who live with some form of disability. The prevalence of disability both in global scale and in separate countries causes a concern (Holloway, 2007:83). The World Report on Disability (WHO, 2011) revealed that the number of people with disabilities is

growing worldwide. It stems because of ageing of the populations and the rise of chronic diseases as well as because of environment changes, natural disasters, road traffic accidents, conflicts, diet and substance abuse (Dionne, Gainforth, O'Malley & Latimer-Cheung, 2013; WHO, 2011).

People with disabilities are a part of our society. They are just like us, they want to live fully and be useful. But due to the restrictions caused by the condition of health, they face barriers to inclusion and their needs are often given low priority (WHO, 2011:3). Typically, individuals with disabilities struggle for the opportunity to receive an education and get a job, experience violence and discrimination, have restricted participation in political and social life (WHO, 2011). Exclusion due to stigma and prejudice about disability often leads to poverty (United Nations, (UN), 2010:7). The prevalence of disabilities in developing countries seems to be higher than it is in the developed countries. Moreover, studies indicated that about 80 percent of all persons with disabilities live in isolated rural areas in developing countries (UNESCO, 2011). African countries seem to share the same problem; even worse.

In studies on disability issues, the exploration of implicit attitudes toward SWD is far from being fully investigated. However, the extant literature supports the fundamental belief that implicit attitudes are negative (Munyi, 2012; Krahe & Altwasser, 2006; Vezzali & Capozza, 2011). Regarding explicit attitudes toward SWD, the valence of such attitudes varies according to context presented (e.g., general versus specific evaluations of SWD's employability). Attitudes (either implicit or explicit) are learned from family/cultural traditions, as well as from personal life experiences and observations. One of the main factors that shapes and reshapes individual and societal attitudes toward SWD is the changing viewpoint about disability around the world.

However, starting from the 1960s, with the Independent Living movement and Disability Rights movement (Brodwin & Orange, 2002), some social activists, especially those with disabilities, claimed that disability is a social construction (Brodwin & Orange, 2002). In other words, it was the social environment as well as social attitudes toward SWD that shaped/exacerbated the situations SWD faced. Therefore, opponents of this social-political viewpoint proposed that first and foremost, environmental factors as well as negative attitudes (prejudice, discrimination) that preclude SWD from joining mainstream societies should be altered.

Thus, children with disabilities make up the world's largest and most disadvantaged minority in terms of education. As a consequence, the quality of life of persons with disabilities in developing countries is significantly lower than that of their peers. The International Annual Review (IAR) (2009-2010), indicates that for people with disabilities, earning a living and education are top priorities, however, 90% of persons with disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa are unemployed, in India people with disabilities are employed 60% less than non-disabled people while in Thailand, 70% of persons with disabilities are unemployed. The employment rate for disabled men is 52 per cent and disabled women 48 per cent in the world.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education particularly, university is considered as an important engine for overall socio-economic advancement (Negash, Olusula & Colucci, 2010). However, there is a glaring disparity in provision of higher education opportunities to students with disabilities. Furthermore, a UN report (2010) posits that available data mostly focuses on educational achievements, this indicates that SWDs fare less well in the higher educational arena than either their male with disabilities or female without disabilities counterparts.

Moreover, persons with disabilities experience double discrimination, which places them at higher risk of sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation. Matziou et al., (2009) observes that despite some helpful laws, policies and systems of practice in some countries, compared to their disabled or non-disabled, person with disabilities: are less educated; experience higher rates of unemployment; are more likely to be abused; are poorer; are more isolated; experience worse health outcomes; generally have lower social status. Therefore, the number of individuals with a variety of limitations is likely to increase in Ethiopia as well. The attitudes affecting this increasing population need to be addressed because studies indicate that negative attitudes are a barrier to a positive quality of life.

Attitudinal studies in Ethiopia have confirmed that individuals with disabilities continue to face negative attitudes, stigma, and discrimination (Shilbre et al., 2001). However, the attitudes of students and instructors at university level have not been assessed as expected. Identifying variables that predict attitudes of students and instructors toward students with disability is essential to developing interventions (Rao et al., 2004). Researchers have conducted studies of other nations that highlight specific factors and their association with predicting attitudes (Rao et al., 2010).

The study of attitudes of university students' and instructors' toward SWDs may benefit by providing methods with which to develop procedures to address these attitudes as well as providing appropriate assessment to measure the effects of interventions (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). WHO (2011) argued that successful inclusion of SWDs in the community is determined, in part, by the attitudes of the public. Studies have uniformly indicated that non-acceptance and lack of full inclusion and integration of SWDs continue to create societal barriers that hinder individuals with disabilities from full participation in society (Dionneet al., 2013; Munyi, 2012; Stubbs & Yawake, 2009; Tervo, Palmer, & Redinius, 2004).

In Ethiopia, individuals with disabilities are viewed as outsiders and are not included in daily cultural activities such as eating with family members, attending events, and socializing with guests. These exclusions occur because there is still a great level of shame and stigma associated with disabilities in Ethiopia; thus, family members who have disabilities are segregated from others (AAU, 2008; Fitaw & Boersma, 2006; Negash et al., 2010; Tirussew, 2005). Even though the concept and provision of special education services seem to have a relatively short history in Ethiopia, recently, the development of the provision of special education to children with disabilities appears to be at a growing rate. UNESCO's (2011) report, Ethiopia is included in the list being one of the countries with a policy that implement integration in regular education. As a matter of fact, special education itself is a relatively new phenomenon in Ethiopia.

The attitudes of university students and instructors towards students with disability have yet to be examined because little research was done. Tekle-Haimanot et al.'s as cited in Zewde (2010) study is an example of some of the research that has been conducted in Ethiopia. The study did not employ attitudinal instruments to accurately measure attitudes and can only attribute the findings to rural populations. One of the main issues with studies about disabilities in Ethiopia is that they exclude future professionals who are currently university students and instructors who could begin to address societal barriers such as policies and access to institutions. Consequently, there seems to be lack of clear vision concerning the relevance of integration in regular classes and factors that hinder its promotion. Hence, a systematic study particularly in the area of attitude assessment towards the integration of students with disability appears to be very important.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the perception of university students and instructors toward persons with disabilities and the challenges and issues mostly influence their perception towards students with disabled. Based on general objective the following specific objectives were stated:

- To identify the perception of the university students and instructors towards Students with Disability (SWD);
- To identify factors that is perceived as threatening or rewarding to the idea of SWDs.
- To assess the relation of some demographic variables (age and sex) to perception of the university students and instructors towards students with disability and also to see the relation of age, sex teachers' work experience and qualification level.
- To describe the situation and then suggest the possible measures to be taken to minimize problems that are detected by this study

Based on the above objectives the following research questions were formulated that the study should addressed:

1. What are the attitude/ perception of the university students and instructors towards the integration of students with disability in regular class?

2. What are the perceived factors that may affect preferences of the respondents in favoring or disfavoring the integration of students with disability into regular classes at university?
3. What is the relation of some socio - demographic factors to the attitudes of the participants towards students with disability?

Significance of the Problem

The history of special education in Ethiopia is noted with "no written documents ... about the conditions of the disabled and their education in the traditional system" (Tirussew, 2005). It is further stated that "the strong influence of religion, the low literacy level of the society and the dominance of myths... attributed to disability" have played a significant role in the mystification of the nature of disability and its effects (Ibid.). Nevertheless, referring to the nature of the traditional educational system, it is assumed that some disabled groups, like the visually impaired might have possibly attended church education. Of course, no document is accessible that indicates the place of the students with disability children in the traditional church school.

As a matter of fact, though efforts are made to formulate new educational policy that allows equal access to all citizens, the number of special needs children that benefit from special education is very scarce. According to the released information in the Education Master Plane of Ethiopia (Zero draft), it is only 0.08 percent that are enrolled in the special education program. Research activity in the area of special education also appears to be very limited. The negative perception of the university students and instructors towards disability, at least in part appears to be one of the reasons for the least enrolment of special needs children in schools (Tilahun as cited in Tirussew, 2005). In fact, to materialize integration as an effective educational practice in the Ethiopian context, teachers and students should develop positive attitudes towards the integration of hearing - impaired students into regular classrooms. Therefore, the exploration of the perception of instructors and students without disabilities toward students without disabilities could help scholars not only understand those perceptions, but develop strategies to enhance public awareness of micro-aggressions toward SWD. This is the major motivation behind this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical underpinning of Disability

The Social model theory contends that it is the society which disables persons with disabilities. Disability is something imposed on top of the physical impairments by the way society isolates and excludes those with disabilities from full participation in society (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). In 1983, the disabled academic Mike Oliver coined the phrase "social model of disability" in reference to the ideological developments. He focused on the idea of an individual model (of which the medical was a part) versus a social model, derived from the distinction originally made between impairment and disability (Brain, 2006). Furthermore, Munyi (2012) observe that disability can no longer be seen as a static feature of an individual but rather as a dynamic and changing experience defined by the changing nature of environment. Historically, people with disabilities have not been treated well by society. Over centuries they have been the subject of varying degrees of pity, ridicule, rejection and seclusion as the result of being 'different'. (Linton as cited in Andrews & Meyer, 2003:34). Some societies perceived disability as punishment by the gods while in others children and adults with disabilities were ostracised, left to die or indeed killed through fear and ignorance (Linton as cited in Antonak & Livneh, 2000).

Fitaw and Boersma (2006) conducted their study in Ethiopia with 932 participants with disabilities: 528 males and 404 females. Only 23% of the participants received a primary education (elementary level educations), and 56.9 % did not receive any formal education. The participants reported that of those over the age of 7 years, about 70.7%, did not attend school. The reasons given for those individuals not being involved in school were disabilities (38.5%), lack of finances (30.9%), lack of physical access (15.2%), and family and community influence (4.5%). Although Newman et al., (2009) noted that economic and socio-cultural norms and values influence attitudes toward disabilities, the Fitaw and Boersma study revealed how economic factors contributed to the small percentage of SWDs receiving an education in

addition to strong cultural beliefs and stigmas that segregated them from others. A study conducted by Tekle-Haimanot et al. as cited in Goldblatt and Rosenblum (2007) examined the attitudes of rural Ethiopians toward physical disability, specifically epilepsy. The participants were interviewed regarding their attitudes and perceptions on each of the disorders. The epilepsy attitudinal survey was administered to a total of 1,546 households in a village and about 94% of that total was interviewed. The researchers reported that epilepsy was known by several different names in that village, depending on the languages spoken.

Although Amharic is the national and official Ethiopian language, over 96 tribal languages are spoken throughout the country. Those individuals who live near Somalia and Sudan in bordering tribes are likely to speak several languages and dialects: Amharic, a mixture of Arabic and Amharic, Somali, and Tigrinya. In the official language, epilepsy is referred to as the “falling sickness” based on the physical symptoms of seizures, which cause some epileptics to lose balance and fall. In the Tigre language, it is known as the “slave’s illness.” This is because this minority group historically has worked as indigenous servants or “slaves” in other parts of the country, and when an individual within this group had epilepsy, it was stigmatized as a disease that only slaves could and would contract.

In Tekle-Haimanot et al.’s as cited in Zewde,(2010) study, the majority of the participants ranged from 15 to 45 years, 58.4% were female, 86.7% identified farming as their occupation, and 53% identified Islam as their religion. About 89% of the participants stated that they had either read about or were aware of epilepsy, with 86% responding that they had witnessed an attack and 14% admitting to having family members with epilepsy. Five percent considered epilepsy to be hereditary, about 2% thought it was a form of insanity, and 45% thought it was contagious. Of those who believed it was contagious, about 98% perceived that during a convulsion was the most likely time to transmit the disease to others. The following questions examined not only attitudes toward people with epilepsy, but also the levels of distance or degrees of closeness people in the village were willing to interact with epileptics. When asked if they were willing to employ a person with epilepsy, 75% said they would not, although 52% said they would work with a person who had epilepsy; 67% admitted that they would not rent to a person suffering from epilepsy, unless they were forced to; and 90% were willing to shake hands with an epileptic but only 41% were willing to be friends with a person with epilepsy. Although 65% of the participants said they would allow their children to befriend a person with epilepsy, about 50% admitted to instructing their children to run away if those individuals had convulsions or seizures. This study demonstrates norms and attitudes of rural Ethiopians toward individuals with epilepsy. More importantly it also shows how they socialize their children to behave around people with a disability such as epilepsy.

Over the years, the meaning of disability has evolved constantly, although it has generally shifted from the medical model - which views disability as an individual deficiency, to the social model - which asserts that it is social and economic structures that create disability (Michailakis, 2003; Anatasios & Kaufmann, 2011; WHO, 2011). When disability is interpreted as an illness or impairment, it is viewed as occurring in an individual’s body or mind, and when interpreted as a social construct, disability is seen in terms of the socio-economic, cultural, and political disadvantages resulting from an individual’s exclusion. Disability can affect anyone at any time regardless of age, gender, culture, ethnicity or social class. The ICF places the notions of ‘health’ and ‘disability’ in the perspective that every human being can experience a decrement in health and thereby experience some degree of disability. Disability therefore does not become something that only happens to a few people in the world, but rather recognized as a universal human experience. The ICF further takes into account the social aspects of disability and does not see disability only as a ‘medical’ or ‘biological’ dysfunction (WHO, 2011). In a recent WHO report (WHO, 2011), there is a call for a balanced approach which gives appropriate weight to both the medical and social models of disability to address the needs of people with disabilities instead of perceiving them as two separate concepts.

Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) pointed out that the social model perspective turns the attention away from identifying people with disabilities to identifying and addressing the barriers in society that restrict their full participation in everyday life. Thus, from this perspective, disabling can be understood by focusing on the relationship between persons with impairment and the society or environment of

which they are part. Therefore, the response to disability is the restructuring of society for it to be able to deal appropriately with people with disability. In this paper an extended use will be made of the social model theory in its analysis of how the society disables persons with disabilities by the way they are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from access and full participation in higher education. The model draws attention to identifying and addressing the barriers in higher education institutions that restrict access and full participation of SWD in learning activities rather than the traditional approach of only identifying students with disabilities. This implies that certain mechanisms need to be put in place to create an environment where all students, including SWD, can participate equally in the process of teaching and learning. According to Krahe and Altwasser (2006) identifying disabling barriers to academic participation in higher education would promote improvement of organizational structures within higher education institutions by addressing specific needs of students with disabilities.

Attitudes of Instructors and Students towards Students with Disability and Integration

In the area of special education, particularly in integrating the students with disability in regular classes suggested that attitudes play a key role in achieving successful social interaction among various groups of instructors and students and win their attention in favor of the required educational modality. With regard to the contribution of positive attitudes for healthy development, research evidences have confirmed that open and positive attitudes with perceptions that match with the reality result in greater interaction with enhanced social and emotional development (Munyi, 2012). Similarly, while discussing about the role of social and cultural factors and the effect of attitudes in relation to the educational systems of a given country, Brodwin and Orange (2002) pointed out that each country's educational system is the reflection of the social and cultural identity. This may be responsible for the existence of different practices of integration among countries, which may be directly related to differences in attitudes towards integration.

Attitudes have been defined as being composed of three main components of affect, behavior, and cognition, known as the ABCs of attitudes (Erwin, 2001; Klooster, Dannenberg, Taal, Burger & Rasker, 2009). These components combined make up the disposition of attitudes: (A) Affect defines the emotions of attitudes, which are the like and dislike; (B) behavior explains the direct action that is connected with the internal attitude; and (C) cognition describes how the organization and formation of attitudes about an object are stored (Hunt & Hunt, 2000). Although this is the operational definition used in the current study, there is not a universally accepted definition of attitude, and in fact, 30 definitions of attitude have been described over the years (Rao, 2004). Although many definitions of attitudes have arisen throughout the years, scholars agree that some components have stayed the same: (a) Attitudes are learned; (b) attitudes are complex, multi-component structures; (c) attitudes are stable (even rigid); (d) attitudes have a social object of reference; (e) attitudes vary in their quality and quantity; and (f) attitudes are multifaceted behaviorally (Klooster et al., 2009; Munyi, 2012).

Studies of Attitudes and Students with Disability (SWD)

In general, professionals and students hold positive attitudes toward students with disability. For example, Tervo et al. (2004) did a cross-sectional study to explore professional and students' attitudes toward SWD. In total, 338 university students completed the survey (241 nursing students, 46 medical students, and 51 other health professional students). Two attitude inventories were administered to all of these respondents –Attitudes toward Disabled People Scale (ATDP) and Scale of Attitudes toward Disabled Persons (SADP). Both scales had high reliability and validity. The higher the scores on both scales, the more positive attitudes students held toward SWD. The results indicated that although health professional students tended to have higher scores on ATDP, they consistently received lower scores on SADP, compared with non-health professional students' norms on the two scales respectively. Moreover, nursing students obtained even lower scores on SADP than their counterparts (medical students and other health professional students). The authors did not provide a clear explanation for this finding. However, they noticed that for these nursing students, most of them were mature students with working experience in the medical and rehabilitation settings. Thus, the authors suspected that their experiences in these settings might have rendered them unfavorable viewpoints toward SWD, since people there were commonly dysfunctional.

Basically, there were two ways to measure employers' attitudes – global and specific attitudes. Global attitudes “are evaluative responses concerning a general topic that typically do not involve declaring planned actions or intentions” (p. 5). An example could be “Disabled people are often unfriendly” from the Attitudes toward Disabled Persons scale (Klooster et al., 2009). On the contrary, specific attitudes “have a narrow scope and may include a statement of intended behavior. For instance, some studies examine participants' expressed willingness to employ workers with disabilities” (Hernandez et al., 2000:5). Second, because of the different attitudes, Hernandez et al. (2000) disclosed that when global attitudes toward SWD were assessed, employers commonly presented positive responses in studies. In detail, Hernandez et al. noticed that the commonalities among these studies were “1) assessment of global attitudes, 2) use of local employer samples, 3) focus on disabilities in general without specifying a particular kind of disability, and 4) use of standardized scales” (p. 7). However, if the specific attitudes were the topics of concern, employers were more likely to elicit negative attitudes toward SWD, especially when a particular disability was the major concern to the workplace (e.g., epilepsy). In addition, in their study, they also highlighted that there was an inconsistency between employers' willingness to hire SWD and their actual hiring records. Thus, the positive attitudes reflected from a global measurement of attitudes might indicate a socially desirable response rather than actual viewpoints.

Likewise, Satchidanand et al., (2012) identified 22 studies using quantitative designs from 1950 to 2012, which focused on healthcare professionals and students' attitudes toward people with physical disabilities. In this systematic review, they found that overall, “healthcare students and providers demonstrate generally favorable attitudes toward people with physical disabilities” (p. 540). However, Satchidanand et al. (2012) cautioned the healthcare field that for some specific areas, such as nursing or medicine, students' positive attitudes toward PWD tended to decrease in time. The study did not provide a clear clue of why it happened, but the topic needs to be seriously investigated. Besides quantitative studies, researchers also conducted qualitative studies to describe a more vivid picture of patients' experiences with their health professionals. Hodkinson and Vickerman (2009) completed a study on patients with chronic back pain. The main purpose, as mentioned by these scholars, was “to explore and conceptualise the experiences of people of working age who seek help from pain clinics for chronic back pain” (p. 1456). They used a qualitative method to capture participants' real experiences in their daily process of seeking treatment on back pain. In total, there were twelve males and six females joining the research. An unstructured interview with minimum usage of probing questions, such as “*tell me a bit more about that*” (p. 1457), was employed to encourage participants to describe their lively stories in interacting with personnel in the pain clinic. One of the major findings was that stigma was pervasive among pain clinic personnel, especially when there was no biomechanical support for participants' back pain. In such cases, healthcare professionals were inclined to use psychological explanations, which resulted in their doubting the honesty of what participants were saying about their sufferings. Specifically, Holloway et al., (2007) called this phenomenon a “moral stigma.”

Many scholars have pointed out the importance of examining college students' attitudes toward disabilities for establishing attitudes in the larger society. Hunt and Hunt (2004) said that because college students are placed in a unique position of becoming future leaders in the business world, and thus having potential to affect employment outcomes for people with disabilities, it was essential to examine the attitudes of college students who were business majors. Although many studies use college students for attitudinal studies, few studies have actually examined attitudes toward visible disabilities. Olkin and Howson as cited in Tervo et al. (2004) specifically examined college students' attitudes toward visible disabilities and the mages they invoked. The study was conducted at a California state university with a 90% Caucasian student population and a total of 184 participants. The participants were 98% Caucasian with 57% females and 43% males. None of the students reported having a disability and no data could be located from the university about the number of students with disabilities attending the university. The students were given two assessments to complete along with a demographic sheet. The two assessments measured two different aspects of attitudes.

The Social Distance Scale (SDS) measured social acceptance of individuals with disabilities. The SDS asked questions such as “would have as a next door neighbor” or “would accept as a close kin by marriage.” The Attitudes towards Disabled People (ATDP) is constructed so that higher scores indicate a positive attitude and lower scores indicate a negative attitude.

Although there were no hierarchies in gender preferences, there were preferences in disabilities. The disabilities toward which the respondents displayed more negative attitudes were cerebral palsy, facial disfigurement, little people (dwarfism), MS, and quadriplegia. The disabilities that elicited favorable social distance and more positive attitudes were amputees with missing arms or legs, and individuals with blindness, crutches, and leg braces. Fifty-eight percent of the students identified the image of a wheelchair user when asked about a disabled person. This study summarized a few aspects of visible disabilities and their acceptance and non-acceptance. Disabilities that affected speech and communication were placed in the negative attitude category. Thus cerebral palsy, facial disfigurement, and MS were met with unfavorable attitudes because of the possibility of affecting an individual’s speech. Although Olkin and Howson’s as cited in Klooster et al., (2009) study may have alluded to speech impairment possibly playing a role in the ranking of disabilities, its critical to examine other aspects that may play a role in college students’ attitudes toward disabilities. To examine college students’ attitudes towards disabilities, researchers need to ask the question to what degree does the majority of society—experts, professionals, and personal opinion—contribute to the attitudes of college students toward disabilities (Brillhart, Jay and Wyers as cited in Satchidanand et al., 2012). Many researchers attempted to answer this question, most notably Yunker’s as cited in Holloway et al. (2007) review of the literature that identified variables influencing attitudes toward PWDs. Further, Yunker wrote that not only is the concept of attitudes difficult to measure, but researchers need to invest in researching more relevant characteristics that have a greater influence on attitudes toward PWDs. He identified contact as having the most influence, and gender, professional field, education level, and self-esteem having some influence. Although Yunker mentioned other variables such as race/ethnicity and religion, they were of little significance. Thus the following review will focus on the variables of educational level, gender, year in school, academic major, contact level, self-esteem, and cultural orientation.

It is critical to acknowledge the influence of education and the environment it provides as a category. It is only logical to address education and educational environment when assessing college student’s attitudes toward disabilities. Stovall and Sedlacek as cited in Au and Man (2006) were one of the first researchers to make the connection between disability type and situation when they assessed college students’ attitudes toward people with physical disabilities. They concluded that disability types influence attitudes. Their study found that college students had more favorable attitudes toward students who used wheelchairs than those who were visually impaired. A study by Rosenthal et al., (2006) indicated that the two factors that made a difference in attitudes were disability type and age; however in other studies age was as significant as disability type. These findings suggest that education and disability type influence attitudes toward disabilities. Higher education has been found to have a positive correlation with more favorable attitudes (Yukeras cited in Barr & Bracchitta, 2008). Students with higher levels of college education expressed more favorable attitudes compared to freshmen and sophomores, who displayed less favorable attitudes toward fairness and accommodations (Bowditch, Buono & Stewart, 2008).

The Social Construction of Students With Disability

It is not uncommon in today for a person without disabilities to encounter someone with disabilities in the classroom or at a work site. Such scenarios are seen as commonplaces, but in reality, PWD have strived for an equal access for decades. Studies (Barr & Bracchitta, 2008; Hernandez et al., 2000; Satchidanand et al., 2012; Tervo et al., 2004) have shown that although people without disabilities present favorable attitudes toward PWD, it does not replace the fact that those people are still suspicious about PWD’s abilities, keep distance from them, and thus treat them unequally.

Disability can be socially constructed through the actions of society in erecting barriers and structures that limit the ability of certain persons in society to function “normally”. Such barriers also limit the ability of such persons to access the opportunities, privileges and resources in society. People with impairments are disabled by the fact that they are excluded from participation within the mainstream of society as a result

of physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers (Bryan& Myers, 2006). These barriers prevent them from gaining equal access to information, education, employment, public transport, housing and social/recreational opportunities. It should be noted that impairment and disability are two different things. The primary source of disadvantage is not the impairment but society's responses to people who are considered disabled. If a community allows physical, architectural, transportation, and other barriers to remain in place, society is creating handicaps that oppress individuals with disabilities. If, on the other hand, a community removes those barriers, persons with disabilities can function at much higher levels. In simple terms, it is not the inability to walk or inability to sit that prevents a person entering a building unaided but the existence of stairs or the lack of benches to lie down, that are inaccessible to a wheelchair-user or a person with a sitting disability.

Issues and Challenges That Influence Attitudes toward Students with Disability

The review of the changing viewpoints about disability shed light on the foundation of the conflict between implicit and explicit attitudes toward SWD. More often than not, people develop a deep rooted aversive evaluation about disability (implicit attitudes) because of negative cultural values, abnormality, as well as SWD's inability to work. However, social justice encourages and engages more and more individuals to alter their negative attitudes (implicit) towards SWD, changing their attitudes to nondiscrimination ones (explicit). At the same time, scholars have reported a number of factors that could influence the valence of individuals' explicit attitudes. Two factors –gender and one's contact experience with PWD – have been widely explored and their effects are consistent across studies (Choi, 2006; Bruyere & Reiter, 2012; Grames & Leverentz, 2010; Hernandez et al., 2000; Hergenrather & Rhodes, 2007; Stachura, 2007). Therefore, empathy is a core component to improve attitudes toward SWD. In addition, scholars also noticed that close contact experiences with SWD serve to promote individuals' attitudes toward them (Hernandez et al., 2000; Klooster et al., 2009; Stachura, 2007; Newman et al., 2009). These experiences do not emphasize how frequently a person meets with SWD, but highlight what relationships exist between individuals with and without disabilities. Specifically, people who have close friends and/or co-workers with disabilities hold positive attitudes toward SWD (Klooster et al., 2009). However, beside these scholars, who are interested in promoting positive attitudes toward SWD, several others are alert to the fact that negative attitudes toward SWD still exist and impact individuals' reactions toward SWD, albeit in a subtle manner (Erten, 2011; Keller & Galgay, 2010; Rao, Angell, Lam, & Corrigan, 2008).

The variables of the current study were derived from several researchers who identified these factors in the development of attitudes toward disabilities (Beckett, 2009; Yuker as cited in Hodkinson,&Vickerman, 2009). Identification and measurement of attitudes are critical; however, the categorization of the source of attitudes is even more crucial. Erten (2011) conducted a study in which he was able to identify six systems from which negative attitudes were derived. The first system is the socio-cultural psychological; these attitudes originate and are influenced by social and cultural norms and belief systems and include what an individual experiences to be the norm in that society. Cultural orientations of collectivism or individualism may clarify cultural norms based on their identification. Based on this identification, Rao et al. (2010) stated that “cultural differences in stigmatizing attitudes may also reflect the intensity of cultural investments in social connectedness and the implications of different forms of group membership” (p. 351). The following section will identify the study variables examined in the current investigation. Studies by Erten (2011) and UNSECO (2010) indicate that most of the higher educational institutions now have institutional policies for students with disabilities. But the ways in which policy implementation is monitored vary greatly among institutions. Various forms of advice, guidance and support are now available to students with disabilities, but more could be done to increase public awareness on this issue. World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) indicate that higher institutions are continuing to move toward providing necessary individualized support services to students with disabilities. After such students learn to take full advantage of these support services, they will improve their chances of receiving the training and education needed to be competitive in the job market. Further, Rao (2004) have found that the main issues and challenges to higher educational institutions that is in universities is to combine recognition of the individuality of students and their needs with policies and

actions which are more than piecemeal attempts to resolve difficulties. A similar study, conducted by Rosemarie (2005), has identified four issues for higher education institutions to address: a) pre-orientation support, b) staff's commitment to facilitating a barrier-free curriculum, c) consultation with and empowerment of students with disabilities and, d) a commitment on the part of higher education institutions to develop support services for students and planning for their personal development.

An Erten (2011) study also found that there was no uniformity in universities in terms of the financial and human resources to respond to this challenge. The researcher suggests that the first step towards providing equal access for all students is the will to address the diversity of needs of students and create a supportive environment accordingly. A similar study by Watermeger et al., (2006) found that students' learning and teaching assessment was restrictive and this appeared to be due to the inappropriate learning resources, lack of modification of teaching by teachers, lack of discussion with students with disabilities regarding their problems, and needs related to learning and assessment strategies that significantly place them in a disadvantaged position in higher education. Bruyere and Reiter (2012) opine that requesting for an accessible classroom was often stressful to the students with disabilities. In a similar study, Parashar, Chan and Leierer(2008) study found that majority of the students indicated that they had encountered barriers to their education, which included a lack of understanding and cooperation from administrators, faculty, staff, and other students, adaptive aids and other accommodations and, inaccessibility of buildings and grounds. Overall, the review of studies shows that there are several factors or barriers which affect the social and educational experience of students with disabilities in higher education institutions. Despite the significant progress in legislations and policies for the students with disabilities in higher education institutions, many of them still face with various challenges completing their studies successfully (Keller & Siegrist, 2010).

Public Perceptions and Attitude towards Students with Disability in Ethiopia

According to the International Labor Organization (Beretvas, 2002), people with disabilities are the largest invisible minority group in Ethiopia. The population of Ethiopia has been estimated at 85 million (WHO, 2011). According to Tirussew (2005), there are 8 million people with disabilities in Ethiopia, although the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the number to be much greater. Due to the high stigma associated with disabilities in the Ethiopian culture, most people either hide or never declare a disability (Tirussew, 2005). In Ethiopia, people with disabilities often are not participants in society because of the overall belief that disabilities are a result of a curse and/or are punishments from a deity (Ibid). Hence, disabilities often are defined in terms of supernatural beliefs. The extent of these beliefs is not clearly specified in the literature, which makes estimating their pervasiveness unclear at present. Ethiopians also view visible (physical) disabilities as limiting, and therefore people with disabilities are believed to have little strength and to be unable to perform physical labor (Shilbre et al., 2001). Because of their inability to perform physical labor, individuals with disabilities are viewed as burdens to their immediate families for not being able to contribute to the family's income. Ethiopia continues to be an agricultural society, and physical labor remains the common source of employment; therefore, a physical disability may be a limitation for participation in the most common job market (Tirussew, 2005).

However, research has shown that increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities is more than just economically advantageous for a country (Beretvas, 2002). Inclusion brings secondary benefits, such as decreasing isolation and increasing secondary psychological well-being for the SWD (Hunt & Hunt, 2002). Nonetheless, this combination of cultural beliefs, perceptions, and negative attitudes are reported to persist and contribute to SWDs lack of participation in Ethiopian society (Chan et al., 2002). If the current negative perceptions are not addressed, these cultural attitudes may increase (Fitaw & Boersma, 2006). The population of SWDs is estimated to increase globally with the advancement of modern medicine and a concomitant increase in the aging population (Chen et al., 2011). SWDs are living longer, and aging in general is accompanied by the decline of abilities such as hearing, vision, and physical mobility. Studies have shown that experiencing negative attitudes in turn negatively affects the perception that SWDs have of themselves and their skills, which in turn may affect SWDs' use of rehabilitation services to optimize their skills (Newman et al., 2009; World Bank, 2008). Antonak and

Livneh (2000) stated that negative attitudes such as prejudice, misconceptions of abilities, and stereotyping “create real obstacles to fulfillment of their roles and fulfillment of their life goals” (p. 211). Furthermore, they asserted that knowledge about attitudes toward people with disabilities might be used to better inform assessments, design improved rehabilitation training and counseling programs, and inform and create public policy that would contribute positively to modification of attitudes toward this population. Antonak and Livneh (2000) also maintained that scholars and researchers must first critically assess the attitudes of professionals before attempting to modify the general population’s perceptions of the disability community. Although general negative attitudes likely affect SWDs’ access to various institutions, such as school, employment; and the larger community, social policy has the potential to change such outcomes (Rao et al., 2008). This is one of the rationales for accessing Ethiopian college students’ attitudes in the current study; they are a defined group of future professionals who could influence policy and access for people with disabilities in their country. Thus, it becomes critical to review laws and policies in Ethiopia that directly and indirectly affect SWDs.

Students with Disabilities in Higher Education Institutions

Students with disabilities (SWDs) represent an emerging population in higher education institutions, whose perceptions and experiences of higher education are ultimately shaped by their socio-cultural experiences, and the existing environment and the availability of specific facilities, required by them, for pursuing their higher studies. A great deal of research in the West has been conducted on diverse issues of students with disabilities in higher education institutions. This review is focused on the factors affecting positive and negative educational experiences of such students with disabilities in higher education institutions. This most recent action by the Ethiopian government illustrates its intent to recognize the rights of people with disabilities. However, negative attitudes continue to be a barrier in Ethiopia despite efforts by policymakers to decrease discrimination against the disability community (Shilbre et al., 2001).

Research has indicated that globally attitudinal barriers, such as access to employment (Burge et al., 2007; Hunt & Hunt, 2004) and access to services (Wong, Chan, Cardoso, Lam, & Miller, 2004), are the most cited causes of hindrance to full participation in society for individuals with disabilities in many countries (Singh, 2003). Critical examinations of attitudes toward people with disabilities are necessary because of the association of attitudes with behavior and formation of beliefs about that population, which also affect relationships with peers and other professionals (Rao et al., 2010). This is especially critical in Ethiopia because of the general increase in the prevalence of disabilities with the progress of medical care and the increase in the aging population (Groce & Bakshi, 2009). As the disability population increases, the need for access to the larger community will increase as well, thus creating a real and immediate need for attitudinal change. As stated earlier, studies have indicated that attitudes can be changed through interventions, but understanding how attitudes are formed may also better inform intervention for attitudinal change. Scholars have concluded that negative attitudes toward people with disabilities may be formed through socio-cultural socialization, meaning that this is how people learn norms, customs, and beliefs (Livneh, as cited in Rao et al., 2008); culture is a variable that affects attitudes and impacts how attitudes are displayed. Since culture is a factor in predicting attitudes, some researchers have suggested that collective and individualistic cultures display attitudes toward disabilities differently.

Although cultural factors are predictive variables, so is the experience of education. Rao et al., (2010) stated that those with higher levels of education tend to have more favorable attitudes toward PWDs. These favorable attitudes may be related to exposure to disability literature and/or PWDs in educational institutions in general; also people who choose to gain more education may already have the tendency to accept change in general and not just changes in perceptions about disabilities. Hunt and Hunt’s (2004) study indicated that college students with social science majors are more likely to display positive attitudes compared to those students with business majors. This finding was related to the fact that students in the social sciences are more likely to be exposed to disability literature and thus have increased knowledge and contact with disabilities in general, whereas business students may have fewer opportunities to be exposed to disability literature and people with disabilities (Hunt & Hunt, 2004).

The attitudes of college students in Ethiopia toward disabilities have not been assessed. College students were chosen for this study because they are the future professionals and policymakers in their society. Many studies choose to examine the attitudes of college students with the assumption that they will influence institutional access for people with disabilities (Satcher & Dooley-Dickey as cited in Au & Man, 2006). The present study focused specifically on college students because this population is likely to have positions that either enable or hinder access for people with disabilities. For people with disabilities in Ethiopia, the opportunity to access social-cultural activities such as weddings, funerals, festivals, and general gatherings is very restricted (Tirussew, 2005); thus, accessing larger institutions such as education and employment has been even more difficult. A study to examine Ethiopian college students' attitudes toward disabilities is needed, because attitudes must first be identified before they can be changed. When the factors that change attitudes are identified, interventions based on those factors can be developed to begin the process toward changing attitudes from negative to positive. More specifically, the attitudes of professionals toward PWDs need to be identified because research has indicated that negative attitudes of professionals can prevent PWDs from fully integrating into a society (Matziou et al., 2009; Tervoet al., 2002).

Although gatekeepers can grant access, they also have the power to prohibit access through negative attitudes and policies, which may perpetuate discrimination against those with disabilities. The International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities (ISSSID, 2001) stated that the intention of creating social policy is to "promote acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream society" (p. 97). Therefore, if policymakers are college-educated and social policy is designed to promote integration of SWDs, it is reasonable to measure the attitudes of those who may influence social policy development and implementation. Also, determining what issues and challenges contribute to negative attitudes may inform the type of interventions that should be considered when addressing those particular factors. To begin this process, research must begin with accurate and valid assessment of attitudes.

METHODOLOGY

Study Method

The study employed a survey method and a focus group discussion technique (to confirm the quantitative results) to examine the perceptions of students and instructors towards students' with disability. An interview was also used to get general information from the key informants.

Participants

The sample of the study has included purposively selected university students with disability, students without disability (how has exposure about disability) and instructors who have currently knowledge and experiences about disabilities; that are assigned in the three purposely selected universities (Adama Science and Technology, Addis Ababa & Haramaya). Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understandings of selected individuals or groups' experience(s) or for developing theories and concepts. Researchers seek to accomplish this goal by selecting "information-rich" cases, that is, individuals, groups, organizations, or behaviors that provide the greatest insight into the research questions (Creswell, 2009). The availability of special units for SWD with a relatively higher- experienced coordinators (from the nearby universities) was the reason for selecting the three universities as a study site. Students with disability and students without disability (how has exposure about disability) were selected as participants of the study for it was believed that they (particularly the SWD) may better understand the essence of the attitude scale questionnaire and elicit dependable information than the rest of other students. The major sources of data for this study were students with disability 39 (M=23 & F=13); students without disability 40 (M=18 & F= 22) and instructors 40 (M=20 & F= 20) from three selected universities were totally included in the study.

Instruments

Attitude Scale: On the basis of the obtained ideas, a three point attitude scale, with a continuum "Agree", "Uncertain" and "Disagree" was constructed in Amharic language to examine the perception of students and instructors towards students' with disability. A clear written instruction was attached to the

instrument. To understand the possible perceived factors that may affect the participants' attitudes, some open - ended items were also included in the instrument. The measuring scale consists of 20 items and the participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement using a three - point attitude scale. The given scale values were, 3=agree, 2=uncertain, 1=disagree to the positively stated items. In 10 of the items that were negatively stated the scoring was reversed (1=Agree, 2= Uncertain, 3=Disagree) so that the higher scores would indicate a more positive attitude towards integration.

Focus Group: To confirm the quantitative results obtained through the attitude scale, focus group discussion was used as an instrument for confirmation purpose. Hence, two focus group discussions were held (one with the students with disability and the other with non disabling students) with 12 volunteer students (6 students with disability and 6 non disabling students) to get more information related to the issues treated by items in the attitude scale. To generate more ideas, some items related to issues in the attitude scale were prepared as main points of discussion. The two focus group discussions were conducted separately and the obtained information is used to supplement the quantitative results. Two key informant instructors (those who are believed to be informative about the university situation owing to their participation in the university activity) from each university were also interviewed to get general information.

Instruments Administration Procedures

Contacts have been made with the department heads and deans in order to establish a smooth relationship to achieve the purpose of the study. Preliminary information was also secured from the selected universities to determine the number of participants to be included in the study from each university. Pilot study (using 34 participants both from students and instructors) was also conducted to improve the quality of the instrument to collect data for the main study. Accordingly, to administer the constructed attitude scale questionnaire with some additional open - ended items, all students with disability (39), non disabling students (40) and all instructors (40) in the three universities were totally included in the study.

After collecting the entire completed attitude scale questionnaire, 12 volunteer students (3 males and 3 females with disability and form non disabling students (4 males and 2 females students) were selected on voluntary basis to conduct two focus group discussions and it was managed accordingly in Hawasa university. Before conducting the discussion, the following points were explained: about the purpose of the study, the study confidentiality, and about the voluntary nature of their participation during the focus group discussion. Almost one hour and a half were used for each session to discuss on issues pertaining to the idea of disability. The discussion held with disable students was audio - taped and the discussion conducted with was video recorded for latter use in writing the paper. At the end, two key informant instructors from each university were interviewed to obtain general information about the overall situation of the university environment. All the collected data were organized and interpreted by using different statistical methods (such as mean, percentage, and t-test) to examine the attitude of the participants towards disability and also to see the relationship of some demographic variables with attitudes.

Validation of the Instrument

Before applying the instrument to the main study, a pilot study was conducted in Hawasa University, located in South Nation Nationality in Hawasa Zone, to check and improve the reliability and content of the instrument. The total number of participants in the tryout study was 34 (M=16, F=18); and 10 instructors were included in the pilot study. After administering the instrument, some participants were asked for feedback and hence unclear items were modified accordingly to minimize item ambiguity. On the basis of the given responses, the internal consistency of items was tested by using a split half method (by applying Pearson product moment correlation coefficient formula and then the Spearman Brown) formula was used to check the reliability of the full length of the measuring attitude scale.

In split half method had been used to test the internal consistency and the reliability of attitude scale by Creswell (2009) while assessing the variables affecting her attitude towards mainstreaming. The obtained results from the tryout study showing the internal consistency of the odd and even items among the groups ranged from 0.80 to 0.92 students and instructors scale respectively. The reliability of the attitude scale ranged from 0.88 to 0.9592, students and instructors scale respectively. Thus, the instrument was

found valuable to collect the data for the main study and hence it was administered as scheduled. The obtained data in the main study was tabulated and organized for further analysis.

Data Analysis

To examine the perception of the student and instructor respondents towards the students with disability and to see the relationship of some demographic variables with attitudes, some statistical methods were employed. Descriptive data analysis (by using frequency distribution, mean score, percentage, and standard deviation) has been used to describe the data on the basis of the reaction of the respondents to attitude scale items. T-test was used to see whether there are mean differences or not between; students with disability versus non disabling students with instructors in their attitudes towards disability. Results obtained from the two focus group discussions were used to confirm the quantitative results. Moreover, the information given by the key informants has also been used to confirm the perception of students and instructors about the overall situations in the university.

RESULTS

As elsewhere mentioned in this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the perceptions of students and instructors by administering 20 items of a three- point attitude scale to a total of 119 (m=56, f=63) participants. That is, students with disability (SWD) (39), students without disability (SWOD) (40) and all instructors (40). Two focus group discussions were also conducted for confirmation purpose. General information was also secured by interviewing key informant instructors from each university. Therefore, on the basis of the given responses by the participants, the main findings of the study are presented in the following manner.

Background of the Students and Instructor Respondents

The age of 39 (M=16, F=23) students with disability ranges from 21- 35 years with a mean age of 24.4 years. The mean age for males and females is 23.9 and 24.8 years respectively (which are similar to the mean age of the group). The age distribution of students without disability (40-M=18, F=22) included in the study ranges from 21- 30 years with a mean age of 22.4 years. The mean age for males and females is 22.9 and 21.8 years respectively (Table1).

Table 1: Description of Student Respondents by Sex Age

Respondents	Sex			Age							
				21-25 yrs		26-30yrs		31-35yrs		Above 35	
	Male	Female	Total	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Students with Disability	23	16	39	15	11	4	5	2	-	1	-
Students without Disability	18	22	40	12	16	3	1	2	1	1	-
Total	41	38	79	27	27	7	6	4	1	2	0

Regarding the age distribution of 40 (m=22, f=18) instructors, it ranges from 26- 52 years with mean age of 43 years. The mean age for males and females is 45.1 and 41.7 years respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Description of Instructor Respondents by Sex and Age

Respondents	Sex			Age							
				26-33 yrs		34-41yrs		42-49yrs		50 and above	
	Male	Female	Total	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Instructors	22	18	40	1	4	3	4	16	9	2	1
			Total	5		7		25		3	

In terms of qualification status, out of 40(M=22.F=18) instructors, it ranges from degree level to doctor level. As to their qualification level, 6(15%) instructors are holders of degree; 14(35%) are holders of master; whereas 20(50%) instructors are with a qualification level of doctor (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Description of Instructor Respondents by Qualification and Experience

Respondents	Qualification						Work experience					
	BA/BSc/BEEd		Master		Doctor		4-14yrs		15-25yrs		26-35yrs	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Instructors	2	4	8	6	14	6	2	9	17	5	3	7
Total	6		14		20		21		14		16	

Hence, a half of instructors appeared to be at a lower qualification level.

Results of Attitudes of Respondents towards Students with Disability

On the basis of the respondents' reaction to each specific item in the attitude scale, percentages, means and standard deviations were computed in order to describe the position of the respondents' along the continuum in their attitude towards the Students with Disability. Consequently, the mean differences between groups (students with disability versus non disabling students), were checked by a t-test.

Responses of the Participants' Attitude Scale Items

The respondents were asked to show their agreement on the idea of the integration of students with disability into regular classes. The result indicated that 87.2% (m=1.75, SD=0.62) of students with disability (SWD) (Table 4), 70% (m=1.50, SD=0.81) of the instructors did not support the integration of SWD into SWOD in a regular class (Table 6). On the other hand, 67.5% (m=2.37, SD=0.92) of students without disability have supported view about students with disability.

As to the perceived workload, 45% (m=1.90, SD=0.91) of instructor respondents believed that there would be more work to do by them if students with disability were integrated. Similarly, 59% (m=1.46, SD=0.60) of the students with disability reacted that instructors would be overloaded if students with disability students were to be integrated. On the other hand, 37.5% (m=2.02, SD=0.08) of students without disability have uncertainty view about instructors' overloads.

Concerning the attitudes of students with and without disability towards each other, the result indicated that only 56.4% (m=1.87, SD=1) of students with disability were not willing to play with students without disability in their spare time. From the students without disability 77.5% (m=2.62, SD=0.74) were willing to play with students with disability in their spare time. Similarly, 55% (m=2.45, SD=0.68) of instructor respondents believed that there would be better if they play together.

Another reaction was the perceived effect of integration on academic achievement of students with and without disability. From the result, 92.3% (m=1.12, SD=0.46) of the students with disability, about 75% (m=1.30, SD=0.57) of instructors did not believe in the idea that integration will improve the academic achievement of students with disability. On the other hand, 67.5% (m=2.2, SD=0.53) of students without disability were uncertain whether integration helps to improve the academic achievement of students with disability or not.

Table 4: Responses of students with disability to attitude scale items

No	Items /attitude statements	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Mean	SD
1	I support the integration of Students With Disability (SWD) into Students Without Disability (SWOD) in regular classes.	10.3	2.6	87.2	1.75	0.62
2	If SWDs are integrated into a class, instructors' would be at disadvantage for they would do additional work.	59.0	35.9	5.1	1.46	0.60
3	I like to play with non disabling students in my spare time.	43.6	-	56.4	1.87	1.00
4	If SWDs are integrated in to regular classes, they would get better results in their academic results.	5.1	2.6	92.3	1.12	0.46
5	If I am placed in regular classes with SWODs, instructor will accept me happily	12.8	25.6	61.5	1.51	0.72
6	I don't want to use hearing aid because others will easily identify me.	53.8	2.6	43.6	1.89	0.99
7	If I learn with SWODs, I expect that bad words being said about me would decrease.	15.4	38.5	46.2	1.69	0.73
8	University instructors do not support the integration of SWDs into regular classes.	28.2	46.2	25.6	1.97	0.74
9	The opening of special class within the university set up will enable the SWDs to have closer social contact SWODs.	71.8	7.7	20.5	2.51	0.82
10	If we learn together in the same class, SWOD will disadvantage educationally.	41.0	23.1	35.9	1.94	0.88
11	Attending in regular classes at university should be the educational rights of SWDs.	43.6	12.8	43.6	2.00	0.94
12	Disability is a sign of low ability in general.	33.3	7.7	59.0	2.25	0.93
13	I believe that SWODs will accept me happily if I am placed in their class.	5	12.8	76.9	1.33	0.66
14	If SWDs are integrated, instructors will have difficulty in teaching.	74.4	17.9	7.7	1.33	0.62
15	I want to be a friend with a non disable student.	41.0	-	59.0	1.8	0.99
16	I support if SWDs attend their education in a separate special class.	74.4	2.6	13.1	1.48	0.85
17	I can equally attend my education if I am integrated SWOD.	5.1	-	94.9	1.10	0.44
18	Integrating SWDs with SWODs will disrupt classroom discipline.	38.5	41.0	20.5	1.82	0.75
19	I believe that SWDs should always deserve an intensified support and follow up from instructors.	84.6	-	15.4	1.30	0.73
20	If SWDs are integrated, then special class instructors would be in problem to teach in SWODs effectively.	23.1	23.1	53.8	2.30	0.83

Table 5: Responses of students without disability to attitude scale items

No	Items /attitude statements	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Mean	SD
1	I support the integration of Students With Disability (SWDs) into regular classes.	67.0	2.5	30	2.37	0.92
2	If SWDs are integrated into a class, instructors' would be at disadvantage for they would do additional work.	30	37.5	32.5	2.02	0.08
3	I like to play with SWDs in my spare time.	77.5	7.5	15	2.62	0.74
4	If SWDs are integrated in to a class, they would get better results in their academic results.	27.5	67.5	5.0	2.22	0.53
5	If I am placed in regular classes, instructors will accept SWDs positively.	10	75	15	1.951	0.50
6	Since using hearing aid makes SWDs easily identified, it is preferable not to use it.	30	15	55	2.25	0.89
7	I believe that negative social stigmas about SWDs will case SWDs attend class with students without disability.	65	25	10	2.55	0.67
8	Instructors do not support the integration of SWDs into regular classes.	17.5	75	7.6	1.90	0.49
9	The opening of special class within the university set up will enable the SWDs to have closer social contact SWODs.	52.5	37.5	10	2.42	0.67
10	Integrating SWD into a class will hinder SWODs education.	20	30	50	2.30	0.79
11	Attending in regular classes at university should be the educational rights of SWDs.	62.5	22.5	15	2.47	0.75
12	Disability is a sign of low ability in general.	15	25	60	2.45	0.74
13	If SWDs are assigned in my class, I will accept them positively.	65	20	15	2.50	0.75
14	If SWDs are in a class, instructors will have difficulty in teaching.	45	55	-	1.55	0.50
15	I want to have a friendship with SWDs.	77.5	10	12.5	2.65	0.70
16	I support if SWD attend their education in a separate special class.	15	17.5	67.5	2.52	0.75
17	I can equally attend my education if I am integrated with SWD.	22.5	52.5	25	1.97	0.69
18	Integrating SWDs with SWODs will disrupt classroom discipline.	25	42.5	32.5	2.07	0.76
19	I believe that SWDs should always deserve an intensified support and follow up from instructors.	72.5	25	2.5	1.30	0.51
20	If SWDs are integrated, then special class instructors would be in problem to teach in SWODs effectively.	22.5	60	15	1.90	0.63

From the given responses 61.5 % (m=1.51, SD=0.72) of students without disability indicated that instructors would be unwilling to accept them in their classrooms. Similarly, 60 % (m=1.50, SD=0.55) of the instructors reacted that they are not willing to accept students without disability into their classrooms. Here, as seen from the reaction of instructors, the prediction of students without disability about the perceived attitude of instructors towards the integration of students without disability appears to hold true in the existing situation. On this same issue, 75 % (m=1.0, SD=0.49) students without disability are uncertain about the attitude of instructors in accepting students without disability.

Table 6: Responses of instructors to attitude scale items

No	Items /attitude statements	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Mean	SD
1	I support the integration of Students With Disability (SWDs) into regular classes.	20	10	70	1.50	0.81
2	The integration of SWD in to regular classes will increase work load on me.	45	20	35	1.90	0.91
3	SWDs are willing to play with SWODs in their spare time	80	5	15	2.62	0.74
4	If SWDs are integrated they would show improvement in their academic performance	15	35	50	1.65	0.74
5	I believe that SWODs will positively accept SWDs if they are placed in regular classes	30	50	20	2.10	0.71
6	Since using hearing aid makes students easily identified, it is preferable not to use it.	-	-	100	3.00	0.00
7	Teaching both students in the same class will help to avoid negative social stigma about SWDs.	35	15	50	1.85	0.93
8	Special class instructors do not support the integration of SWDs in to regular classes.	60	30	10	1.50	0.68
9	The opening of special class within the university set up will enable the SWDs to have closer social contact SWODs.	95	5	-	2.95	0.22
10	Integrating SWD into a class will hinder SWODs education.	20	30	50	2.30	0.80
11	Attending in regular classes at university should be the educational rights of SWDs.	65	15	20	2.45	0.82
12	Disability is a sign of low ability in general.	-	-	100	3.00	0.00
13	The placement of SWDs in regular classrooms would hurt the educational progress of SWDs.	70	10	15	2.56	0.69
14	My professional skill is limited to teach SWDs.	80	10	10	1.30	0.65
15	SWDs have no negative impact on the selection of a friend.	25	5	70	1.55	0.88
16	I support if SWD attend their education in a separate special class.	60	5	35	1.75	0.96
17	If SWDs are placed in regular classes, they can equally attend their education.	-	10	90	1.10	0.30
18	Integrating SWDs with SWODs will disrupt classroom discipline.	45	25	30	1.85	0.87
19	I believe that SWDs should always deserve an intensified support and follow up from instructors	100	-	-	1.00	0.00
20	If SWDs are integrated ,then I would be in problem to teach in regular classes effectively	20	5	75	2.55	0.82

Concerning the attitude of students without disability in accepting students without disability, 65% (m=2.50, SD=0.75) of students without disability claimed that they are willing to accept if students

without disability were placed in their classrooms. On the contrary, 76.9 % ($m=1.33$, $SD=0.66$) of students without disability expressed their fear that r students without disability would not accept them positively. On this point, 65% ($m=2.50$, $SD=0.75$) of instructors expressed positive view. Regarding the reaction of the respondents about the academic competence of students without disability in the integrated classroom set up, 94.9 % ($m=1.10$, $SD=0.44$) of students without disability, 90% ($m=1.10$, $SD= 0.52$) of instructor respondents affirmed that students without disability cannot attend their education as equally as students without disability. As to students without disability, 52.5% ($m=1.97$, $SD= 0.69$) of them expressed uncertainty about the academic competence of students without disability.

Concerning the instructor respondents' professional competence to teach in classes where students without disability are integrated, 74.4 % ($m=1.33$, $SD=. 85$) of the students without disability, 80 percent ($m=1.30$, $SD=.65$) of instructors and 45% of students without disability claimed that instructors will face difficulty in teaching if students without disability were integrated into regular classes. On this same issue, 65 % ($m=1.55$, $SD=. 82$) Of the instructor respondents reacted that they feel inadequate in their teaching professional skill if students with disability were to be integrated into students without disability classes.

As to the social benefit of integration, the obtained result indicated that 71.8% ($m=2.51$, $SD=0.82$) of students with disability, 95 percent ($m=2.95$, $SD=0.22$) of instructor respondents were in favor of the opinion that the opening of special classes within the university set up would enable the students with disability to have closer social contact with hearing students. On the contrary, 74.4 % ($m=1.48$, $SD=0.85$) of students with disability, 60% ($m=1.75$, $SD=0.73$) of instructor respondents reacted that students with disability should attend their education in a separate special class. This indicates that valuing the social benefits of integration alone may not necessarily lead individuals to develop positive attitude towards integration for its academic benefit. As to the nature of classroom discipline, owing to the integration of students with disability, 45% ($m=1.85$, $SD=0.74$) of instructor respondents and 38.5 % ($m=1.82$, $SD=0.75$) of students with disability believed that integrating students with disability with students without disability will disrupt classroom discipline. In the proceeding paragraphs, the general profile of the group on the basis of the computed mean scores, statistical results related to mean differences and the relation of some demographic variables to change of attitude are presented.

Comparison' of Groups ' Attitude towards students with disability on the Basis of Mean Scores

Table 7: Groups ' Mean' Values on attitudes towards students with disability

No	Groups/Respondents	N	Mean	SD
1	Students with disability	39	1.70	0.31
2	Students without disability	40	2.20	0.30
3	Instructor respondents	40	1.89	0.32

As it can be seen Table 7 above, the mean scores of students with disability (1.70), instructor respondents (1.89) were below the average value (2). This indicates that the two groups, as a whole appeared to have a negative attitude towards the students with disability with little variation among themselves. On the other hand, the mean score of students without disability (2.20) generally indicated that students without disability appeared to have a somewhat positive attitude towards the students with disability.

Groups' Mean Differences on Integration

The mean differences between groups in their attitudes towards integration were checked by a t -test and the following results were obtained.

Table 8: T- test Results for Mean Differences between groups in their Attitudes towards the Integration of SWDs

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	df	t-Val	Sig.
Students with disability Vs Students without disability	39	1.700	0.314	-0.501	77	7.260	0.000
Students with disability Vs Instructors	39	1.686	0.250	-0.031	37	.306	0.762
Students without disability Vs Instructors	40	1.717	0.378				
Students without disability Vs Instructors	40	1.985	0.330	0.200	38	1.96	0.57
	40	1.785	0.315				

As indicated in Table 8, there appeared statistically significant mean difference between students with disability and Students without disability $t(77) = -7.260$, $p < 0.05$ in their attitude toward integration. However, the mean difference between the students with disability and instructors is no statistically significant $t(37) = -.306$, $p > 0.05$. There also appeared no statistically significant mean difference between students without disability and instructors in their attitude towards the integration of students with disability into regular classes $t(38) = 1.96$, $p > 0.05$.

Some Perceived Factors that Contributed to Favor or Disfavor the Integration of HI Students.

Responses given by the respondents to the open - ended items have generally reflected some problems that may hinder the perception of student with disability into regular classes. Some benefits that integration may contribute to student with disability were also indicated by the respondents.

The main factors that were most frequently mentioned by student with disability for disfavoring were: the inability of instructors to use sign language, communication problem with students with disability, fear to cope with students without disability in academic matters, mistreatment and teasing on the part of students without disability and the perceived negative attitude of instructors in accepting student with disability in their classrooms. The main factors more frequently rated by the instructors for disfavoring the perception of student with disability were: absence of sign language as a means of instruction in regular classes, communication barrier between the student with and without disability, and failure to cope up with academic challenges. The expected wastage of time in an effort to assist student with disability and the existing classroom size of students were also mentioned as main problems.

As seen from the given responses, the indicated benefits that positive perception could contribute to the student with disability appeared to be more of social benefits rather than the academic benefits. The four students with disability who favored integration, for instance, stated that they support integration not because it is academically beneficial to them, but to play with their students without disability peers. Students without disability who supported the integration of students with disability believed that integration would enable student with disability to develop better relationship with students without disability, avoid feeling of loneliness, gain assistance from students without disability in academic activities, improve their language through interaction with students without, develop self -confidence and to improve their academic performance.

The benefits of integration indicated by the instructors were also more of social benefits. Instructors believed that integration would enable students' with disability to create friendship with students without disability, develop positive self -concept about themselves, learn social life, gain assistance from students without disability whenever required, improve their language, and to reduce social stigmas that others may have towards the students' with disability. Generally, factors that are directly or indirectly related to communication problem seem to be major obstacles to the integration of students' with disability into regular classes. As seen from the given responses, the social benefits of integration were more emphasized than the educational benefits in favoring the integration of students' with disability into regular classes.

Analysis of the focus group discussion held with student with and without disability students

As it was already introduced in other part of this paper, two focus group discussions (students with and without disability) were conducted for confirmation purpose.

Students with disability who participated in the focus group discussion were 3 males and 3 females. Their age ranges from 14 years to 18 years. Students without disability who took part in the focus group discussion were 4 males and 2 females. Their age ranges from 11 to 14 years. All participants were voluntary to take part in the discussion. Issues presented in the discussion for both focus groups were related to the expressed attitudes or feelings about the perception and integration of and students with disability stated in the attitude scale. Only the highlights of the focus group discussions are briefly summarized in the following paragraphs. In the first group, the moderator (the researcher) presented issues for discussion to students with disability. As expected, the respondents generated more ideas.

All students with disability participants, with emotionally loaded feeling, explained that the integration of students with disability into regular classes would be impossible due to the existing communication barrier between the students with disability and instructors (including students). Additionally, mistreatment and provocation of students without disability against the students with disability and lack of willingness (as perceived by students with disability) on the part of regular class instructors to accept students with disability in their classrooms were also mentioned as main obstacles towards the integration of students with disability.

Moreover, students with disability expressed their fear that they would be in problem and even lag behind academically if they were integrated in to regular classes. All students with disability preferred to remain as they are in the special class in order to maintain their identity and for their academic benefit. Some students with disability said, "*We want to be like special class students*". This implies that some students with disability may be interested to join special class rather than being in the integrated class. This opinion (favoring the special class) was also favored by 74.4% of the students with disability in a response given to the attitude scale item. From the held discussion, students with disability generally appeared to have a negative attitude towards the student without disability. Students with disability complained that regular class students were underestimating and teasing them about their students with disability. As a result, the students with disability have developed a common saying, which reads: "*Those who hear are not good for us*". The students with disability explained that there was no joint activity planned by the university to enhance social interaction with students without disability. They further confirmed that no orientation program has been arranged by the university to create awareness and better relationship between the students with and without disability. They (the students with disability) finally informed that vocational education should be provided to students with disability rather than pure academic subjects.

The second focus group discussion was carried out with students without disability. As seen from the response given to item \ in the attitude scale, 67.5 % of students without disability were in support of the integration of students with disability into regular classes. But respondents in the focus group discussion (5 out of 6 students) did not support the immediate integration of students with disability into regular classes.

The regular class students suggested that, though they favor the integration of students with disability in principle, regular class instructors should be trained in sign language before the integration of students with disability into regular classes. The respondents were hesitant to explain about the perceived attitudes of special class and regular class instructors. Regular class students also have expressed their feeling that they welcome the placement of students with disability into regular classes if students with disability are willing to join them positively. The regular class students did not deny that they have contradictions with students with disability. They generally perceived the students with disability as an object of fear. Students without disability complained that students with disability usually attack the student(s) without disability in group mainly by misinterpreting the actions or sayings of the students without disability.

One student without disability expressed his feeling about students without disability by saying the following: "*Whenever I see the students with disability, I feel as if I am chased by the biting dog*". The students with disability are perceived as *aggressive, hostile and merciless* by the students without

disability. They (students without disability) too confirmed that *no planned activity was undertaken by the university to create better relationship* between the students without disability and students with disability. As a whole, the results obtained from the two focus group discussions largely appeared to confirm the responses given to the attitude scale items.

General Information from Key Informants

The four key informant instructors disclosed that no programs have been planned by the university to facilitate interaction between the students with disability and students without disability. They further confirmed that no effort has also been made to create awareness among the university community about the nature of disability and the disability person. The Key informants reported that there were conditions where the disability and regular class students come into conflict due to communication problem. The Key informants informed that various types of equipment that were practically in use some years back are now kept idle due to lack of trained man power.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of students with disability, students without disability, instructors towards the integration and perception of students with disability into regular classes. Some demographic variables contributing to attitude towards integration were also considered. Furthermore, the study has also aimed at identifying the perceived factors that may predispose the participants to favor or disfavor the integration and perception of students with disability into regular classes. The result generally indicated that students with disability ($m=1.75$), and instructor respondents ($m=1.50$), appeared to have negative attitude towards the integration of students with disability; while, the students without disability ($m=2.37$) have positive perception toward integration in regular classes (see Tables 4, 5 & 6).

As a whole, student with disability (SWD) and instructor respondents appeared to show a relatively negative attitude towards integration being followed by regular class instructor. On the other hand, students without disability (SWODs) appeared to have a somewhat positive attitude ($m=2.37$) towards the integration of students with disability in regular classes (see Table 4, 5 & 6). Comparison of respondents' mean values by sex revealed that both males and females in each group (when compared in their own group) appeared to have a relatively closer mean scores (see Table 1). The female SWDs were found with the least mean score as compared to male SWODs. This implies that female SWD seemed to have strong negative attitude towards integration; while both male and female SWODs appeared to have a relatively positive attitude towards the integration of female SWDs into regular classes.

The result obtained from the focus group discussion has also confirmed that SWDs have a strong negative attitude towards integration. In case of regular class students, though they generally appeared to have a relatively positive attitude towards integration in their response to the attitude scale items, 5 (83.3%) participants (out of 6 students) in the focus group discussion did not support the integration of SWDs. They said that the existing barriers should be reduced first. Previous studies on attitudes of students and instructors provide consistent picture. The result in this study, particularly with reference to the attitudes of SWDs, special class teachers and regular class teachers, agrees with studies undertaken by (Tervo et al., 2004; Holloway et al., 2007; Klooster et al., 2009).

While, previous studies on attitudes of students and instructors did not provide consistent picture. The result in this study, particularly with reference to the attitudes of SWDs, instructors disagrees with studies undertaken by (Hernandez et al., 2000; Klooster et al., 2009; Satchidanand et al., 2012). The major perceived factors rated more often by the SWDs to disfavor integration were: communication problem with instructors and students, fear of coping up with SWODs in academic activities, mistreatment/teasing by the regular class students and the perceived negative attitude of instructors in accepting the students with disability.

The reasons rated more- often by the instructors to disfavor integration were mainly related to the absence of sign language in regular classes, communication problem between the SDWs and SWODs (including instructors), problem in coping up with academic challenges, possible time- wastage in an effort to assist SWD and to the existing classroom size of students. Regular instructors were having view to disfavor the

integration of SWDs. Reasons mentioned by the SWDs to disfavor integration were more emphasized by them during the focus group discussion. As to the attitude of students with disability towards integration, Stainback and Stainback as cited in Chen, Ma, Li and Zhang (2011), indicated that students in a class are unsure and hesitant about integration mainstreaming considering it "*as a place where they may feel unwelcome and uncomfortable*". Zigler and Stevenson as cited in Choi (2006) on their part reported that integrated students "*feel just as stigmatized by the normal peers as do handicapped children who are educated in self contained classes*".

As noted by some researchers, SWDs, in some instances tend to come into conflict with their students without disability peers due to their own misconception about the situation. Hegarty and Pocklington as cited in (Dionneet al., 2013), for instance, reported that "*the SWDs think that they are being ridiculed when they are not*". Additionally, it has been observed that a group of SWD in one university was far too quick to misinterpret other students' actions and retaliate negatively. Hence, the complaints forwarded by the SWDs during the focus group discussion related to this same issue (misinterpretation of actions) need to be taken into account while assessing possible causes that keep apart the disable and non disable students. As seen, especially from the focus group discussion held with SWDs, other than communication problem, mistreatment and teasing directed towards the SWDs and the perceived negative attitude of instructors seem to serve as a condition to develop negative attitudes towards integration.

Therefore, without avoiding the social bias attached to the SWDs and reduce the existing communication barriers, it would be very difficult to think of the integration of SWDs into regular classrooms. Therefore, winning the positive attitude of SWDs by reducing the existing major problems is highly pertinent to promote their successful integration. Many educators noted that integration will be more effective and enables SWDs develop a positive feeling about their personal values if their non disable peers in the university accepted them (Tibebu as cited in Bowditch et al., 2008). Hallahan and Kauffman as cited in Dionne et al., (2013), on their part informed that 'social environment can largely determine the child's inclination towards making healthy social interaction. The other worrying condition that may hinder the integration of HI students, as seen from the result, is the existence of negative attitudes of regular class and special class teachers towards integration.

Padeliadu and Lampropoulou as cited in Grames and Leverentz (2010) noted that teachers' attitudes have been considered as one of the major factors guaranteeing the success of integration of students with special needs. Similarly, Bryan and Myers (2006) informed that mainstreaming person with special needs in the regular education set up "*depends crucially on the attitudes and the actions of the regular class teacher and the school team*" as a whole. Hastings and Oakfird (2003) furthermore stressed that less positive attitude towards integration on the part of special class teachers is to be perceived as losing the integral supporters in the promotion of the integration of special needs children.

Despite all the facts that confirm the positive role of instructors in the process of integration, some previous studies indicated that instructors appeared to have negative attitudes towards integration. C lark as cited in Hastings and Oakfird (2003), on comprehensive literature review of instructors' attitude towards SWDs pointed out that "*instructors typically are uncomfortable with SWDs and have negative attitudes about their placement in regular classes*". Similarly, the survey conducted by Padeliadu and Lampropoulou as cited in Hergenrath and Rhodes (2007).indicated that special education teachers were having less positive regard towards integration than regular class teachers.

As it is further indicated by Padeliadu and Lampropoulou as cited in Klooster et al.,(2009:180), "*Special education teachers may consider integration as a threat to their professional status or their special assets related to their appointments in special schools and classes.*" Moreover, it was noted that negative attitudes of instructors towards integration "may be the result of apprehension /unhappy feeling concerning their new roles in case of the implementation of integration" (Ibid). This might hold true in part as to the case of instructors in this study. However, it is also possible to assume that instructors can perceive integration negatively not because of threat to their status but due to the academic concern that they may have in preferring what appears educationally beneficial to the SWDs. As seen from the given responses, 92.3 percent of the SWDs claimed that integration will not improve the academic achievement of SWDs.

This issue was also raised in the focus group discussion and SWDs believed that they will be at disadvantage academically if they were to be integrated. Concerning the effect of integration on SWDs' academic achievement, (Scruggs & Mastropier as cited in Newman et al., 2009), reported that 70.3 percent of instructors agreed that the placement of SWDs in regular classrooms would hurt the educational progress of SWDs. Hence, as far as students and instructors are not able to perceive the academic benefits of integration to SWDs, it would be less likely to win their support to promote the integration of students with disability.

The other point to be treated was related to the attitudes of instructors towards accepting the students with disability. The observed resistance of instructors to such a maximum negative extent and the negative perception of SWDs about instructors' willingness in accepting them seem to be an alarming condition to be noted in taking appropriate measures to facilitate integration. Lack of effort on the part of universities in arranging conditions for sharing experiences has been confirmed by the key informants and also by the disability and non- disability participants during the focus group discussion. In fact, as it was reported in other studies little concern is given "*to intervene in a formal way to promote interaction between pupils with special needs and their peers*" (Hegarty & Pocklington as cited in Newman et al., 2009).

The obtained result indicated that 53.8 percent of students with disability were not willing to use hearing aids because they did not want to be identified by others. During the focus group discussion, one female SWD strongly opposed the idea of using a hearing aid not to be identified by others. The remaining five SWDs expressed their feeling that they are willing to use hearing aids only when they are in classes and keep them in their packet when they are in the outdoor. The hostile nature of the university environment (as perceived by the SWDs) and possibly the images they have (the SWDs) about their personal values can have an impact on their attitude towards using the hearing aids. On this same issue, the survey made Hegarty and Pocklington as cited in by Newman et al., (2009:445) has indicated that the SWD had difficulty in "*being singled out through wearing hearing aids*" and even through their occasional use of sign language.

As to the effect of integration in reducing the social biases attached to SWDs, 46.2% of SWDs did not believe that integration would reduce negative stereotypes towards the disability. Similarly, 50 percent of instructors reacted that integration will not reduce the negative social biases. The position taken by the regular instructors on the effect of integration to reduce social biases appeared to similar with what Scruggs and Mastropieri as cited in Dalal (2006) have reported. In their study, 63.7 percent of instructors had believed that the integration model would reduce the negative social stigma attached to disabilities.

Hence, for integration to be possible, instructors and students should perceive that integration could serve to reduce social biases for it provides the opportunity to have more understanding among each other. The interesting thing was that 65 percent of SWDs were in support of the idea that integration would reduce the social biases about hearing - impaired students. As to the social benefits of integration, 71.8 percent of SWDs, 52.5 percent of SWODs, 95 percent instructors affirmed that the opening of special classes would enable the SWDs to have closer social contact with SWODs. This positive response appears to be a healthy sign as a condition to maintain special education units/classes as an option to promote closer social and physical proximity between the SWDs and SWODs.

However, the position taken by the participants in favor of the social benefits of special classes appears to be paradoxical when responses given to item 16 are closely examined. According to the given responses to item 16, 74.4 percent of SWDs, 60 percent of instructors believed that SWDs should attend their education in the separate special class. The opinion forwarded by the SWDs during the focus group discussion was also in favor of special schools. The possible assumption that could be made about the occurrence of such inconsistent view is that the participants might have been more concerned with academic benefits than social benefits. As it can be recalled, the perceived reasons for favoring the integration of SWDs were more of social benefits than the academic ones. Concerning the effect of integration on regular class students' academic progress (item 10), 41 percent of SWDs agreed that the integration of SWDs would hinder regular students' academic progress. On the other hand, 50 percent of SWODs and 50 percent of instructors claimed that integrating SWDs would not hinder regular students'

academic progress. In Scruggs and Mastropier as cited in Choi (2006) report, it was stated that students with disabilities and without disabilities could benefit from integration experiences.

In principle, attending in regular classes was perceived as an educational right only by 43.6 percent of SWD. Both instructor respondents and SWODs were perceived equal as an educational right 65 percent. In the focus group discussion, the SWD expressed their opinion that they will not claim integration as their educational right unless others are willing to accept them positively. In fact, though integration is perceived negatively by SWD due to the perceived constraints, the participants who responded negatively should have positively valued attending education in regular classes as a right. The majority of the participants (SWDs 59% & SWODs 60%) in the two groups and all instructors did not consider disability as a sign of low ability in general. Despite the communication problem that the SWDs have, perceiving SWDs as full functioning individual may have its own positive contribution in promoting the integration of SWDs into regular classes. More students with disability (76.9%) perceived that students without disability are unwilling to accept them in their classrooms. Conversely, 65 percent of students with disability showed their willingness to accept SWDs. As it can be seen from the result, SWDs seem to misperceive the attitude of regular class students in accepting SWDs. Such misconception may prevent SWDs from making harmonious social relationship with SWODs.

Regarding the professional competence in teaching the SWDs, 80 percent of instructors responded that they feel inadequate in their professional skill to teach the SWDs in integrated classes. Similarly, 74.4 percent of SWDs and 65 percent of instructors believed that they would face difficulty in teaching if SWDs were integrated in regular classrooms. Probably, communication problem might have been taken by the participants as possible reason in judging the teaching competence of regular class teachers in the integrated classrooms. Hegarty and Pocklington as cited in Rao (2002), on this same issue reported that teachers appeared to consider themselves as ill-equipped to teach students with special needs or lack time to teach them in a large class. As a matter of fact, as noted by educators, teachers' competence in teaching students is a function of "general teaching skills, perceptions of the pupils and attitudes toward them ... the teaching context and the type of support available (Ibid, p. 148).

Concerning the academic competence of SWDs in the integrated classroom set up, 94.9 percent of SWDs and 90 percent of instructors reacted that SWDs cannot attend their education as equally as regular class students can. As seen in the focus group discussion, hearing impaired students appeared to lack confidence in facing academic challenges due to communication problem. While treating this same issue, Hegarty and Pocklington as cited in Rao (2004) warned that though SWDs lack confidence, "the lack of confidence must be seen in the context of the communication difficulty". Concerning the perceived effect of integration on classroom discipline, 45 percent of instructors and 38.5 percent of SWDs responded that the placement of students with disability into regular classes will disrupt classroom discipline. This issue has been also raised during the focus group discussion held with the disability and non - disability students. SWODs expressed their feeling that students with disability may be impulsive due to lack of understanding with SWODs.

On the other hand, SWDs believed that using a sign language in regular classes as a means of instruction could distract the attention of regular class students not to concentrate on the subject matter. They further stressed that such condition (distraction of attention) may lead SWODs develop feeling of resentment against SWDs. Previous studies on this same issue indicated that the majority of instructors prefer not to teach students with disabilities (including the hearing- impaired) partly by associating them with trouble (Padeliadu & Lampropolou cited in Gordon et al., 2004).

Similarly, in Barr and Bracchitta (2008) survey 30.3 percent teachers responded that students with disabilities could be harmful to the classroom. On the contrary, in the survey conducted by Beckett (2009), it was reported that SWD remained silent "*when they had not understood something or had run up against some difficulty*". However, it appears reasonable to assume that the way SWDs behave in a class could largely be governed by the prevailing conditions within the classroom. As to the participants' perception concerning the extent of support and follow up to be offered for SWDs, 84.6 percent of SWD, 72.5 percent of SWODs, 100 percent of instructors believed that SWDs will always need an intensified support and follow up from instructors. The position taken on this specific item possibly indicates the

"high concern" that the participants have about the assistance to be given for SWDs, and maybe the low perception of the participants towards the SWDs as self efficient individuals in facing life challenges. In previous studies it was argued that *"too high a level of supervision and staff support was detrimental and prevented pupils from growing in independence"* (Hastings& Oakfird, 2003: 428). It was noted that *"insisting an independent action from pupils led pupils to believe in themselves and so become more independent"* (Ibid. P.429).

In general, it is believed that *"The opportunity to act independently, to run risks and make mistakes, to explore the world about them and their own capacities... is an essential part of growing up"* for all children and for those who have special needs (Ibid). In fact, many educators have common understanding that maintaining the atmosphere of autonomy/feeling of independence requires *"appropriate attitudes on the part of all concerned, both pupils and staff"*(Ibid, p.431). Regarding the competence to teach in regular classrooms, 75 percent of instructors reacted that they feel competent to teach in regular classes. The positive self perception of instructors (75%) as effective to teach in regular classrooms can be taken as an asset to promote integration. Regarding statistical treatments, the mean difference between the students with disability and instructors was checked by a t - test (at a = 0.05 level) and it was not statistically significant $t(37) = -0.306, p > .05$, (Table 9). The SWDs did not appear favoring integration at required level - though it was normally expected. The mean difference between the students with disability and Students without disability in their attitude towards integration was found statistically significant $t(72) = -7.26, p < 0.05$, (Table 9).

Concerning the mean difference between students without disability and instructors, the t - test result indicated that the mean difference was not statistically significant $t(38)=1.96, p > .05$. Since both groups had nearly closer position on items in the attitude scale, this may be taken as one of the possible reasons not to obtain a statistically significant mean difference between special and regular class teachers (Table 9). The mean difference between males and females in each group was also checked by a t-test and the difference was not statistically significant. Padeliadu and Lampropoulou as cited in Hergenrather& Rhodes (2007), regarding gender, reported that, there was no difference between male and female teachers (both in special and regular class teachers) in their attitude towards school integration.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of students and instructors toward students with disabilities and identify issues and challenges in implementation of integration program into regular classes.

The analyses of literature review showed evidence of negative as well as positive attitudes of students and instructors toward students with disabilities in different times and places. The inconsistency in the result indicates the need for further study in the area. As it was seen from the result, though SWDs appeared to have a somewhat positive attitude towards integration, the majority of SWDs and instructors did not support the integration of SWDs into regular classes. The mean scores of SWDs (1.50) and instructors (1.75) were below the average value (2); indicating their negative attitude towards the integration of SWDs. The given responses to some attitude scale items and information obtained from the focus group discussion and from key informants confirmed that there was no smooth social relationship between the SWDs and SWODs.

According to qualitative analysis (focus group and interviews) results showed three unique perceptions when student and instructor participants sorted statements. The first perception disclosed participants' support of fact-oriented understanding of SWDs, as well as their opposition to inequality toward SWD. The second perception revealed student and instructor participants' good intention concerning help and strength of SWD, and their disagreement with inequality toward SWDs. The third perception indicated student and instructor participants' intention of helping SWDs, assuming their helplessness, and disagreement with inequality toward SWDs. Finally, participants' gender and close contact experience with SWDs did not differentiate those perceptions when participants sorted statements. Further, in this study, the following support services or issues facilitated the positive perception for students with disabilities at the university: (i) services of disability officer, (ii) availability of support services, (iii)

university coordination with other agencies like Students network, and (iv) attitudes of instructors and students without disability peers towards the students with disabilities.

The major perceived factors for disfavoring the integration of SWDs were mainly related to communication problem, perception of the participants about situations in the university and to feeling of incompetence in facing challenges that may be encountered in the integration process. The t- test result for groups' mean differences confirmed that there was a statistically significant mean difference between the SWDs and SOWDs; possibly owing to reasonable differences they showed in their reaction on the attitude scale items. The mean difference between SOWDs and instructors, SWDs and instructors and between male and female participants in each group was not statistically significant. Another conclusion of this study is concerned about challenges that affect the attitudes of instructors and students toward SWDs like ,the nature of disability (which instructors hold negative attitudes to more sever impairments), lack of training, adapted curriculum, availability of support, materials and equipments and Class size, which are found consistently influencing attitudes of instructors in implementation of integration program into regular classes. It seems reasonable to conclude here that with the provision of more resources and support, flexible and accessible curriculum, pre-service and in-service training; instructors' attitudes could become more positive.

As seen from the result, the demographic variables considered in this study did not show a statistically significant relation to the attitude of the participants in favor of integration when the four groups were treated independently. While the relationship of the independent variables can be viewed as interactive, the degree to which each variable has contributed to attitude towards integration did not appear clearly. Therefore, further research is required to identify the relative contribution of each variable to the development of positive attitude towards the integration of SWDs into regular classes. However, in the research that resulted in the presence of negative attitude of instructors and students with disabilities toward SWDs and integration program into regular classes, indicates the need for intervention to bring about more positive attitude, as long as instructors' attitudes remain critical for successful implementation of integration program into regular classes. Thus, the situation in return suggests that much effort have to be paid to avoid the existing communication barriers between the SWDs and the SWODs and university community and also to bring positive change of attitude among students and teachers in favor of the integration of SWDs.

In conclusion, the overall picture of the results in this study (with the exception of students without disability having less positive attitude towards integration) indicated that the majority of students with disability and instructors have negative attitude towards the integration of SWDs into regular classes. Hence, there appears to be no conducive situation to promote the integration of SWDs into regular classrooms particularly in universities that were included in the study. Finally, findings from this study and studies conducted by different researchers clearly show that the significant increase in the number of students with disabilities in higher education institutions over the past two decades is accompanied by an equal concern for the academic failure of a number of these students. These researchers contend that many factors could possibly contribute challenging situations for students with disabilities at higher education. It is important for policy makers to understand those challenging situations that affect the educational experiences of students with disabilities.

Implication: This study implies the need for the development of positive attitude towards the perception of students and instructors toward students with disabilities and successful implementation of integration program into regular classes. Further, the study entails the need to the availability of training, adapted courses/curriculum, resources and utmost responsibility of the instructors for the implementation of integration program. Another implication is for professionals, practitioners and policy makers to design programs to intervene negative attitudes and to control factors contributing towards negative attitudes in implementing successful integration.

RECOMMENDATION

The way instructors and students without disability perceive students with disabilities, the implementation of integration program and the prevailing conditions within the university set up may hinder or enhance

its promotion. Therefore effective measures need to be taken to tackle the prevailing problems that work against students with disability and the implementation of integration program. Depending upon the scope of the problem and areas of emphasis for taking actions, measures to be taken can be carried out at several levels. Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

Measures to be taken by the Government

One major area of policy is focused upon the management issues within the existing system, which are important to address the challenges and issues faced by students with disabilities. Specifically,

- Therefore, there must be clearly stated guidelines to provide special education to students with different types of disabilities. Legislation, educational policies, teachers' training programs also need to be progressively updated to realize integration as an educational modality.
- The government should play a part in creating public awareness about the nature of disability and person with disability through its accessible organizational networks. This would help to develop positive attitude in society towards the person with disability.
- Study has indicated that early intervention for person with disabilities can facilitate their successful integration with their hearing peers (Moore as cited in Rousso, 2001). According to the UNESCO's (2010) report, "*there is little or less provision for persons with disabilities*" in Ethiopia (p.105). Hence, the government should encourage the provision of special education for persons with disability at a sufficient level. This may serve as a foundation to successful integration.
- To reduce communication problem between instructors and SWDs and enhance the integration process, sign language skill training should be given for instructors through pre - and in- service training programs. Additionally, SWDs need to be assisted technologically. Hence, instruments, such as audio, hearing aids, should be accessible for SWDs.
- To promote successful integration, reasonable number of students should be rolled in a classroom. To ensure fair class enrollment, an effort should be made towards this end by constructing additional classrooms/ universities.
- Another implication is that, policy should provide additional funding resources in order to meet requirements of all types of disabilities like sign language interpreters, to buy new assistive devices or equipments, to create adaptations or friendly environment in laboratories and install automatic doors in all the places.

At University Level

Students with disability, as part of the university community, should enjoy a rewarding social and academic life with their students without disability peers. Therefore, it is highly pertinent to remove the existing barriers between the disable and non- disable university community. To do so, the preconceived beliefs that lead individuals develop negative attitude towards each other need to be changed. To achieve this end, at least in part, the following measures can be taken at the university level.

- The university should create awareness among the university community about the nature of disability and of the students with disability. This would help instructors and students to perceive SWD as persons with a potentiality to grow up. Joint activities should be wisely structured (by the university) to facilitate social interaction between the SWDs and SWODs. Closer social and physical proximity between students may bring positive attitude towards each other.
- The university management should review the current policy and make changes in the existing system. Support for students with disabilities should be decentralised in entire campus. Instead of having a single support cell in one place, there should be more advocacy and support centres or networks which could help students with disabilities.
- The university should appreciate diversity and respond to varying needs of students to reach to their full potential. The university should reassure that there is respect to individual differences and mutual understanding between and among instructors and students.
- Continuous assessment of SWDs' attitude own and towards integration should be made to identify interested individuals to join regular classes. Giving opportunity to interested SWDs to join regular classes may initiate others to favor integration.

- There should be collaboration among instructors for sharing experiences and arrange ongoing supports to the SWDs and SWODs students.
- All equipment available in the resource rooms should be in use to help SWDs to acquire certain skills that would be helpful in their future life.
- Students with disability must be informed about their own personal values and potentiality to make them develop a positive self- image in their interaction with the university community.
- To reduce communication problem, sign language and others training should be given to instructors and students by those instructors who are already trained related students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities appear to be isolated not only in universities but also in their family. Therefore, the university needs to work closely with parents to discuss the types of support that should be given to SWD to facilitate communication both at home and university level.
- The main important point for university is that the persons who are employed as disability officers, or coordinators, should be full-time employees. In order to properly understand the problems of students with disabilities and improve their educational experience, it is better if they are employed on the basis of certain qualifications like their knowledge, awareness and work and educational background related to disability issues.
- Guidance and counseling service appears to play an important role in creating favorable university climate if professionally/ educationally meaningful services were to be given to the university community. Hence, though priority is given to universities, guidance and counseling service should be extended to universities where special units are available.

Instructors and Students

- Instructors should be oriented about the nature of disabilities and the potentiality to be cultivated in SWD so that they can have better understanding to them and promote integration.
- They should appreciate individual differences and be prepared/ willing to meet academic and social challenges resulting from diverse individual needs by acquiring knowledge about the nature of individual differences.
- Instructors should work hand - in - hand to achieve successful integration through sharing experiences.
- Instructors should guide learning experiences as opportunities to develop respect, trust and sense of responsibility among students (SWDs & SWODs).
- There is need to undertake more sensitization and awareness regarding SWD issues and challenges. Awards can also be offered to those students and instructors who assist and promote the well-being of students with disability within the campus.
- Promotion of self-advocacy among the students with disabilities is greatly needed. There is need to encourage students with disability, especially the students who are more at risk of experiencing to report those incidences and to talk about it freely. In conclusion, "*The development of positive attitudes and the recognition of the strength and value of each individual can only occur when students have the opportunity to grow up together with the expectation and modeling of acceptance and support for each member of the university community*" (Stainback & Stainback, as cited in Bowditch, Buono, & Stewart, 2008).

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