

ABSTRACT

This dissertation thesis is designed as a theoretical and research survey focusing on the currently marginalised issue of intact pupils' preconceptions of intellectual disability. The survey aims to outline the concept of intellectual disability concisely and to accentuate the current paradigm shift in education with regards to integration and inclusion. Particular attention was paid to the theoretical and epistemological basis of preconceptions as well as to the current state of scientific knowledge of the presented area. Research was conducted in order to analyse and characterise intact pupils' preconceptions of intellectual disability. Furthermore, the empirical study aimed to determine whether pupils' preconceptions differ depending on their gender, year of school attended and the declared experience of persons with intellectual disability. A transversal quantitative survey was conducted at 22 mainstream basic schools in the Czech Republic. The research sample consisted of 2230 intact pupils attending the 5th, 7th and 9th forms of basic schools. Data were collected by means of mind mapping and non-standardised questionnaire of our own construction. The findings demonstrate that pupils perceive the phenomenon of intellectual disability in terms of medical paradigm (emphasising the somato-pathological aspect of handicap with fixed ideas of the inability of persons with such handicap prevalent as well as the idea of such persons' dependence on the help of others). Moreover, the findings allude to developmental tendencies on the level of cognitive dimension of preconceptions of intellectual disability (misconceptions were particularly detected amongst 5th-form pupils with no experience of intellectual disability persons). General attitudes to persons with intellectual disability can be defined as rather positive, however, intact pupils' attitudes towards the integration of peers with intellectual disability into mainstream education were rather negative. These pupils' pro-segregation attitudes can be perceived as predictors of sorts as they may hinder the process of integration/inclusion of pupils with intellectual disability into mainstream basic schools. Based on the empirical research findings, the dissertation thesis also provides specific proposals and measures for educational theory and practice, limitations of the survey are discussed and stimuli for follow-up research are outlined.

KEY WORDS

Basic-school pupils, preconceptions, misconceptions, intellectual disability, integration/inclusion, quantitative research, mind map, questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis, multivariate linear regression