

Abstract

The present study aimed at exploring the challenges of shadowing a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder in an inclusive setting. A purposive sampling as well as snowball sampling strategy were used to recruit sample of the study. The study sample consisted of (N=6) shadow teachers working in inclusive schools in Lahore. The age range of participants was between 20-30 years. To elicit a comprehensive response regarding the challenges of shadowing a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder in an inclusive setting, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed. The interviews were audio-recorded and later on the recordings were transcribed for an in-depth and a detailed analysis. The analysis was done using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Emergent and sub-ordinate themes were derived from the transcription of each participant individually. After further analysis, super-ordinate themes were derived which included Disorder Related Deficits, Teacher's Lack of Affirmative Support, Peer's Unsupportive Attitude, Social Exclusion, Limited Resources, Lack of Proper SEN Department, Bullying and Social Rejection, Parent's Lack of Support, Unrealistic Expectations, Professional Disregard, Difficult Nature of Job and Academic Burden. Eventually, a full-fledge and elaborative discussion was offered in order to aid understanding of themes, how they are interlinked and to give a detailed overview of participants' experiences. This study can be used by the school administration, psychologists, researchers, mental health providers as well as policy makers to address the individualized needs of shadow teachers and autistic students. It will also provide grounds for the management of underlying issues.