



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY WITHIN
EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM FOR VISUALLY- IMPAIRED
LEARNERS IN PAKISTAN***

MALIK SHAZIA

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PAKISTAN**

By

MALIK SHAZIA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2018

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate my accomplishment to my family. To my beloved Father, Malik Ashiq Hussain, who has always been my greatest inspiration and the reason why I set goals in my life, I love you, Abbu G, because you are my living example of what it means to work hard, to have self-respect, and to live a spiritually peaceful life.

To my sweet mother, Mussarrat Bibi, who spoke this achievement into my life when I was a child. "I wish to see you a doctor one day!" I love you and will never forget your prayers, influence and love in my life, Ammi G.

To my loving husband, Javid Iqbal, thank you for taking this journey with me. Even though we struggled hard and sacrificed throughout this process, you never quit and you motivated me to finish what we started. You are my best friend, confidante, and love of my life.

To my cute son, Muhammad Ghaus Javid, am grateful for all the sacrifices you have done to complete my tough journey and your lovely presence in my life motivated me to go through my aims. Love you, which has no measures!

I love you all more than words can express.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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January 2018

Chairman : Umi Kalthom Abdul Manaf, PhD
Faculty : Educational Studies

This study was conducted to understand the parental involvement on the Orientation and Mobility (O&M) for Visually Impaired Learners (VIL) within the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) in Pakistan. In particular, it was aimed to examine parental involvement in O&M practices, challenges encountered by parents and teachers in handling VIL with finding various ways in handling these challenges. Communication Barrier with solving strategies between parents and teachers of VIL were identified in relation to O&M practices that are needed for VIL to become independent. Four research questions were formulated for this study. To examine the phenomenon of parental involvement on the O&M, parental involvement theories were applied, such as (i) Epstein (1995), (ii) Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), (iii) Turnbull, Summers, and Brotherson (1984). These theories were used to support the study by expanding its usage to a new context by incorporating the Disability Social Model developed by Rieser (2002), to better improve and understand the curriculum issues of VIL in Pakistan.

The study employed qualitative interpretive case study approach. Data was gathered through semi structured interviews as the major technique and by means of observations to support. Semi structured interviews were carried out to obtain a wide range of understandings, experiences and perspectives among parents of VIL and teachers of O&M and observations were done to examine O&M practices with a checklist based on literature review. Ten parent and teacher respondents were involved in this study and deliberately were chosen from two secondary level Government institutions for visually impaired in Lahore, Pakistan. Several methods were used to check the trustworthiness, or credibility of this study. The study used a triangulation method to justify the credibility of the research through researcher as

primary instrument, interviews, and observations. The collected data were transcribed in verbatim before manually analyzed through a Cross-Case Analysis Approach. The major findings indicated that there was a lack of parental involvement in O&M practices from the parents and teachers' perspectives. In O&M practices, parental involvement plays a crucial part of the process. Knowledge of O&M, parent training and support, strong parental role and insufficient parental involvement were the emerging themes discovered in the study. Some other conceptual issues were also identified, such as; lack of communication, interaction, parental assistance and meeting between parents-teachers, leading to less effective communication between them. Equally parents and teachers alike were facing many challenges in managing VIL encompassing issues on parenting of VIL, time constraints, and non-acceptance within the community for VIL.

In addition, the findings revealed parent-teacher views on how to address challenges in handling VIL. There were suggestions from respondents on enhancing the roles of parents such as frequent visits to the schools, solving the problems of VIL, increasing parental awareness and positive roles of the media. Furthermore, the findings enhanced the concept that VIL should learn O&M practices to become independent by mobility techniques, cane techniques, sighted guide and self protection techniques. The study has notably contributed to the field of curriculum and instruction field through the improvement of ECC in relation to O&M practices for VIL. According to the respondents, mastery of O&M practices will enable VIL to become independent in their environment.

From the above findings, it was concluded that the lack of parental involvement in O&M practices within the ECC has led to the problems encountered by respondents. In addition, since there are lack of effective communication between parents and teachers, it has become fundamental in the comprehensive conceptualization of O&M involving parental involvement. This study also summarized that there is an urgent need for parental involvement in O&M and to implement inclusive special education policy with an effective strategy to address parental challenges in handling VIL. Several strategies have been recommended to address the problematic elements of parental involvement in O&M practices that have been identified in the context of the conducted study and to increase parental involvement in O&M practices in order to provide ample independence to VIL within their environment.

From the above findings, this study concluded that enabling parental involvement in O&M practices to make VIL independent. Underpinned Knowledge of O&M, parental support, strong parental role as to gain successful parental involvement were intensively tying all these themes on the meaning and experience with ingrained active parental involvement therefore, parental involvement in O&M emerged. Besides, it was concluded that applying institutional structures such as updating daily diaries, conducting parent-teacher meetings, seminars, and inclusion of the positive roles of media to promote effective communication. In terms of practice, it is suggested that there should be a provision of training programs for the O&M

teachers for conducting parent-teacher meetings with the expansion towards collaboration between them as well as improving coordination. This study has contributed to providing valuable information with a focus on parental involvement in O&M, which will be beneficial to policy makers by adding parental involvement in special education. Finally, it is recommended for future studies to conduct similar studies with other types of disabilities which will subsequently provide additional insights on the phenomenon of parental involvement in the field of curriculum and instruction.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PENGLIBATAN IBU BAPA DALAM ORIENTASI DAN MOBILITI DALAM KURIKULUM TERAS MELUAS UNTUK PELAJAR CACAT PENGLIHATAN DI PAKISTAN

Oleh

MALIK SHAZIA

Januari 2018

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Kajian ini dijalankan untuk memahami penglibatan ibu bapa terhadap Orientasi dan Mobiliti (*O&M*) untuk pelajar cacat penglihatan (*VIL*) dalam *Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)* di Pakistan. Khususnya, ia bertujuan untuk meneliti penglibatan ibu bapa dalam amalan *O&M*, cabaran ibu bapa dan guru dalam pengendalian *VIL*, dan juga mencari beberapa cara yang sesuai untuk menangani cabaran tersebut. Halangan komunikasi antara ibu bapa dan guru *VIL* didapati adalah salah satu cabaran yang dikenal pasti dalam amalan *O&M* bagi *VIL*. Kajian ini mengkaji enam persoalan kajian. Bagi mengkaji fenomena penglibatan ibu bapa terhadap *O&M* beberapateori telah digunapakai dania merangkumi, (i) teori penglibatan ibu bapa oleh Epstein (1995), (ii) Hoover-Dempsey dan Sandler (1995), (ii) Turnbull, Summers, dan Brotherson (1984). Seterusnya teori-teori ini telah digunakan untuk menyokong kajian ini melalui pengembangan penggunaannya kepada konteks baharu dengan mengabungkan Model Sosial Hilang Upaya oleh Rieser (2002), bagi memperbaiki dan untuk lebih memahami isu kurikulum *VIL* di Pakistan.

Reka bentuk kajian adalah menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes interpretif kualitatif. Data dikumpul melalui temu bual separa berstruktur sebagai teknik utama dan pemerhatian dan semakan dokumen sebagai teknik sokongan. Temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman, pengalaman dan perspektif di kalangan lima orang ibu bapa *VIL* dan lima orang guru *O&M* bagi *VIL*, bagi mengkaji amalan *O&M* mereka. Sepuluh orang responden telah terlibat di dalam kajian ini dan dipilih secara sengaja daripada dua institusi pendidikan untuk pelajar hilang penglihatan tahap menengah kerajaan di Lahore, Pakistan. Beberapa kaedah telah digunakan untuk menyemak kesahihan dan kebolehpercayaan kajian ini. Kajian ini juga menggunakan kaedah triangulasi bagi menjustifikasi

kebolehpercayaan kajian melalui penyemakan ahli, ulasan rakan sebaya, dan jejak audit. Data yang dikumpul telah ditranskripsi secara verbatim sebelum dianalisis secara manual melalui Pendekatan Analisis Kes Silang.

Penemuan tematik utama kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa penglibatan ibu bapa adalah kurang di dalam amalan *O&M* daripada ulasan perspektif yang diterima daripada ibu bapa dan guru-guru. Di dalam amalan *O&M*, penglibatan ibu bapa adalah amat penting untuk proses perlaksanaannya. Kurangnya latihan dan sokongan ibu bapa, peranan ibu bapa dan penglibatan ibu bapa adalah merupakan tema yang telah timbul dalam kajian ini. Beberapa halangan lain yang dikesan adalah akibat kurangnya komunikasi, interaksi, bantuan ibu bapa dan perjumpaan antara ibu bapa dan guru, yang membawa kepada komunikasi yang kurang efektif di antara ibu bapa dan guru-guru *VIL*. Ibu bapa dan guru-guru telah menghadapi cabaran yang sama di dalam pengurusan *VIL* seperti, keibubapaan, kekangan masa, cabaran budaya dan ketidakterimaan di dalam masyarakat.

Kajian ini telah memperoleh pandangan daripada ibu bapa-guru mengenai cara untuk menangani cabaran dalam pengurusan *VIL*. Beberapa cadangan telah diterima mengenai cara untuk meningkatkan peranan ibu-bapa seperti kekerapan ibu bapa melawat sekolah, penyelesaian masalah *VIL*, peningkatan kesedaran ibu bapa dan juga menyedari akan peranan positif pihak media. Di samping itu, penemuan seterusnya menunjukkan bahawa *VIL* perlu belajar amalan *O&M* melalui teknik mobiliti, teknik tongkat, bimbingan penglihatan, dan teknik perlindungan sendiri di dalam usaha peningkatan tahap berdikari mereka. Kajian ini telah menyumbang kepada bidang kurikulum dan pengajaran melalui penambahbaikan *ECC*, daripada segi hubungan amalan *ECC* dengan *O&M* untuk *VIL*. Mengikut ibu bapa dan guru-guru *VIL*, latihan *O&M* membolehkan mereka berdikari di dalam alam persekitaran mereka.

Berdasarkan penemuan-penemuan di atas, dapat disimpulkan bahawa kekurangan kandungan *ECC* adalah daripada segi hubungan dengan *O&M* yang membawa kepada masalah yang dihadapi oleh *VIL*. Ini ditambah pula dengan komunikasi yang kurang efektif di antara ibu bapa dan guru-guru yang merupakan asas penting di dalam pengkonsepsualan *O&M* yang komprehensif melalui penglibatan ibu bapa. Kajian ini juga merumuskan bahawa terdapat keperluan yang mendesak untuk penglibatan ibu bapa di dalam *O&M* serta bagi tujuan pelaksanaan polisi pendidikan khas yang inklusif, serta strategi efektif bagi menangani cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi di kalangan ibu bapa dan guru-guru *VIL*. Beberapa kaedah telah disyorkan untuk menangani elemen yang bermasalah bagi amalan *O&M* yang telah dikenal pasti di dalam konteks kajian yang dijalankan dan seterusnya dapat meningkatkan amalan *O&M* melalui penglibatan ibu bapa di dalam usaha memberikan kebebasan secukupnya kepada *VIL* di dalam persekitaran mereka.

Antaranya ialah penglibatan ibu bapa dari segi struktur institusional, seperti mengemaskini daili harian, pelaksanaan perjumpaan ibu bapa-guru, penganjuran seminar, dan peranan positif pihak media. Dari segi amalan, telah dicadangkan keperluan mengadakan peruntukan secukupnya bagi program latihan guru-guru *O&M* di dalam mengatur perjumpaan ibu bapa-guru di dalam usaha memperluaskan kerjasama di antara mereka, di samping memperbaiki koordinasi di antara penglibatan ibu bapa di dalam amalan *O&M*. Kajian ini telah memberi maklumat yang bernilai dengan memfokuskan penglibatan ibu bapa di dalam *O&M*. Ini akan memberi manfaat kepada penggubal polisi bagi penambahbaikan polisi pendidikan khas dengan adanya penglibatan ibu bapa. Akhir sekali, untuk penyelidikan masa hadapan, dicadangkan untuk membuat persamaan kajian ke atas pelajar kurang upaya yang lain bagi tujuan memperolehi pandangan tambahan mengenai fenomena penglibatan ibu bapa di dalam bidang kajian kurikulum dan pengajaran.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 12 January 2018 to conduct the final examination of Malik Shazia on her thesis entitled "Parental Involvement in Orientation and Mobility within Expanded Core Curriculum for Visually-Impaired Learners in Pakistan" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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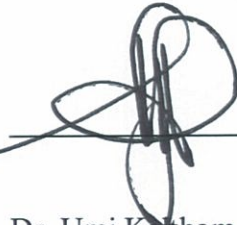
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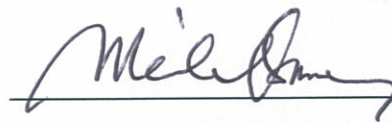


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

O&M	Orientation and Mobility
VIL	Visually Impaired Learner
VILs	Visually Impaired Learners
ECC	Expanded Core Curriculum
IDEA	Individual with Disabilities Education Act
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
EFA	Education For All
WHO	World Health Organization
ETAs	Electronic Travel Aids
IEP	Individual Education Plan
NLTS2	National Longitudinal Transition Study-2

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It covers the background of the study that includes: National and International policies of special education, the National Agenda, the importance of parental involvement, orientation and mobility (O&M) of visually impaired learners (VIL), the expanded core curriculum (ECC) and its implementing strategies. The discussion continues with the statement of the problems, objectives of the study, research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, limitations of the study. This chapter ends with the summary of chapter one.

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is the fundamental right of every child and it includes learners with visual impairment to acquire the basic and necessary education according to their disability needs (The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). VIL's face various social and educational challenges that need to be overcome with the help of the O&M. Besides the acquisition of academic skills, VIL also needs to be taught O&M skills similar as their sighted peers that include learning through observation or incidental learning. It is crucial to learn these skills in a functional and purposeful way by VIL, in order to be successful and independent adults (Ringwalt, 2013).

In 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that there were 314 million people with visual impairments in the world and about 12 million of them were children between the ages of 5 to 15 years. The report also estimated that 1.4 million children in the world had significant disabilities and 90 percent of them were living in the developing countries. The high alarming percentage of this population needs to be addressed on their educational needs, one of which is O&M by relating it with the ECC.

Special educational legislations and practices have always been considered as important factors in strengthening the parental roles and increasing the opportunity for families to get involved in the education of their VILs. To this end, provisions were provided on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as to assure parental involvement and safeguards in the implementation and development of the child's educational program. Regardless of these authorized concerns, many families are not eager to get involved in planning such programs for their VIL (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997). Thus the following sections explain the National and International policies in relation to special education for the VIL and their educational system in Pakistan. The following part describes about the VIL.

1.1.1 Visually Impaired Learners

The importance Visually Impaired term is used to define those individuals whose have no visual abilities to a complete blindness. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), “visual impairment, including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness” (Individual’s Disabilities Education Act, 2004). Blindness, “referring to the absence of usable vision, is often used to describe individuals who may be able to perceive light or images, but are not able to use residual vision for functional purposes” (Jan, Freeman, and Scott, 1977).

In society, visually impaired persons face many barriers and challenges due to their impairment, which cause isolation (Fatima et al., 2013). This is a fact that the VIL face many difficulties in performing a task to go from one place to another due to their disability (Lahav, 2014). According to Corn & Koenig (1996), “having difficulty accomplishing visual tasks, even with the use of prescribed corrective lenses, but who can enhance his or her ability to accomplish these tasks with the use of compensatory visual strategies, low vision and other devices, and environmental modifications” (p. 4). Tobin (1994), asserts: “In the United Kingdom, a person is eligible to be registered as blind if he is ‘so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential’ (p. 1). The VIL need an adapted education for their hidden needs, potentials and capacities (Ajuwon, 2014). This adapted education need to be a set of O&M skills for the independent movement of VIL. And this set of O&M skills for VIL is required in a developing country like Pakistan. In the following section, the description of O&M is given before discussing the ECC and implementing strategies.

1.1.2 Orientation & Mobility for Visually Impaired Learners

Orientation & Mobility are recognized as an integral components of the ECC for students with visual impairments (Hatlen, 1996). A learner with visual impairments requires direct and sequential instruction provided by an O&M specialist (Lohmeier, Blankenship, & Hatlen, 2009) to be able to acquire the skills necessary to interact with others (Pavey, Douglas, McLinden, & McCall, 2003). In addition, they could facilitate their access to educational, vocational, social, and recreational opportunities (McDonnall, 2011; Riley, 2000; Wolffe & Kelly, 2011). Many environmental information cannot be achieved if one only depends on the vision in the movement of their environment. Further, Leong (1996) explained that if there is no sight, other senses should be used alternatively, like touching and hearing. A spatial map is essential for successful orientation of VIL (Majerova, 2015). With the use of other senses, the VIL need to learn about their surroundings through their cognitive skills (Guth & Rieser, 1997). Without vision, such person’s face psychological difficulties and O&M support them in acquisition of conceptual and perceptual information (Lahav et al., 2015).

According to Hill & Ponder (1976), in the area of O&M, spatial orientation is defined as “the process of using the senses to establish one’s position and relationship to all other significant objects in one’s environment” (p. 3). Jacobson (1983) explained that it is also “the ability to use one’s remaining senses to understand one’s location in the environment at any given time”(p. 3), and “the ability to establish and maintain an awareness of one’s position in space” (LaGrow and Weessies, 1994, p. 9). Parents of VIL need to get support and information from O&M teachers to solve the unique needs of VIL (Kirk, 2011). Cotuk (2015) concluded that VIL are encouraged by the learning of mobility skills with their siblings and utilization of these skills in their daily life. This observation offers a vital set of O&M to unveil a useful understanding of Pakistani parent involvement in O&M skills. The following section presents the importance of parental involvement.

1.1.3 Importance of Parental Involvement

Morrison (2007) emphasized that the children’s performance at school is affected by parental involvement. Likewise, Kindiki (2009) asserted that when there is sufficient parental involvements in a child’s education, an increase motivation and academic achievement can be observed. When a partnership between parents and teachers are found, students realize that for their success both environments are in fact on the coordinating and investing their time and resources. Parental involvement seems to be an active combination of commitment and participation between parent and teacher (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011). Further study by Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) explored parental involvement includes parents support and participation at home and in school, which contributed to the direct impacts on the performance of their children’s education directly.

Parental involvement is explained as, parents and their active roles to collaborate in their children’s development, learning, and ensuring that they are well known about the school lives of their children and a relation of partnership with school (Williams & Ullman, 2002). According to Chan (1995), “parental involvement is not something that is “done” to “parents” (p. 19). It is rather what parents and the school do collaboratively and collectively to ensure effective and adequate policy making and implementation, funding, discipline, staffing and facilities for their children’s success. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) identified that to maximize the potential for children schooling, they require parental involvement.

Parental involvement and collaboration between parents of VIL and teachers contributes to students’ academic success (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Several studies showed a connection in exploring parental involvement in educational programs and student academic achievement, cognitive growth, and emotional well-being (Epstein, 2010). In education, parental involvement is part of an educational philosophy advocating a child-centered curriculum in special education practices. Furthermore, International research has emphasized on the involvement of parents in planning and implementing educational programs for disabled students (Angel,

Stoner, & Shelden, 2009; Hobbs & Silla, 2008; Hui-Chen & Mason, 2008). Insufficient involvement of parents may result in less responsiveness to VILs needs.

Some studies demonstrated a positive and direct association between parental involvement and motivation towards academic achievement (Crozier & Reay, 2005; Henderson & Berla, 1997). Cheeks (2012) added that parental involvement creates partnerships among schools, parents, and communities. The resulting partnerships develop effective communication among students, parents, and teachers from home to school and school to home. Through ongoing and active communication, teachers and parents share information and resources regarding students' academic and behavioral conduct. Together, these efforts establish a solid foundation for both. Therefore, a parent-teacher communication is essential in promoting parental involvement (Ames, Khoju, Watkins, 1993; Ho Willms; Pang & Watkins, 2000). There were communication barriers between parents and teachers in the context of the study. Taken together, with improved parent-teacher communication and parental involvement was expected to reflect the parents and teachers of VIL in Pakistan context. Thus, the current study addresses the communication barriers faced by parents and teachers of VIL in relation to O&M.

Furthermore, the research by Murray suggested that without effective hands-on experience and collaboration with each other, parents and educators may experience incompetent partnerships and face communication barriers (Murray et al., 2011). It is imperative that parents and families, communities, and schools work cooperatively and collaboratively with one another to improve upon the learning experience of children (Westwood-Robinette, 2014). This observation offers a vital set to unveil useful understanding from the parents and teachers of VIL in respect of the involvement of parents in O&M and to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers.

1.1.4 National and International Policies of Special Education

The importance and the needs of special education relating to visual impairment in Pakistan has been felt for many years in different educational institutions. Policies were highlighted for the first time on the importance of special education by the Commission on National Education (1959). After that the Educational Policy (1972) and the National Policy and Implementation Program (1979) shed more light to the importance to this section. The same phenomenon was also reflected in the medium-term (five-year) plans. This was felt even more serious when the Directorate General of Special Education, Islamabad formulated a draft of National Policy for Special Education in 1986 and its revision in 1988 as to meet the emerging needs of the special / disabled population. Later in 1999, another special educational policy was established. Government of Pakistan launched the latest National Policy in 2002, for people with disabilities, which has been implemented and is currently effectively in place. In 1985, special education was started for VIL in Sunrise special education school Lahore, Pakistan. This is considered the starting point of O&M training in the educational institute in Pakistan.

The issue of educating children with visual impairment is a serious concern in a country like Pakistan, where the system of education, social approach, communal behavior and socioeconomic conditions of families are unable to support and help VIL in a way that he/she actually deserves (Ahmed, Khan, & Nasem, 2011). It was the right time to provide such type of educational system for VIL. And this system of education needs to be a form of O&M skills that can help VIL to be independent in their daily lives.

In the 1994, in the Goals legislation 2000, there were eight key goals highlighted; one was specifically related to the important area of parental involvement, in addition to this the academic institutions need to encourage the partnerships between parent-teacher that will eventually increase parental involvement and will be more towards emphasizing parental contribution for the development of educational, social and emotional progress of the child (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The significance of parent-educator partnerships is imperative because of several legislative acts such as, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1975, 1997) and No Child Left Behind (2002) as well as advocated by many educational and professional organizations, including the Exceptional Children Council, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (Murray, Ackermann-Spain, Williams, & Ryley, 2011). All these educational Acts support the vital role of parental involvement in the education of their disabled children and the present study is conducted in the light of the parental involvement phenomenon.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2006 and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 support the rights of families to become involved in the education of their children (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [OSERS], 2009). The IDEA documents also emphasized a child-centered curriculum (the Expanded Core Curriculum) as the essence of special education, and mandated that each VIL needs to receive O&M, as one of the components of the ECC. The specific emphasis in the documents is on the importance of parental involvement. The specific guidelines advocated the procedures for parent-teacher collaboration in schools (Hebel, 2014). Until recently, however, there have been no reliable evidences that combine parental involvement in O&M and collaboration between parents and teachers of VIL in Pakistan's context.

In the following section, table 1.1 illustrates province wise population by disability in Pakistan for the year 2012. The table highlighted the alarming high number of VIL in the province of Punjab with the emphasis on the seriousness of disability that is actually the main reason as to conduct this study.

Table 1.1 : Province wise population by disability in Pakistan (2012)

District	Total	Blind	Deaf/ Mute	Crippled	Insane	Mentally Retarded	Multiple disability	Others
Punjab	2816795	243986	233737	598235	189907	220308	228478	1102143
Sindh	1432148	108308	89411	1548000	89453	107466	129185	753525
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	560265	40084	42894	175593	32822	41575	45883	181414
Balochistan	210391	18270	11137	30947	9791	1316	13402	113715
Islamabad	16352	1508	1978	4888	2038	745	745	3880
Total	5035951	412157	379157	964463	324010	417692	417692	2154677

Source: Persons with disabilities (PWDs) statistics in Pakistan (Awan, 2012).

The following part sheds light on the importance of the National Agenda.

1.1.5 The National Agenda

The National Agenda emerged among educators of the visually impaired that the required independent skills were not being addressed completely in the general academic curriculum. The originators of the National Agenda believed that the educational needs of VIL were not meeting the unique needs of this group. The National Agenda brought to the forefront needs to assess the mainstream curriculum through which students identified as blind were being taught (National Agenda, 2004, p. 1).

The National Agenda developed a set of goal statements that were sent to parents, VIL, and teachers of the visually impaired requesting to get feedback as “likelihood of goal statements being achieved by 2000 and the impact on education for students who were visually impaired” (National Agenda, 2004, p. 3). The work of this group culminated in what is referred to in Goal 8 as the ECC. Goal 8 and the ECC are the focus of my study as there is less parental involvements in O&M especially in Pakistan. However, at present, there is still a lack of parental involvements in O&M (Aziz, 2011) within the guidelines of the ECC in Pakistan. Therefore, to prepare these learners with such independent skills of O&M, a study is needed on how parents can be involved in O&M to gain a successful parental involvement and coping with parental challenges in handling VIL. Teachers’ perspectives as regards to the strategies for effective communication to implement O&M practices for learners with visual impairment are also necessary. (For a detailed summary of the important components of the National Agenda, please refer to Appendix Q).

1.1.6 The Expanded Core Curriculum and Implementing Strategies

Education is the most common experience of the children of the whole world. It is not about getting only special children into schools, but making sure that all special schools work in the best of these children who are entrusted to them. Schools provides various learning experiences that prepare these special children for their

future lives. At the heart of these learning experiences is the curriculum (Olibie, 2014). The ECC is also known as “disability specific curriculum” that was written to acknowledge the needs of VIL. The ECC reflects a body of knowledge and skills that are needed by VIL. It contains nine critical components and O&M is one of the most critical and important component of ECC. All nine components can be referred (Appendix R).

The word “curriculum” comes from the Latin word “currere” which means “a course to be run”. By this definition, curriculum signifies a course of studies followed by students in a teaching institution. A curriculum is a “plan or program of all experiences which the learner encounters under the direction of a school” (Tanner & Tanner, 1995, 158). It also specifies the main teaching, learning and assessment methods and provides an indication of the learning resources required to support the effective implementation of the course.

The place of curriculum in education makes it axiomatic that concerted efforts be made at all times to implement a curriculum that meets the needs of the society. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) note that curriculum implementation focuses on the processes and practices through which a curriculum is implemented. The task of curriculum implementation as described in Thomas (2012) involves putting into practice the stipulated curriculum policies, content and innovations. Curriculum implementation involves the performance of teaching tasks and rendering of expected services as specified in the curriculum. Provision of required learning support to VIL include, classroom adaptations, curriculum modifications and O&M in the area of school boundaries. To achieve such required responsibility, the involvement of teachers, parents and community is considered necessary to accomplish the responsibility (Habulezi & Phasha, 2012).

Implementing the curriculum is the most crucial and sometimes the most difficult phase of the curriculum development process. This is because the final destination of any curriculum (whether it be a school, college, university or training organization) is the classroom involving students, teachers, administrators and the community (parents). Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (University of Zimbabwe, 1995, p. 8). Effective implementation requires, among other things, the involvement of parents in the education of their children (Olibie, 2014). Further, VIL need modifications in the existing curriculum and also require special services along with the adopted materials and existing services (Ali & Hameed, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problems

The importance of orientation and mobility (Barraga & Erin, 1992; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999) cannot be overstated. Effective use of O&M skills enables VIL’s to perform better and accomplish their daily routines as independent individuals (Rosen

& Joffe, 1999). These skills need by VIL in moving towards the targeted goals safely, efficiently and independently (Hill & Ponder, 1976; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999). Moreover, VIL need to perform the required level of mobility skills (Altunay, 2003; Tuncer & Altunay, 1999). For that reason, parental involvement in Pakistan and elsewhere, in O&M for VIL and parent-teacher communication is essential (Ames, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Ho & Willms; Pang & Watkins, 2000).

Similarly, understanding the challenges that parents' of the VIL face are crucial, in order to internalize the ECC on O&M skills in a meaningful manner (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010). Effective implementation requires, among other things, the involvement of parents' in the education (O&M) of their children (Olibie, 2014). Therefore, a need to involve the parents of VIL in O&M practices is pertinent. In its place, however, mostly the focus has been directed to academic performance as a necessary indicator to appreciate VIL performance with the involvement of their parents' (Barnard, 2004; Fan & Chen, 2001; Weissberg, Kasprow, & Michael, 1999). However, a more fundamental study of parental involvement that has yet to be addressed is related to the urgent need of parental involvement in O&M that is not addressed yet. The lack of research based on parental involvement (Aziz, 2007) in O&M for this visually impaired population calls for more research in this area.

To date, there are relatively few studies on the above aspects, mainly those that focus on the process, rather than the outcomes, of helping VIL to excel in the O&M skills (Weissberg, Kasprow, & Michael, 1999). In this case, most parents of VIL fail to fit in with the demanding requirements of the ECC on O&M skills (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010). As the literature indicates (Fernandez, 2004; Dean, 1998), limited research has been conducted to explore parental involvements towards O&M of VIL. Only two studies were found with parental involvement in O&M outside Pakistan. Fernandez (2004) explored the focus of parental involvement in O&M with cultural backgrounds of Puerto Rican families. Secondly, Dean (1998) investigated Hispanic parent' perceptions of O&M services with relevance to ethnicity and culture of this group of population. There is a lack of research with parental involvement in education of VIL (Aziz, 2007) especially in O&M. For these reasons, this study is conducted in detail on parental involvement in O&M for VIL in Pakistan to add to the body of literature in the field of Curriculum and Instructions.

In this regard, parental involvement in education of VIL largely motivates pupils' motivation for their academic work and their commitment to school (González, Willems, & Doan, 2005; Urdan, Solek, Schoenfelder, & 2007; Mo & Singh, 2008). There is a need to employ institutional communications methods (news letters and parent-teacher meetings) (Westwood-Robinette, 2014). Therefore, a parent-teacher communication is essential in promoting parental involvement (Ames, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Ho & Willms; Pang & Watkins, 2000). Hence, this lack of coordination (Martinez & Alvarez, 2005) and communication barriers make parental involvement, feeling ill to communicate (Hoover-Dempsey, 2002).

Consequently, scarcity of research has been found in Pakistan targeting parents' of VIL with their own involvement in O&M (Aziz, 2007). Previous studies, however, have been conducted outside Pakistan contexts, such as Hill & Ponder, (1976); Tuncer & Altunay, (1999) which focused on the essence of

O&M skills efficiently and independence for VIL. Elsewhere, Sapp and Hatlen (2010) seemed to focus on the challenges. Until recently, there have been no reliable qualitative research evidences on parental involvements, parent-teachers communication barriers, and parental challenges on VIL's O&M practices in Pakistan's education context. Therefore, this study is proposed to fill the gaps in literatures focusing on the parental involvement in O&M within the ECC for VIL in Pakistan in much detail.

Theoretically, this research attempts to make a contribution of knowledge to the existing parental involvement model developed by Epstein (1995), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), Turnbull, Summers, and Brotherson (1984) by expanding its usage to a new context with collaboration of the social model of disability developed by Rieser (2002) to better improve the curriculum issues of VIL in Pakistan. Parental involvement models are used in western countries with different perspectives of researches, but the applicability of parental involvement theory is needed in Pakistan. Therefore, this research is conducted with the aim to fill the theoretical gap of parental involvement in O&M for VIL.

Access to the core curriculum is often a challenge for VIL. The challenges are providing adaptation material and skills in a format that VIL can access. Specialized equipment, adaptation materials, O&M skills and instructional strategies are developed in ECC and recommended to address these challenges for VIL (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010). VIL need to get benefit from visual information to aid in the development of their concepts (Anderson, 2010). The ECC is a model of successful instruction, which is designed to meet the unique needs of VIL, thus ECC-related instructions are incorporated into the VILs' curriculum (IEPs; Sacks & Rothstein, 2010; Sapp & Hatlen, 2010). Yet, little empirical researches are available to document the ECC's effectiveness and its role in the transition to O&M, but lack of research in relation to parental involvement towards O&M within the ECC for VIL in Pakistan context. Hence, with the parental involvement of VIL in the O&M listed as the integral part of ECC, the study seeks to identify the ways that can promote effective role of parental involvement in O&M for the better independence of VIL. Most of the existing literature highlights the procedure however, effective understanding process is needed with a qualitative case study approach in the context of the study with parental involvement in O&M within the ECC for VIL in Pakistan.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the phenomenon of parental involvement towards O&M within ECC by the VILs. Thus, four specific research objectives are formulated for this study as follows.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To explore involvement of parents and teachers in respect to O&M for VIL.
2. To identify communication barriers that parents and teachers face and perceive to be helpful in communicating with VIL in relation to O&M.
3. To examine challenges parents and teachers face in handling VIL and how to cope with those challenges in respect to O&M?
4. To identify O&M practices of VIL in relation to become independent in classroom settings.

1.4 Specific Research Questions

1. How do parents and teachers gain successful parental involvement with respect to O&M for VIL?
2. What are the strategies in solving communication barriers between parents and teachers of VIL in relation to O&M?
3. What are the challenges that parents and teachers face in handling VIL and how they cope with those challenges in relation to O&M?
4. What are the O&M practices needed for VIL to learn to become independent?

Given the research objectives and the research questions, the present study will suggest implementing some strategies of the ECC for developing O&M practices based on the data of learners with visual impairment's independent practices of O&M in this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

The present study is significant for its contribution to new knowledge in the field of curriculum and instruction, policy making, improve implementation practices and practical significance for parents, teachers and VIL as described in the following section.

1.5.1 Contribution to New Knowledge in the Field of Curriculum & Instruction

In this area, the findings of this research are significant in many ways: firstly, the findings of this research has highlighted the parental involvement in O&M that have contributed and enriched the theory by adding the aspect of parental involvement in O&M based on Pakistan's context to develop and provide knowledge relating to parental involvement theory. The findings of this study remained significant in this area by discussing the issue of parental involvement and the important area of the ECC, such as O&M of VIL. The findings are an important contribution to the field by adding insights on parents VILs successful involvement in O&M and ways to cope with disability challenges of their VILs. In this regard, the present study is extended and enriched with some conceptual issues like knowledge of O&M, strong parental role and parental support and training are incorporated in the discourse of parental involvement in O&M. This comes with an opportunity to advance our knowledge that could help decision makers in the field of special education in Pakistan.

Knowing about effective communication strategies from parents and teachers' viewpoints that provide essential new knowledge in the field of curriculum and instruction. This is beneficial in increasing parental involvement in O&M practices, and coping with parental challenges. It is a required contribution to a country like Pakistan, who is facing educational issues for the children with visual impairment (Ahmed, Khan, & Naseem, 2011). In Pakistan, the education system and the O&M curriculum (O&M) for VIL need to be aligned with the guidelines of ECC. Therefore, the findings of the present study, will discuss on revising the existing curriculum (O&M) of VIL at secondary level in Pakistan. To sum up, with the implementing strategies of the ECC, the contribution to the body of knowledge of the curriculum and instruction can be used to strengthen the field of special education, proficient skills and knowledge of O&M teachers and teacher must then share those proficient skills and knowledge with the parents of VIL.

1.5.2 Contribution to improve Implementation of Practices

This section illustrates the contribution to improve the implementation practices. The findings of the current study were estimated to highlight some important guidelines for effective O&M practices within the ECC. Concepts such as parent-teacher meetings, knowledge of O&M and positive role of media have been holistically used as necessary findings for the relevant authorities. That knowledge could offer special education administrations a refreshed focus to improve O&M teacher education with refresher courses of O&M. Based on the parental involvement in O&M, these findings are able to show the importance of parental involvement in the special education department with some of the suggested guidelines for O&M practices within the ECC. Some concepts like strategies to improve effective communication between parents and teachers are used as essential findings for the administrations of special education. The provided knowledge will be able to offer the administration of

special education, by focusing on improvement of the communication between special education teachers and parents of VIL. The findings for the ECC implementing strategies can be used to improve O&M practices with the provision of teacher refresher courses in their training programs. The findings of the study could also improve the O&M practices with better teachers' training to visually impaired learners in their respective institutes.

Determining the effective communication strategies (daily diaries, parent-teacher meetings) between parents and teachers in relation to O&M could help the O&M teachers in general and the administration of special education in particular. Moreover, the study further offers practical suggestions to the administration of special education on how to involve parents of VILs in their O&M in handling the parental challenges and the effectiveness of the communication strategies that could be employed by parents and teachers for the purposes of effective O&M. In other words, the findings of the study offer necessary grounds for proper practices of O&M with the guidelines of ECC among visually impaired learners with the help of O&M instructors who can provide better training. In addition, the findings of the study can be used as a forward step to involve parents in O&M in dealing with the parental challenges in general and to develop O&M practices in line within the ECC.

1.5.3 Contribution to Practical Significance for Parents, Teachers and VIL

This section presents the practical significance of the study for VIL, their parents and their teachers. The following description elaborates the significance of the present study.

The findings of the study may contribute to parental involvement of parents of VIL, because deeper understanding of the reasons as parenting of VIL, no acceptance in society for VIL and time barrier for parental involvement in the O&M process may reveal what parents of learners with visual impairment believe on how VIL be able to attain education target. Specifically, examining, understanding and feelings of parents about the disability of their children (Gumpel & Sharoni, 2007), may promise improved practices for VIL in special education schools because previous studies have found that parents became frustrated when O&M did not align with the expectations of the family (Browder, Flowers, & Wakeman, 2008; Callahan, Henson, & Cowan, 2008).

The results of the study are anticipated to contribute to teachers with the unique understanding and experiences of VILs for effective communication in O&M process. Identification of parental challenges may assist teachers with implementing educational programs (O&M) aligned with the goals of the family (Santamaria, 2009). This study may assist teachers in implementing parental involvement in O&M by exploring the understanding of parents about the VILs independence (Barrera & Liu, 2006; Granlund et al., 2008; Marshall & Goldbart, 2008).

Moreover, the study further offers a practical contribution to VIL exploring parental involvement and parent-teacher communication barriers in the O&M practices will support more educational practices for enhancing the academic and social performance of VIL. Learners may suffer from severe visual impairment and health issues that challenge their motivation to learn and succeed in schools. Parents and teachers who collaborate and communicate, send learners the message that they care equally about their learning in class (Lynch & Adams, 2008). Moreover, the research may reveal new avenues to support VIL towards their independence with beneficial delivery of O&M.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research sought to examine parental involvement in O&M practices. Firstly, the researcher employed a theoretical stance on the role of parental involvement. The purpose was to examine the role of parental involvement in relation to O&M for VIL and parental challenges in handling VIL with communication barriers of parents and teachers. Secondly, the researcher purposefully selected sampled parents of VIL and experienced O&M teachers. In this case, the respondents were engaged to share their knowledge and experience of parental involvement in O&M. The respondents communicated with, their challenges in handling VIL and communication barriers between them. That was important in order to fortify the essence of the role of parental involvement from the views of parents and teachers of VIL with the focus to involve them in O&M practices. In the following part, the limitations of this study are drawn.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of a research discloses the situation that may provide and confine boundaries for the study. The researcher purposefully sampled experienced respondents from two government secondary level institutions of special education in Lahore, Pakistan.

Firstly, the final emerged themes and conclusions on successful parental involvement, parental challenges and communication barriers by parents and teachers of VIL were not communicated to the respondents for further suggestions and comments. This is called member checks in a qualitative research as the important procedure for credibility requirement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The respondents could come up with constructive suggestions if the themes were shared. However, the respondents had very busy time schedule and due to shortage of time, this communication did not take place.

Another limitation for this study is in line with qualitative methodology. Due to the small population, qualitative research findings might not be generalized to other people or settings and nothing is known about how the suggested approach could

affect the results (Merriam, 2009). For such reasons, the findings of the study might be unique to the respondents of the study, generalization burden remains with the one who appreciates the similarity of theme and context of the conducted study (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the findings of this study could not be employed beyond the given settings unless other respondents have similar characteristics to those of the respondents.

Lastly, this study is limited in terms of the findings that would be limited to qualitative research method through interpretive case study approach. How the suggested analytical approach could affect the results, it's not known yet. However, many qualitative study findings might not be generalized to other settings or respondents due to their small population (Merriam, 2009). In fact, the interviews were conducted to the respondents who shared their experiences based on their contexts. For such reasons, the findings of the current study might be unique to the respondents of the study. Therefore, the findings would not be employed beyond the given settings unless other respondents have similar characteristics with the respondents of the study. In the next section, the conceptual and operational definitions of the terms are explained.

1.8 Conceptual and Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Visually Impaired Learners

Visually impaired learners (VILs) are defined as those children who use their remaining senses of hearing and touch, instead of their ability to see, as they learn with these senses for reading Braille (Koenig, 1996). Operationally, visually impaired learners are defined as students who use special adaptations (Braille) and skills (O&M) and curriculum (ECC) for their study.

1.8.2 Orientation and Mobility

Orientation and mobility (O&M) are described as the set of concepts, practices/skills, and techniques needed for safe, efficient, and graceful travel under all environmental conditions (Jacobson, 2013). Operationally, O&M is the ability to use information (concepts, practices, techniques) from the environment to move from one place to another.

1.8.3 Orientation and Mobility Specialist/Teachers

According to Ellis (1991), an O&M specialist works in a special school for the VIL, described the O&M program provided at the special school for the visually impaired in which he/she is employed. Operationally, O&M specialist/teachers are defined as

professionals who are specialized in teaching braille, orientation & mobility skills/techniques to make VIL independent in their environment.

1.8.4 The Expanded Core Curriculum

According to Hatlen (1996), the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) refers to the nine generally accepted areas that VIL and youth (both who are blind and low vision) need to be successful in school, the community, and the workplace. Operationally, the ECC is the curriculum that addresses the needs of VIL who are not taught through the standard academic curriculum. ECC has nine areas, but the present study is only focusing on one of the areas which is the O&M for VIL.

1.8.5 Parental involvement

The term parental involvement refers to the ways in which parents of VIL, participate in the O&M of their visually impaired child. In this way, parents attend and participate in school-related activities of VIL and communicate with the teachers of VIL (Shutes et al, 2009). Operationally, parental involvement is taken as parent-educator communication and partnerships with the schools attended by the VILs according to procedures, proposed by Joyce Epstein (2001).

1.8.6 Communication Barriers

The term communication barriers refer to the school obligations with no interaction with the parents to inform them about student progress (Epstein, 1995). Operationally, communication barriers are taken as the hurdles/barriers between parents and teachers that create a lack of parental involvement in schools.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described the background of the study, the needs of this research and significance for the parents, teachers and VIL. The focus of this study is “Parental involvement towards O&M within the ECC for VIL in Pakistan”. This chapter has described the importance of O&M, the history of O&M within the ECC. As O&M plays a vital role in creating independence among the VIL and parents need to be actively involved in this process.

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Shazia Malik, Umi Kalthom Abdul Manaf, Nor Aniza Ahmad, and Miamunah Ismail. Strategies to solve Communication barriers between parents and teachers of visually impaired learners in Pakistan. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction (Indexed Scopus-Under Review)*.

LIST OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Presented a paper on “The Effect of Orientation Mobility Curriculum on the Academic achievement of visually impaired children among public and private institutions of Lahore” in Graduate Research in Education Seminar (GREDuc 2015) held in Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang Selangor, Malaysia in 4-5 Dec. 2015.

Presented a paper on “Role of special education curriculum in the adjustment of physically handicapped children in the family” in 12th International Conference on Advances in Social Sciences (ICASS 2015) held in Linton Universiti College Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 28-29 December 2015.

Presented a paper on “Time Management, Burnout, Personality and Social Support among Postgraduate Students”. 4th International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities (ICSSH 2016), held at the Rumah University, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 18-19 July 2016.

Presented a poster on “Parental Involvement in Orientation and Mobility of Visually Impaired Learners in Pakistan: A Case Study”. International Conference on Teaching and Learning (ICTL, 2016), Universiti of Malaya, held at Hilton Hotel Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 5-6 October 2016.

Presented a paper on “Conceptualizing Orientation and Mobility Practices within the Expanded Core Curriculum”. Graduate Research in Education Seminar (GREDuc 2016) held at Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang Selangor, Malaysia 17 December 2016.

Presented a paper on “Understanding Challenges of Parental Involvement from the Perspectives of the Parents of Visually Impaired Learners in Pakistan”. International Conference on Educational Research and Practice (ICERP, 2017) Organized by the Faculty of Educational Studies UPM, held at Everly Hotel Putrajaya, Malaysia 26-27 July 2017.



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