

Delineating the Struggles Special Education Students and Parents Face in Puerto Rico

Paola Sola¹ and Johnny Lopez-Figueroa[#]

¹Commonwealth-Parkville School, Puerto Rico

[#]Advisor

ABSTRACT

In this research, the question of the unique education system's lack of resources and how it directly affects students and parents looks to be answered. This investigation discusses the system's many flaws, including the shortage of teachers, assistants, and therapists. The lack of training for teachers, the poor maintenance in schools, the violation of the architectural laws, and how poor salaries resulted in many protests, directly affecting students. The Rosa Lydia Velez trial had a huge impact; it helped people notice the many flaws in the system and raise their courage to speak up against the justice system. Another one of the main problems is the constant misdiagnosing of children due to untrained professionals and incorrect examinations. This problem was when students got retested, and almost all had a misdiagnosis. The system is demonstrating little to no worry for their students, including when it comes to school maintenance, with over 247 in critical need of repairs. The poor salary affected drivers, leaving students without transportation, assistants both T1 and T2 had to have several jobs to support themselves financially, and many teachers quit their jobs due to poor administrative support. The case that highly impacted the investigation was the letter for the government from Ivelisse Otero that demonstrated how schools are breaking the protocol, not focusing on the student's well-being, and not following the confidentiality rules affecting teachers and students. This investigation aims to shed light on the many flaws and have a call to action to find a solution.

Problem Statement

The problem with the unique education system is the need for more support and resources. The Special Education System was established in 1958 as the first education for people with intellectual disabilities in Bayamón. This group was created with only eighteen students. In 1961, John F. Kennedy designed a worldwide plan targeted at people with intellectual incapacities. Later, in 1995, a law stating that everyone deserved an education was passed (Ley Federal 89-10 del 1965). A year prior, there was a high demand for special needs services, eventually increasing the number of special education children from eighteen to thousand five hundred. Then, in 1966, due to political disagreements, special education schools started receiving federal funding.

Purpose

The purpose of this documentary-analysis action research inquiry is to inform of the lack of resources on the island, specifically the Special Education system. The lack of resources is causing the quick deterioration of the system, directly affecting students and parents. The ultimate purpose is a call to action to improve the system. The main one is to create new funds to support schools and provide more training for upcoming teachers.

Justification

The Special Education system helps more than 75,000 children, yet it is failing its students. The system is failing due to many factors, but the biggest one is the need for more resources on the island. Starting with the lack of training, schools want to do something other than go the extra mile and provide teachers with training and workshops to educate themselves further. The government needs funds and must follow the correct protocols in different situations. The general public is unaware of the Special Education system's problems; this investigation aims to raise awareness and produce a positive change.

Research Questions

1. To Evaluate the lack of funding and academic resources.
2. To interpret the underfunding of therapists, the lack of specialized training programs for assessors, and the use of telehealth services to connect children with special needs to licensed therapists.
3. To explain the low public awareness of problems with the special education system.

Research Objectives

1. To Evaluate the lack of funding and academic resources.
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3. To explain the low public awareness of problems with the special education system.

Theoretical Framework

To inform on the lack of workers due to poor salary, these include transportation services and T1 & T2 assistants quitting their jobs due to poor wages. To raise awareness of the lack of action from the government to improve classroom comfort and accessibility. Mention the poor maintenance and repairs in schools even after the break. To evaluate the letter sent to the governor mentioning the lack of professionalism and protocol actions when relocating a student and assistant. The sources all mention a need for more government funding, and the administration needs more support and action regarding teachers' wellness and students' education.

Definition of Terminologies

The term Special Education System was coined in 1963 by Dr. Kirk to define learning disabilities. The Special Education program was created thanks to John F Kennedy's establishment of a program for people with disabilities after his sister had a mental illness (Thomas Jr, 1996). Dissemination was coined in 1615 when it was defined as "above"; it was later defined as the act or process of spreading something (Merriam Webster, n.d.). The term "Federal Census" is derived from Latin. The word "census" is Latin, so in a linguistic sense, the Romans took the first censuses, who were undoubtedly doing this around the middle of the first millennium B.C. However, the first census is complex to pinpoint. It is estimated that about 5,000 years ago (Diamond, 2020).

Review of Literature

How Rosa Lydia Velez's Case Impacted Society

Educating others about Rosa Lydia Velez's case and the progress her inclusion in the legal system has made possible has been crucial. Increase public knowledge of the achievements made possible by Rosa Lydia Velez's work and her sway over resolving legal issues and temporary fixes. Increase general knowledge of the potential effects of lawsuits and the judicial system. Attain the goal of offering top-notch services to kids with exceptional needs. The following article elucidates this argument by indicating that:

The Special Education Program has undergone a process of scrutiny since the beginning of that case in 1980. Teachers who work with students enrolled in the special education program are being anonymous about current changes to the program. The lack of training and dissemination of information is the leading cause of this work.

Despite the new amendments made to existing laws that cover our students with disabilities, their provisions are not met. The right that these students have for their parents to claim to participate in decision-making regarding the services received is what guarantees to a certain extent that the law is complied with. The case of Rosa Lydia Vélez has revolutionized the special education program since the non-compliance of our educational system is evident in each hearing held. This non-compliance that existed a few decades ago is the same one these students experience daily and, in some instances, the most obvious.

Because this investigation is a documentary, it has been limited to the exclusive review of legal documents and laws related to case No. K.PE 801738 of Rosa Lydia Vélez. (Brower, 2009)

The usefulness of this source within this investigation delineates that education should be available for everyone, no matter the circumstance. This investigation provides a deeper understanding of the historical and legal aspects of the Special Education System in Puerto Rico. It encourages parents of special needs children to fight for their children's educational rights. It helps future investigators educate themselves on how Puerto Rico's education system, specifically the Special Education system, does not comply with the IDEA laws established. To bring awareness to the injustices of the educational system and how they are often discriminating towards people with disabilities. Bring an understanding of the power of lawsuits and not be intimidated by the legal system. Inform about the lack of resources like therapists, machinery, and teachers. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of fostering a more inclusive and accessible educational environment, promoting equal opportunities for all students. Additionally, it highlights the necessity for collaborative efforts among parents, educators, and policymakers to address these systemic issues effectively.

Are Teachers' Lack of Education Part of the Problem?

A study showed that to support students with unique needs and stress, the theory-to-practice transition by the school and supervisors needs to be facilitated. The findings demonstrate that special education teachers must be prepared to use active learning strategies. They did not participate in professional workshops or support programs to assist them in transitioning from theory to practice, nor did they receive any orientation. Because university requirements do not correspond with Special Education Systems' requirements, teachers feel under-prepared for their careers, ultimately affecting children's education. In regard to this, a study from *Proceso de Inducción del Maestro de Educación Especial del sistema de enseñanza pública de Puerto Rico* was able to state that:

When the teacher begins to practice his profession in school, whether public or private, he is going through a transition from theory to practice. This transition is essential for the school director to consider and refer this teacher to receive guidance through an induction program. The research on this topic supports this induction program for the beginning teacher (Amos, 2005; Brenes, 2009; Hernández, 2013; Kent et al., 2012; Lipton et al., 2003; Suárez, 1987, among others). However, most research has been done with regular classroom teachers, principals, or administrators. To date, it has not been possible to identify research that offers a picture of how an induction program is carried out in special education teachers and how this program has favored

these teachers to remain in their profession. This study aimed to explore how new special education teachers perceived their period of insertion into the teaching profession concerning the induction process received from the point of view of teachers of this programmatic area in Puerto Rican schools on the Island. (White-Giraldez, 2017)

The information presented in the source shows how the lack of education for teachers affects students' education. They strive to improve the transition from theory to practice. Give administrative support to teachers to ease the harsh transition. Help improve Puerto Rico's teachers' lack by altering their work environment. Develop new programs and institutions for teachers and create a community to help each other. The data found informs us that 30%-50% of teachers leave their jobs due to lack of support. Ensure that students are evaluated correctly and assign a teacher and assistant to help with their academic development. This source helps us learn about the deeper reason why the Special Education System is failing and helps us find a solution to provide the correct resources for teachers.

Are Children Being Purposely Misdiagnosed?

To ensure that children with disabilities get the right help and a complete diagnosis, we should focus on making the evaluation system stronger. These diagnostic tests should be performed by someone other than personnel who must use the appropriate equipment and instruments. Children who need special education but are unable to get it due to incorrect diagnoses are being denied it by inexperienced professionals. A significant conflict emerges when the staff members who deliver the services assess them. The following article elucidates this argument by indicating that:

The possible reasons why such a disproportionate number of students attended by the Department of Education are in special education - when the average in other jurisdictions is 11% - lies in erroneous diagnoses is alarming. But there is a remedy, and the representatives of the community of psychologists in Puerto Rico have put their finger on the sore spot. Incomplete evaluations and reevaluations, done with inadequate and rushed tests and materials, result in Special Education registering misdiagnosed children and excluding children who have not been identified due to these faults, as explained by Dr. Edward H. Fankhenel, president of the Psychology Examining Board. If one button is enough to show, the experience of the psychologist and member of the Board, María Rolón, is tremendously revealing. As the professional explained in legislative hearings where the problem is studied, 85% of the cases that she has evaluated and that were classified as Special Education were misdiagnosed, and in the cases of learning problems, 100% were also misdiagnosed. (El Nuevo Día, 2014)

The information presented in the source validates the need for more professionals, and training significantly affects students with special needs. María Rolón, a psychologist from the special education board, re-tested various students to see if they were correctly diagnosed. Her findings determined that 85% of the cases she evaluated as Special Needs were misdiagnosed, and when it came to learning disabilities evaluation, 100% of the patients were misdiagnosed. Another significant factor affecting the system is that the staff conducting the evaluations also offer the services, resulting in misdiagnosis to gain more clients. With over 159,000 students in the unique education system, \$430,000,000 in resources are being incorrectly distributed, neglecting special needs children from the help needed. Parents need answers and action and request professionals to work directly at these schools and centers to prevent further corruption. Parents want to bring awareness to the situation for their children to receive the correct diagnosis and resources. Additionally, it underscores the urgency

of comprehensive reform in the unique education system to ensure that students with special needs receive the appropriate support and services they deserve.

Are Schools Facing Lack of Basic Materials?

To inform people about the shortage of supplies in schools and the way the educational system turns down teachers' requests. The source claims teachers requested basic school supplies but have not received them. The federal government provides schools with a budget for supplies, but the budget given could be much higher. It was suggested that teachers "relax and cooperate" and show appreciation for their existing resources. The sources provide more background on the lack of primary materials by elaborating:

Invited to an activity held yesterday at the José Miguel Agrelot Coliseum of Puerto Rico under the promise that "surprises" would be announced, some teachers who attended the event hoped that it would be some help or some good news about the need for materials, painting and cleaning on school campuses.

However, during the event, Department staff, as well as the acting secretary Yanira Raíces, gathered them in the so-called Choliseo to reiterate to them that they should adopt a "positive attitude" before the start of the school year, that they should "relax and cooperate" and "be grateful," something that some of them did not like. "How do I tell my students to relax and cooperate (in the conditions my school is in)?" questioned a teacher who did not want to be identified after during the activity they were allegedly told, "relax and cooperate."

Given the teacher's complaint, the Department of Education, through its spokesperson, Alexis Ramos, indicated that the activity motivated them to return to classes positively. (Cabán, 2023)

The data extrapolated from the source demonstrates how teachers' requests for materials and assistance are constantly denied. It explains how the education system repeatedly ignores teachers' demands and tells them to "Be grateful" and to "Relax and cooperate." Teachers need more school materials and technology, such as printers and computers, but the education system expresses different priorities. They stated they gave teachers cards with money for the start of the academic year. Still, they should have commented on their budget; teachers noted that the money was unnecessary. The Teacher Association of Puerto Rico discovered that more than 588 schools in Puerto Rico faced infrastructure and maintenance issues. Schools are neglected for proper maintenance, including painting, risking children's health. Teachers rebelled against the education system, stating they had never felt so disrespected.

Is The Puerto Rican Government Breaking Architectural Laws?

To Bring attention to Puerto Rico's disregard for the laws governing architectural barriers and the consequences this has for the island's disabled populace. Puerto Rico still needs to be allowed to break the laws about architectural barriers; they keep getting away with it. One problem is that there are not enough ramps in parking lots and meters, which makes it difficult for people in wheelchairs or crutches and moms pushing baby strollers. Many places have fragile doors that are impossible for wheelchair users to enter, including governmental offices. In this regard, a study by El Nuevo Día was able to indicate that:

Despite the high number of people with some disabilities who live in Puerto Rico, architectural barriers continue to appear that prevent or hinder the free movement of this population without the authorities making a coordinated effort to plan with this in mind and raise awareness of the situation in the citizenry.

Failure to comply with laws and regulations prohibiting architectural barriers is a crime. Furthermore, it is an intolerable conduct that is committed daily by both government agencies and private companies and individuals that violate the rights of the more than 750,000 citizens who, according to the federal Census, have some disability in Puerto Rico. A recent example of the problem is the installation of parking meters on a street in the center of Caguas that forces pedestrians to get off the sidewalk to pass, which becomes a practically

impossible exercise in the case of people in wheelchairs with crutches or for those who carry their babies in strollers. It is evident that the municipal government failed to allow the installation of these parking meters, which it has already promised to remove, but also highly worrying is the apparent lack of supervision as well. (El Nuevo Día, 2014)

As the source within this investigation implies, Puerto Rico is violating many architectural laws. They need to maintain and improve ramps and automatic doors. Governmental buildings and public transportation are not wheelchair accessible, making the disabled community feel discriminated against. Puerto Rico's government failed to install accessibility-friendly structures after promising the people they would. This source helps advance the investigation by informing citizens about the lack of accessibility on the island, helping show the lack of resources in Puerto Rico. This investigation helps promote the studies by bringing these issues to light and finding a solution. There are more than 750,000 disabled population in Puerto Rico, and not near the same amount of disability accessibility. Moreover, this highlights the pressing need for immediate action to ensure that Puerto Rico's infrastructure becomes more inclusive and accommodating for individuals with disabilities, ultimately fostering a more equitable society for all residents. Additionally, it underscores the importance of holding public officials accountable for their promises to improve accessibility for disabled citizens.

The Lack of Transportation

To shed light on the underfunding of public schools that results from salary disparities. The article describes how a lack of transportation harms children, especially those attending public schools. Since they were promised a raise but never received one, many drivers are protesting their pay and the lack of transportation. The drivers are on strike, leaving many children unable to get to school. The fact that there needs to be more funds to pay for 379,000 for transportation expenses is another problem. The government still owes over \$8 million in unpaid fees to those who use public transportation, despite their insistence that they have yet to receive them. Drivers are stating they will only be satisfied once they receive what is owed. Regardless the protest of drivers, the following source goes into detail by indicating:

Torres is one of more than 700 carriers that offer service to around 10,000 children and young people who use the public-school transportation service in Puerto Rico daily. The island is in a deep economic crisis, without the capacity to pay its debt, which is around \$72 billion, and to continue maintaining the provision of essential public services. Just a few weeks ago, the Secretary of the DE, Rafael Román, asked Congress to help serve public education students, claiming that the agency he heads does not have the money necessary to meet the students' basic needs in the island's public system. Román emphasized in his letter to Congress that "there is simply not enough money to meet the needs of the 379,000 children in Puerto Rico's public schools. Washington has to act soon to avoid foreseeable and irreparable damage." Different school transportation companies in the metropolitan area of San Juan maintained the strike. However, in the rest of the island, the transportation service was provided with general normality, even though payment delays are recorded in many other municipalities. The president of the Federation of School Porters, José Rosado, assured that the Department of Education planned to send almost half a thousand checks as part of its effort to ensure school transportation until the 2015-2016 school year ends next May. (Univision 2016)

The findings presented here demonstrate that more than 300,000 students benefit from public transportation to school on the island, yet the transportation system needs to improve. One of the leading causes is the poor salary offered to drivers and the more than \$8 million owed; due to the unfair pay, many drivers have resorted to protesting, demonstrating how essential they are to the Special Education system. The government wants to provide drivers with the necessary funds to provide services for only some public school students. This information is essential for the investigation since we can see the many factors contributing to the system's downfall. We can also see the many times the government has promised their workers a change yet consistently failed to complete them. This information helps advance the investigation since we can see that many of the

root causes of the problems are the lack of funds on the island. This investigation shows how the lack of support from the government is ultimately affecting students.

The Unfair Salary T1 & T2 Assistants

This study aims to provide more information about the around 120 special education system assistants (T1 and T2) who staged protests in front of the capital building against their unfair compensation. The government's practice of underpaying assistants for their jobs is examined in this article. Assistants demanded a raise from \$9.08 to \$15 per hour. When asked, the government stated that they had already increased their salary in the past. Assistants state that they were told they would receive an increase for over 20 years. Due to this salary, assistants must work numerous jobs to meet ends. While only needing to work 700 hours a year, some persons were denied bonuses while needing to work 960 hours; the following source explains this further by stating:

About 120 Special Education student service assistants (T1 and T2) held a demonstration in front of the Capitol on Friday to demand wage justice, permanence, and reduced time required to receive their Christmas bonus. Their claims are contained in Senate Bill 1140, which would establish the 'Employment Justice for Special Student Services Assistants Act,' which is currently stalled in the Finance Committee, pending a decision on the salary increase. According to the spokesperson for the T1 Assistants group of Puerto Rico, Guillermo Betancourt Rodríguez, "Our hourly pay is \$9.08 per hour, for 20 years, it is the last increase that has occurred. The federal minimum for private companies is \$9.50; other places are \$13 and \$14 an hour." This translates to between \$450 and \$500 per fortnight, forcing them to look for additional employment to meet their financial obligations. (Torres-Guzman, 2023)

The source informs that according to the spokesperson for the T1 Assistants group of Puerto Rico, Guillermo Betancourt Rodríguez, their hourly pay is \$9.08 an hour for 20 years, which is the last increase that has been given. The federal minimum for private enterprise is \$9.50, while there are other places where it is \$13 and \$14 an hour. Faced with the lack of action, workers from different regions of the Public Education System on the island were absent from their work as a protest since many have not received their salaries for the current academic year that began in August. The permanence requirement is eight and a half years, with three excellent evaluations. Some have been depending on each assessment for more than 14 years. Their third claim relates to the Christmas bonus since, unlike the private sector, in which 700 hours per year are required, they must work 960 hours yearly. Assistants stated that they will keep protesting until their needs are met.

Lack of Maintenance in Schools

To inform of the lack of school maintenance and repairs even after the break. After the school break, it was determined that more than 400 schools needed maintenance and infrastructure improvement. The secretary of education stated that none of the 853 schools in need were the Department of Education's responsibility. He stated that instead, they belong to the "Autoridad de edificios publicos" (AEP) or the Authority of Public Buildings. Due to this responsibility battle, both parties refuse to make a change. He said they pay the AEP almost 80 million dollars to maintain schools. Regarding the importance of maintenance, the following article from *Primera Hora* can indicate:

Just hours before the children of the public education system return to the classrooms, senators bombed today, in a public hearing, the Secretary of Education, Eliezer Ramos Parés, with complaints from his constituents about the poor state of multiple schools in different parts of the country. Meanwhile, Ramos Parés welcomed a proposal that the Senate would work on, and that was launched in the public hearing by the president of the Senate Health Committee, Ada García Montes, so that the maintenance of schools returns to the hands of a single agency, even that it is the Department of Education itself that assumes responsibility. The Minister of Education acknowledged some of the deficiencies pointed out to the restart of school but said that the conditioning of the schools is divided by the Public Buildings Authority (AEP), with 384 schools and the Office

for the Improvement of Public Schools (OMEP) with 467, as well as the Infrastructure Financing Authority (AFI). Since last year, he has been in charge of repairing schools with short column defects. (Bauzá, 2022)

The importance of this source concerning this investigation is that there is a battle for who will assume responsibility for the lack of maintenance in schools. We can see how more cases regarding the lack of maintenance in schools are coming to light. It has been determined that between the "Autoridad de Edificios Públicos (AEP)" the "Oficina para el Mejoramiento de Escuelas Públicas (OMEP)" and the "Autoridad para el Financiamiento para la Infraestructura (AFI)" have more than 800 schools combined that are in desperate need. The Department of Education is responsible for 853 schools' maintenance, yet they state it is the AEP's responsibility; therefore, no action would be taken. They argue that since they pay the AEP 78 million dollars a year, it is only fair that they assume responsibility for these schools. Of those schools, 246 are in desperate need, primarily found in the island's southwest. Ruiz Nieves stated that the department would receive about \$2,300 million in federal funds for school maintenance.

Heat Management in Extreme Temperatures

To inform the public on the measures the government is taking to improve classroom comfort and accessibility. It mentions the measures taken to have a more comfortable classroom. One of the main issues is the lack of air conditioning in classrooms, especially since many students with special needs require a relaxed environment—a hydration center or more water fountains, especially with constantly rising temperatures. Also, have more hydrating foods at breaks, such as fruit, to prevent dehydration. Most importantly, to have trained nurses in children with special needs. As a result, schools need to adjust to the student's well-being, especially with increasing temperatures. In this regard, the investigators were able to state the following:

The intention of the Popular Democratic Party (PDP) delegation in the House of Representatives to go over Gov. Pedro Pierluisi's pocket veto of House Bill 1040, which proposes to install air conditioners in public schools, does not proceed because it goes against the provisions of the Constitution of Puerto Rico. A similar bill is pending to be approved. Other reactions emerged after the controversy, including that of the mayor of Cayey, Rolando Ortiz, who sent statements to the press informing that the municipality is contributing to the management of the consequences of climate change, cooperating with the Department of Education (DE) in the upcoming installation of air conditioning units in 320 classrooms in the city's public schools. However, the NPP spokesperson said he would favor any other project that would improve the school infrastructure by installing air conditioners or fans to appease the extreme heat - with historic temperatures - perceived on the island a few months ago. (Figueroa-Rosa, 2023)

Infrastructure improvements must be made to improve the equipment requirements and available electrical capacity, and a thorough investigation is being carried out at each institution. To guarantee proper operation, the installation of electrical substations is needed. Another improvement required is to alter meal plans to include fresh fruit-hydrating meals. Since classrooms are only conditioned with fans, they request changing school uniforms to be more comfortable with the material and the heat. A schedule change is also requested since the weather in an enclosed classroom can cause heat strokes. Schools should have a weather plan just as schools in the United States do. The weather in Puerto Rico can reach more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer, considered extreme temperatures.

The Letter for The Government

To inform on the lack of administrative support and the need to follow the correct readjustment protocol. The source mentions how a T1 assistant was shedding light on the lack of administrative support and care for students. When informed that a student would be relocated to a different school, she received the news verbally from her work peers, which could have been more professional. The school promised to communicate the

change with the student's parents so she could transfer with her student. The parent stated that this information was never provided to him. Instead, he was told that the students would transfer without an assistant. In this regard, the article goes into detail by stating that:

I have been working for nine years and four months at the Montessori Juana Colón High School as a T1 assistant. All of my reviews have been great. During that time, I learned a lot about the autism population. I have learned to know each of my students. I have also dedicated myself to learning about the rights of students with autism so that they are not violated, and I love what I do. On December 21, 2023, the director in charge, Mrs. Celines Melendez, gave me some unprofessional news to stop co-workers. He informed me that he received an email stating that I would be relocated to another school because my student is often absent. The director never met me, nor was it formal; the little she told me was verbal and in public, where I was sitting with another colleague in front of the office, violating confidentiality. I asked him for a more straightforward explanation of the change on that occasion, and he replied that the student was often absent. On December 5, 2023, Mrs. Celines Meléndez and I met to discuss an issue related to the possible change of my student. She indicated that she would meet with the student's father, Jesus Vazquez, to change the location from the autism classroom to an independent living room. (Vázquez, 2024)

The source informs how Ivelisse Vazquez, a T1 assistant for kids with autism, faced tension with her school's administration. She was told she was relocated due to her student's poor assistance. She received the news of the relocation verbally in front of peers instead of having an official meeting. The lack of communication between the student's parents and the assistant resulted in some conflict. The administration did not follow the relocation protocol, including house visits, looking for alternatives, or sending a referral to the social worker or teachers. The administration told the parents that Ivelisse would not be transferred with their child, while they said Ivelisse would. The school also needed to provide the students with resources to make the transfer seamless and comfortable.

Methods

This investigation utilized a computer with an internet connection and an internet browser, Microsoft Edge. To find the sources required for this investigation, the Google search engine was paramount for pinpointing the necessary sources to elucidate the research question. Although the internet connection was unstable at times, it proved sufficient to conduct all the required constituents of this investigation. Even though some sources are not peer-reviewed, the investigation mentor revised them and approved them while confirming their validity. All these components working in tandem created the optimal conditions for the consummation of this project. This investigation is a Qualitative Investigation, completed using a qualitative investigation design. This investigation was completed utilizing a documentary analysis design and sources. To populate this research, it was necessary to specify the purpose of each of the ten sources used. These were found using a computer to find newspapers and trials. Furthermore, it was essential to recognize the source's design and approach, indicate the target audience, highlight their limitations, and determine their recommendations and findings. An analytical component outlining the significance of the data presented in the inquiry was generated, and a descriptive content analysis methodology had to be utilized for this investigation.

Results

The utilized search engine Microsoft Edge proved most beneficial for the selected sources of this investigation. One of the sources was Not Recent (2009), which dealt with information regarding the Rosa Lydia Velez trial and its impact on society. The second source was not recent (2017). It discussed information regarding the need for more education and training teachers. The third source was not recent (2014), indicating the constant misdiagnosis due to the absence of professionals and correct exams. The fourth source was very recent (2023),

describing that schools lacked more basic materials due to unfair funding. The fifth source, which was not recent (2014), delves into the fact that many public places must follow the correct architectural laws. The sixth source must be more recent (2016), demonstrating the need for more public transportation due to unfair salaries. The seventh source was very recent (2023), and it validated that assistants T1 and T2 were protesting in front of the capitol demanding a better salary. The eighth source was very recent (2022), and it elucidated that schools need more maintenance even after summer and winter break. The ninth source was very recent (2023), and it illustrated that schools need to provide students with a comfortable environment, especially with rising temperatures. Finally, the tenth source was very recent (2023), and it clarified the fact that a letter was sent to the government regarding the need for more professionalism and a relocation process. For the investigation to come to fruition, the scope of the research question had to be more encompassing to find more information on the subject, which permitted the optimal conditions to answer the research question. If the original research question had not been changed, the essay would not have been written as well, given that the research question would have been challenging to complete. The information that could not be found was the funding process for public schools and the screening process for administrative and teaching positions. The internal threats identified were that the written sources' order differed from those found.

Discussion & Conclusion

This investigation discusses the need for more resources that contribute to the deterioration of the Special Education system. One of the most important sources is the Rosa Lydia Velez trial and its massive impact on society's view of the Special Education system. The other sources explain teachers' lack of knowledge due to them not assisting seminars or training to work better with kids with disabilities. Another cause is the constant misdiagnosing due to untrained professionals needing to perform the correct exams or reevaluate sure students. Some problems faced due to the lack of funding for schools include the need for more basic materials such as pencils and markers, the poor maintenance in schools even after school breaks, and the unfair salaries for workers. Workers affected by unfair salaries include drivers for public transportation, T1 and T2 assistants, teachers, and therapists. Schools are failing to provide students with a comfortable environment, especially with the increasing temperatures, and are failing to provide essential accessibility in public spaces, thus breaking architectural laws. The most important sources of the investigation would be the Rosa Lydia Velez trial and how it brought awareness to the many flaws in the system, as well as changed people's perspective of the system, and the letter to the government from Ivelisse Vazquez regarding how schools are breaking the relocation protocols and are showing very little care for their students well being. It is recommended that this investigation have a documentary call-to-action design with a descriptive analysis methodology.

Limitations

In comparison, an external threat could be identified as the poor Wi-Fi in the establishment that affects the internal validity of the investigation, as well as the slow computers on occasion. No internal validity or external validity issues were faced. Some independent variables in the research were the poor salary and lack of school funding, which affected people's behavior, resulting in many protests and poor performance. How does the rapid deterioration of the Special Education system in Puerto Rico negatively affect children's education due to a lack of funds, upkeep, transportation, and peer and administrative support? The lack of these services is directly affecting both students and teachers. How can children with special needs receive the support and resources they require when there is a shortage of treatment equipment, licensed therapists, and a misdiagnosis caused by untrained assessors? There needs to be a reevaluated and altered system to provide children with a

fair and comfortable environment. What level of public knowledge exists regarding the problems with the Special Education system, and how might raising awareness result in better outcomes and increased support for the system's development? Raising awareness can help to better the lack of resources on the island and help improve the system for future generations.

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