

The Survey of Teachers, Principals, Deputies, Knowledge about Learning-Specific Problems

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ABSTRACT

The current study is intended to identify the rate of knowledge of primary school principals, deputies, and teachers about learning specific problems that students encountered there. For this purpose, 120 participants from Islamshahr City primary school principals, deputies, and teachers (5 female schools and 5 male schools) responded to a standard test about the rate of knowledge of educational group in primary school concerning to learning- specific problems that comprised of a test with 20- multiple choice items. The descriptive method of research was of survey type. In this study, stratify cluster sampling method was utilized. T-one sample administration and review of etiological, semiotic parameters and educational- medical interventions indicated that the rate of general knowledge as well as their awareness about the aforesaid variables was at average and lower level. The results of one- way ANOVA showed that the rate of primary school education group about learning- specific problems was at normal level and among of them awareness of principal was higher than deputies and teachers and also awareness of teachers was at higher level than in deputies.

KEYWORDS: Rate of Awareness (Knowledge), Primary School Manpower, Learning- Specific Problems

1. INTRODUCTION

The unit of learning disabilities is one of the paramount branches of psychology and in education of exceptional children. Learning is a major tool for human's adaptation to his/ her ever- changing environment. Within several generations ago, people might handle various jobs and trade and social affairs without learning in educational center; however, in today world this is impossible. At present, we are living in multimedia world and computer is the latest information system that is followed by remote communication, electronic post (email), internet, Wide World Web (WWW) and the others. In all of the above cases, human should learn how to receive and use the needed information; therefore, today more than past illiteracy and disability in learning serve as more disabling factor. Term learning disabilities suggests deficiency of that group of children and students who are suffered from disorder in one and more basic psychological processes regarding perception and application of oral or written language despite of enjoying normal or even higher than normal intelligence as well as healthy visual and auditory and motor organs and also normal environment in terms of emotional and socio- cultural aspects. One of the first terms that were used about the children who are suffered from learning disability disorder (children with brain trauma) or the children with brain slow processing disorder which has focused on medical and biological aspects of disability is term learning disability that was offered for the first time by Samuel Kirk in 1936 and it was accepted because it was significantly referred to behavioral symptoms. Application this appropriate terminology has been continued so far. The advantage of this term is related to its focus on educational problems and beyond from medical implications for this reason parents, teachers, and students accepted it easily [1].

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) classification system is considered as one of the most reliable international system for classification of learning disability that has been welcomed by the wide range of physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and even mentors. With respect to sensitive, fine, complex, specialized process of diagnosis, upon confrontation of children to learning disability, diagnostic criteria should be clear and certain in the mind of experts in the field of exceptional children measurement so that to be able to employ the most advanced classification criteria. DSM-V includes six fields: intellectual developmental disorder or mental retardation, attention deficiency disorder in students who are suffered from learning disability, autism spectrum disorders, communication disorder, and motor disorders based on which these children are divided into several groups [2].

The manpower in school where it includes principals, deputies, and teachers as education group always possesses unique features and characteristics thereby the workforce should be able to organize education and improve formal- informal learning according to educational objectives. This measure will be possible when the manpower is expert and they not only obtain information about learning but also regarding learning problems; the

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special problems which are prevalent in approximately 10- 12% of primary schools [3] and it may cause removing a wide spectrum of educational efficiency. Identifying the rate of educational group's knowledge in primary school may provide applied information in educational need analysis and in On the Job (OTJ) training courses. In many children, learning disability may appear for the first time when they enter into schools and they could not manage to acquire educational skills. This disability is revealed often in reading but it may be observed in mathematics, writing, or other lesson related subjects as well, among those behaviors which are observed in first years of primary school is attention band concentration deficiency, weak motor skills like taking pencil naively and scrawled writing, and difficulty in learning of reading. During the next years in primary school and in parallel with more difficult curriculum, it is possible to encounter some problems in other fields like social studies or sciences. Also emotional problems are intensified after several years in failure since students become more alert about their own low achievement in contrast to their other classmates. Some of social problems and inability to find friend and maintaining of friendly relations may become significant at this age period [1].

Thus, it should be noted that ability in skills includes basic professional knowledge to which educational group need especially primary school teachers. Playing these professional roles requires possession of abilities in evaluation, diagnosis, codification of curricula, educational exercises, managing students' behaviors, planning and administration of teaching and learning environment, and supervision and evaluation [4]. In addition, educational group should be aware of learning theories and strategies for teaching of verbal language (speech), reading, language, mathematics, behavior management, and put social and emotional skills and primary professional skills at their disposal; many students, who suffered from learning disabilities, may not be identified before third or fourth grade in primary schools due to few knowledge of educational group regarding learning disabilities [5]. In this regard, Moor and Logoni [6] argue that there is always a risk for students with learning disabilities and in the case of on time diagnosis, educational group, particularly teachers, may label them as lazy, irresponsible, or students without motivation. This subject is so important that those students who are labeled due to learning disability, often are deprived from appropriate educational and training opportunities and they may experience common social and emotional problems with low motivation and deficient learning of textbook contents [5, 7].

Therefore, knowledge and awareness of educational group about the reasons of learning disabilities, recognition is educationally important aspect that may contribute teachers, principals, and deputies in subject of identifying students with learning disabilities and isolation of these children from learning problems and recognition that confuse them so that the employed workforce in school to be able to become familiar with reason of any disorder and to help to recognition, classification, and retaining them [8] while despite of the high necessity several studies have been carried out in this regard in Iran. The results of study done by Mostafa Sharbati [9] about rate of awareness of experts of learning disorders as the effective factors on human resources development in towns of Tehran Province indicate that rate of awareness of given experts of learning disorders is at average level while the findings from other investigations conducted by Mohammad Ayazizadeh [10] that measured rate of awareness in advisors of exceptional children schools in Tehran City about symptoms and signs of learning specific problems showed that the consultants had no appropriate knowledge in this field. In another study, by a survey on rate of awareness in primary school female and male teachers in Eastern Azerbaijan Province (Iran), Babaei Miardani [11] concluded that the rate of awareness in these teachers is at lower level than average. In other research, Ameri [12] indicated that rate of awareness among female teachers is higher than male teachers in Semnan Province. In her study under title of "Review on the rate of knowledge in primary school teachers about learning disabilities", Abdi [13] showed that their awareness of learning specific problems was at lower level than average. In another investigation done by Alkhatib [14] in Jordan, he studied on rate of knowledge among 450 primary school teachers about learning disabilities with respect to variables of teaching background and education degree where the results showed that teachers have generally awareness about learning disability at average level. Similarly, Sideris [15] expressed that gender of teachers is related to knowledge of learning disability and it may affect on their ability. With respect to very crucial importance of real measurement of knowledge in educational group about learning specific problems and lack of the sufficient studies conduct in this field, the following questions are purposed for codification of comprehensive curricula for on the job training of educational group and on the top of them teachers in primary schools:

- What is the knowledge rate of principals and deputies and teachers about semiotics of learning specific problems?
- What is the knowledge rate of principals and deputies and teachers about etiology of learning specific problems?
- What is the knowledge rate of principals and deputies and teachers about educational- medical interventions in learning specific problems?

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Sample Population and Sampling Method

The statistical population of the present study included all principals, deputies, and teachers of grades 1-6 of primary schools in Islamshahr Town. The needed sample size for this study was determined as 120 participants. In current study, sampling design is of stratify cluster type and for this purpose the samples were chosen by randomized selection technique based on divisions of Islamshahr city within its different geographical directions. At next step, 10 primary schools (5 female and 5 male schools) were selected by taking lot and 120 questionnaire forms were filled out according to sample.

Tools and technique of Data Collection

Measurement instrument was a standard questionnaire that has been utilized for determination of knowledge and awareness of educational group in primary schools at Islamshahr city about learning specific problems in students. To build test, the latest version of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM- IV) and other scientific sources about learning specific problems have been used to prepare a questionnaire with 20 multiple choice questions including semiotics, etiology, and educational- medical interventions related parameters concerning to learning specific problems. At first step, the face validity of these questions were approved by the respected advisors and master academic teachers and then by specialists in the field of learning specific problems and to conduct the primary investigation, a test was administered for 30 principals, deputies, and teachers from primary schools in Islamshahr Town. We have calculated reliability coefficient by means of Cronbach’s alpha as 78% and this figure expresses the internal consistency for questions of measurement tools. With respect to the constituent questions, it could be implied first parameter as etiology variable (5 questions), second parameters as semiotic variable (19 questions), and third parameter as variable of educational- medical interventions (5 questions).

3. RESULTS

With respect to variable of knowledge rate (awareness), that has qualitative and continuous distance scale, the parametric tests was adapted, including technique of calculating mean confidence range for comparison of awareness of primary school educational group concerning to learning specific problems. Thus, to review the questions, we have used the mean values of knowledge rate at levels of variables of etiology, semiotics, and educational- medical interventions by means of single sample t- test as statistical model and to compare the knowledge rate among educational group we have utilized one- way ANOVA. The results indicated that the mean value of educational group’s knowledge rate in variable of etiology for learning specific problem was 1.56 and at the same time the mean values for variables of semiotics of learning specific problems and educational interventions were obtained 2.73 and 1.56 respectively. To examine the awareness rate among the principals in primary schools regarding learning specific problems, we have used single sample t- test where its results are summarized in Table 1. Thus, it is implied that the awareness rate of educational group derived from t- test is ($t = -12.11, p < 5\%$) for variable of etiology and for semiotics variable as ($t = 13.36, p < 5\%$) and for educational- medical interventions variable as ($t = 12.63, p < 5\%$) and eventually for total exam as ($t = 16.06, p < 5\%$) so this indicates a significant difference.

Table 1: Results of single sample t- test for study on awareness of educational group about learning specific problems

Variable	N	Mean	t- value	Sig. (2- tailed)
Etiology	120	1.56	-12.11	0.0001
Semiotics	120	2.73	-13.36	0.0001
Interventions	120	1.56	-12.63	0.0001
Total	120	5.55	-16.06	0.0001

Following to the subject, one- way ANOVA test was used to compare the knowledge rate regarding learning specific problems among educational group that is given in Table 2 and summarized their results there. The results came from one- way ANOVA indicated that there is no significant difference in variable of etiology concerning learning specific problems among educational group. Similarly, there is no significant difference in variables of semiotics, educational interventions, and finally knowledge total rate regarding learning specific problems among educational group. With respect to Table 3, the mean value for awareness rate of principals regarding learning specific problems is 7, which higher than mean value of awareness rate of deputies about this factor that is 5.1. on the other hand, in comparison to awareness rate of teachers in this regard, the mean value of principal awareness rate is 1.2 higher while in contrast, the mean value of deputies’ rate of awareness is 7% lesser than teachers’ mean rate of awareness. At last, based on the results derived from single sample t- test, it may be

declared that awareness rate of educational group in Islamshahr city primary schools about learning specific problems is at average and lower level while principals were higher than teachers and teachers were higher than deputies in terms awareness rate concerning to learning specific problems.

Table 2: ANOVA test results for comparison the rate of awareness about learning specific problems among educational group

Items		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Etiology	Principals	10	2.2	1.7
	Deputies	10	1.8	1.3
	Teachers	100	1.5	1.8
	Total	120	1.6	1.7
Semiotics	Principals	10	3.1	4.3
	Deputies	10	2.3	2.9
	Teachers	100	2.7	3.5
	Total	120	2.7	3.5
Interventions	Principals	10	1.7	2
	Deputies	10	1.1	1.7
	Teachers	100	1.6	1.6
	Total	120	1.6	1.7
Total	Principals	10	7	2.2
	Deputies	10	5.1	1.3
	Teachers	100	5.8	0.6
	Total	120	5.8	0.6

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of current research show that rate of awareness about learning specific problems among principals, deputies, and teachers of primary schools in Islamshahr town is at average and lower level and by comparison among experimental and theoretical mean values, it can be concluded that knowledge rate in principals, deputies, and teachers of Islamshahr town primary schools regarding three parameters of etiology, semiotics, and educational- medical interventions for which 20 questions had been considered, is lower than theoretical and normal average and among them principals are higher than deputies and teachers and rate of awareness is higher in teachers than deputies.

By comparison of the findings of the present research with previous conducted studies inside and outside the country, it is suggested that the results of this research are complied with the findings of studies done by Kamkari and Shokrzadeh [2] who expressed that academic professors lack the appropriate knowledge and awareness about the lessons of learning specific problems and they may verify the result of investigation conducted by Sharbati based on which experts of learning disorder possess few awareness about learning specific problems.

Similarly, in a survey under title of “review on the awareness rate among teachers in exceptional students schools in Tehran City”, Ayazizadeh [10] had stated that teachers have no appropriate and perfect knowledge about learning disorders and they might answer the questions based on their own experiences while 99 percent of them are not familiar with the scientific methods of teaching and retraining of students with learning disorders. Therefore, the present study also confirms this finding. Abdi [13] had posited that primary school teachers in towns from Tehran Province have less information about learning specific problems than average level so the current research presents the identical results to the survey done by Abdi [13].

Finally based on the conducted studies, it can be expressed that that the current research is in line with the studies conducted by Ameri [12], Babaei Miardan [11], and Abdi [13] that had implied the teachers had no appropriate knowledge concerning to learning specific problems. Alternately, with respect to a study which has been carried out by Alkhatib [14] in Jordan under the title of “a survey of general education teachers’ knowledge of learning disabilities in Jordan” the results indicated that all teachers had the knowledge about learning disabilities at average level; these findings contradicted the results of present study. Therefore, with respect to results of current research, it is suggested that:

- Several on the job training courses should be held purposefully along with codification of the related topics with definition, history, knowledge, etiology, semiotics, and educational intervention concerning to learning disabilities within these courses to educational group.
- Disable learner children need to a curriculum that has certain structure as possible. Many of them could flourish their talents under the supervision of a well- trained principal or teacher and have a relatively life.
- With respect to lower level of teachers’ knowledge about learning disability, it is suggested that first to provide facility for teachers, who employed for teaching in primary schools (particularly teachers with higher

than 10 years teaching experience), to continue their study and at the second to attract teachers with higher educational degree in employment of new teachers.

- Since learning disorders may hinder flourishing students' talents and it may lead to their disappointment and disdain so diagnosis of learning disorders and taking measure for treatment and solving of their problems is a task that should be taken into consideration by education and training practitioners. Some factors like physical diseases, emotional traumas, family adverse conditions and education lower quality may disrupt student's learning and cause retardation in education. Teachers should know symptoms of learning disorders in order to refer the patient students to the competent bodies if requires; therefore, codification of the relevant contents regarding learning specific problems may serve as the paramount efforts.

- It should make some efforts to hold educational workshops to improve knowledge of educational group further about learning disorders toward diagnosis- knowledge and educational interventions in primary school students and several on the job training classes, conferences to be held with publication of books and journals and to motivate them to observe these principles.

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