

Psychological Co-Relates of Learning Disability among Children

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Abstract: *The study was undertaken to assess the psychological correlates – emotional, behavioural and self-esteem issues of learning disability among children. It was hypothesized that there will be no emotional stability amongst LD children, LD children have low self-esteem, and behavioural issues will be higher in LD students. Students across the age group of ten years to sixteen years were included for the study (N=89). Children with average and above average IQ but with learning difficulty, Children who are physically healthy and active in other co-curricular activities, Children who are going for remedial classes for subject wise Learning difficulty were included. And children with various types of Learning disability like dyslexia(both reading comprehension and writing), dyscalculia and dysgraphia were included for the study. Information sheet -Socio-demographic data sheet, Consent form of parents, PBCL- Problem Behavior checklist by Vimala Veeraraghavan, Developmental Pathological Checklist(DPCL)-Malvika Kapur, Rosenberg Self-Esteem (Rosenberg 1965) questionnaires were administered on the selected sample. The Problem behaviour, self esteem, and emotional disorder, psycho-social stressors, and temperamental profiles in DPCL were assessed. The results show that the students with LD have low emotional stability, and also results show students with LD, low on self esteem and they have average to moderate problem behaviour on Problem Behaviour checklist. The present study reveals that children with LD have emotional stability problem and show differences in temperament issues and their Social stressors is a matter of concern as they go to a special school and not to the regular school, where the inclusion is not there. Children with LD also have low self-esteem as there is a lot of comparison with the normal children. Further, the limitations of the study, suggestions for further research are also given.*

Keywords: Learning Disability, Problem Behaviour, Self-esteem, temperament, Psycho-social stressors, emotional disorder

1. Introduction

Approximately 5 % of all public school students are identified as having a Learning Disability(LD). A disorder that impacts a child's ability to interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain in the general population. Parents of children with LD or ADHD, often focus on their academic challenges. Research shows, however, that how children use information to solve real-life problems, manage their daily lives, and what type of learner they are may be better indicators of success than their cognitive skills. Any kind of learning disability frequently co-occur with one another and with social skills deficit and emotional, self-esteem or behavioural problems. The longer the children with disability at any different level of severity who would be unattended or, go without identification and intervention the more difficult it is to provide remediation. Children with learning disabilities be it mild, moderate or severe are likely to manifest an increased severity of social and behavioural deficits. While children with reading issues also manifest attention deficit disorder and are more resistant to interventions. Severe reading disorders are clearly a major concern even mild deficits in reading skills are likely to indicate difficulties in academic learning. However other academic, social and behavioural manifestations of learning disability are also important and cannot be assumed to adequately address by programs to improve basic reading skills and also One of the earliest profiles, developed by Clements (1966), includes the following ten frequently cited attributes: Hyperactivity , Impulsivity , Perceptual-motor impairments , Disorders of memory and thinking , Emotional lability , Academic difficulties , Coordination problems , Language deficits , Disorders of attention and Equivocal neurological signs. Almost 35 years later, Lerner (2000) identified nine learning and behavioural characteristics of individuals with learning

disabilities: , Disorders of attention , Reading difficulties , Poor motor abilities , Written language difficulties , Oral language difficulties , Social skills deficits , Psychological process deficits , Quantitative disorders , Information processing problems.

According to Smith and colleagues (2004), students with problems in cognition may share the following characteristics: Make poor decisions , Have trouble adjusting to change , Make frequent errors , Require concrete demonstrations , Have delayed verbal responses , Have difficulties understanding social expectations , Require more supervision , Have trouble getting started on a task ,Have trouble using previously learned information in a new situation. A possible reason for these social-emotional problems is that students with LD often have deficits in social cognition. They may have the following characteristics: Misread social cues , Misinterpret the feelings of others , Not know when they are bothering others, Be unaware of the effect of their behaviour on someone else, Be unable to take the perspective of others or put themselves in someone else's shoes. Research has consistently found a higher-than-normal rate of behavioral problems in the classroom among students with learning disabilities (Cullinan, 2002). In a study of 790 students enrolled in K-12 LD programs in Indiana, the percentage of students with behavioral problems (19%) remained consistent across grade levels. After reviewing 152 different studies, Kavale and Forness (1996) concluded that 75% of students with LD exhibit deficits in social skills. Social skills deficits include the following: National Association of Special Education Teachers NASET Characteristics of Children with Learning Disabilities Acceptance by peers Difficulty making friends Being seen by peers as overly dependent Being less likely to become leaders Resolving conflict Managing frustrations Initiating or joining a

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conversation or play activities Listening Demonstrating empathy Maintaining a friendship Working in groups. In view to this an attempt is made to understand the psychological correlates such as social-emotional problems, self-esteem issues, social support and behavioural issues of LD children. A study on neuro-cognitive differences, in children and adults between their learning and altering behaviours and reinforcements by Shephard, E.; Jackson, G. M.; Groom, M. J.; Vol 7,(2014) indicate that children have specific difficulties with reinforcement learning when acquired behaviours must be altered. This may be caused by the added demands on immature executive functioning, specifically response monitoring, created by the requirement to reverse the associations, or a developmental difference in the way in which children and adults approach reinforcement learning. Another study by The Association of Reading Disability, Behavioral Disorders, and Language Impairment among by J. Bruce Tomblin^(a1), Xuyang Zhang^(a1), Paula Buckwalter^(a1) and Hugh Catts^(a2) show Children with language impairment (LI) have been shown to be at risk for reading disability (RD) and behavior disorder (BD). This study sought to determine if the behavior disorder and reading problems represented different outcomes or if these conditions occurred together when found with LI. A group of 581 second-grade children, including 164 children with LI, were examined for spoken language, reading, and behavior disorder. The data for each of these areas were examined as dimensional traits and as clinical categorical traits. The data indicated that whereas Reading Disability was directly associated with Behavioural Disorder, the association of LI with BD required the mediation of RD. A Meta-Analysis study by Kenneth A Kavale and Steven R Forness on Social Skill Deficits and Learning Disabilities(1996); Using the methods of meta-analysis, the investigation explored the nature of social skill deficits among students with learning disabilities. Across 152 studies, quantitative synthesis shows that, on average, about 75% of students with learning disabilities manifest social skill deficits that distinguish them from comparison samples. Approximately the same level of group differentiation is found across different raters (teachers, peers, self) and across most dimensions of social competence. Although social skill deficits appear to be an integral part of the learning disability experience, a number of questions about the relationship between learning disability and social skill deficits remain unanswered. Until these questions are answered, social skill deficits are best viewed as one among many elements of the learning disability constellation, and no significant definitional changes related to social skill deficits appear warranted. Peer acceptance and self-concept of students with disabilities in regular education by Sip Jan Pijl in 2009 addresses the relationship between the acceptance of students with disabilities by their peers and their self-concept. Research shows that level of acceptance and self-concept are moderately related. Students with disabilities not accepted by their peers in regular classrooms thus run the risk of developing low self-concept. It was assumed that this does not apply to students with moderate to severe learning disabilities (LD), because they are less able to understand fully their level of acceptance by typical peers. Therefore, they do not experience negative feelings linked to an eventual isolated position and are less likely to develop a

low self-concept. In total, 498 seventh-grade students participated in the study, of which 37 were described as having a disability. The data indeed showed a moderate relationship between acceptance and self-concept in the total group. But contrary to expectations, the students with moderate LD showed a marked relationship between peer acceptance and self-concept. For these students meaningful relations with peers are as important as for all students with and without special needs. The results of this study caution parents and teachers of students with moderate to severe LD not to underestimate the relevance for these students of being accepted and having friends in the peer group.

2. Significance of the Study

It is seen from the various literature reviews and other related studies the research on issues like self-esteem, social issues, behavioural problems, and self-esteem are not studied as a psychological correlate. Many a times there would be a lot of comparison with their academic achievement and general behaviour could be trained and in effort to the same the research is been conducted to understand the psychological correlates of LD children.

3. Method

The aim of the current was to study the psychological correlates – emotional, behavioural and self-esteem issues of learning disability children. The objective was to identify the level of emotional, behavioral problems and self-esteem of children with LD it was hypothesized that there exists a significant association between learning disability and psychological problems among LD children. The variables of the study were Children with LD and Emotional problem, psychosocial stressors and temperamental profiles, Behavioural Problems and Self-esteem. The sample for the study were chosen to be N=89, Children aged between 9-16yrs of age and both the genders were included for the study. Children who are already been screened for learning difficulty/disability were included. Special children with Autism, borderline MR etc. Children with low IQ, Children suffering from any physical illness were included. Children with average and above average IQ but with learning difficulty, Children who are in class VI and VII only, Children who are physically healthy and active in other co-curricular activities, Children who are going for remedial classes for subject wise Learning difficulty and also students who are not attending for the same were excluded. The tools used were Information sheet-Socio-demographic data sheet, Consent form of parents, Child Psychopathology checklist by Malvika Kapur, Problem Behavior checklist by Veeraraghavn and Archana Dogra, Rosenberg Self-Esteem (Rosenberg 1965). A socio-demographic sheet, consent form was given to the parents along with Problem Behaviour checklist, self-esteem scale, and child psychopathology checklist. The questionnaires were scored for descriptive statistics of the sample. The Problem behaviour checklist was administered for parents along with child psychopathology checklist which was scored for emotional disorders, temperamental profile and psycho-social stressors and self-esteem scale for children respectively. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the sample

4. Results & Discussion

Table showing descriptive statistics of the Children with LD on Problem Behaviour checklist, self-esteem, Psycho-social stressors, and temperamental profile.

Psychological correlates	N=89	
	Mean	Standard Deviation
PBL	93.73	17.36
Self-esteem	13.91	1.63
Emotional Disorders	4.52	2.88
PSS	6.78	3.92
Temperamental Profile	8.18	2.98

The objective of the current study was to identify the level of emotional and behavioral problems of children with LD. To identify the level of self-esteem of LD children. It was hypothesized as there exists a significant association between learning disability and psychological problems among LD children. Based on the findings of this research the hypothesis is proven showing the association of learning disability with psychological correlates; problem behaviour, self-esteem, emotional disorders, psycho social stressors and temperamental profile. The findings indicate there exists high problem behaviour, significant self-esteem issues, temperamental problem and emotional issues of LD children. The reason for the same could there is high amount of pressure from the family circle and a lot of comparisons among the family with their cousins and friend's children who are regular performers. Another reason for a psychological correlates being high is as most of the parents are highly educated and they cannot see their own children underperform in academics. And also screening for LD being done very late that is after age ten where the psychological damage is caused already on children. The researchers propose an intervention model to help cope up with psychological problems of LD children which would help them in functioning with their regular counterparts. The issues such as problem behaviour would be because of psychological process deficits social skills deficit, problems in processing information and poor motor abilities with LD children. There are certain number of children with Self-esteem and social skills issues which might be a result of difficulty making friends, managing frustrations demonstrating empathy, resolving conflicts, acceptance by peers being over dependent on family members and others. The psychosocial stressor is significantly lower but is prevalent as the perceived support system emphasizes more stress on improvements and constantly relates with being their children more normal. By understanding what the psychological correlates are understanding common characteristics the researcher would be able to propose appropriate intervention to deal and improve the psychological correlates of children with LD.

5. Conclusion

Children with Learning disabilities have high problem behaviour, emotional issues, temperamental problems, facing psycho-social stressors and significant self-esteem issues. The implications for further research would be to design an intervention to cope with psychological issues for children with LD would be useful.

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