EXPLORING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF SPECIAL CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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INTRODUCTION:

Learning process is much more complex, however, brain opt simple scheme in order to learn something that consist of input, integration, and output. When any information

ABSTRACT:

OBJECTIVES: The objective of the study is to explore common behavioral problems among special children who suffer from learning disabilities and examine whether their learning disabilities can cause psychological adjustment problems in children and split up as per gender.

STUDY DESIGN: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

PLACE & DURATION OF STUDY: Study was conducted from March, 2015 to August, 2015 in GISL, Okara and GHSS(HIC), Chiniot.

METHOD: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria were followed to gather data for this study. Slow learner children with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) and hearing impaired children with dysgraphia (writing difficulties) with an age range 6-18 years and IQ ranges 70-90 were included whereas slow learner children without learning disability and hearing impaired children without learning disability were excluded. Sample of 110 was selected which comprised of 50 (Hearing Impaired children with learning disability), (20 girls and 30 boys) and 60 slow learners with learning disability (30 boys and 30 girls) using purposive sampling technique and data was collected from parents, teachers and children with learning disabilities using semi structured interview guide for qualitative analysis and Child Behavior Checklist and Psychological Adjustment Scale for quantitative analysis.

RESULTS: Results showed that special children with LD have Mean=56.95, SD=23.889 on Behavioral Checklist and on Psychological Adjustment Scale, results showed that .9% of children with LD were well adjusted, 11.8 were adjusted, 44.5% less adjusted, 37.3% were maladjusted and 5.5% were severe maladjusted out of 110 population of special children with learning disabilities whereas, as per gender, there was statistically no significant difference on Behavioral Checklist and Psychological Adjustment Scale.

CONCLUSION: Learning Disabilities have comorbidity of behavioral problems and maladjustment, Furthermore, boys and girls with learning disabilities have same tendency of psychological adjustment problems and as well as behavioral problems.

KEY WORDS: Behavioral Problems, Psychological Adjustment, Learning Disabilities.

INTRODUCTION:

Learning process is much more complex, however, brain opt simple scheme in order to learn something that consist of input, integration, and output. When any information
comes into brain from the eyes and ears, brain makes sense out of it and send message to the nerves and muscles. Through memory process, after integration, brain store some information and retrieved when needed.

The term disability describes impairment in person’s ability to function due to changes in mental health and different subsystems of body with range of mild, moderate, severe and profound. Disability is a complex phenomenon covers impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Having problems in body functions or structure is called impairment whereas, difficulty to execute any task or action is called an activity limitation and when an individual have difficulty to participate any action due to his or her life situation called participation restriction.

Learning disabilities are an umbrella term for a wide variety of learning problems that can involve dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, reasoning, and listening and speaking problems. Their brains are simply wired differently and affects how they receive and process information, this can lead to trouble with learning new information and skills, and putting them to use.

According to DSM-5, one essential feature of specific learning disorder is persistent difficulties learning key stone academic skills that includes reading of single words accurately and fluently, reading comprehension, written expression and spelling, arithmetic calculations and mathematical reasoning (dyscalculia, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, dysphasia, aphasia). These disabilities may involve in some kinds of behavioral problems. To understand behavioral problems, it is necessary to understand behavioral functions.

Four common behavioral functions are Social Attention, Tangibles or Activities, Escape or Avoidance, Sensory encouragement. It’s worth noting that a behavior can serve more than one function. Psychological adjustment means how well a person handles common demands in life and how independent they are compared to others of a similar age and background and how adjust himself or herself in their peer groups and family system.

To understand psychological adjustment of children with learning difficulties, it is essential to understand their behavioral problems, it is also necessary to understand association of psychological adjustment and behavioral problems among children with learning disabilities. As children with different kinds of learning difficulties create problems during their class work. The aim of this study is to identify common behavioral problems and level of psychological adjustment of special children with learning disabilities.

**METHOD:**

Total sample of 110 special children with learning disabilities( dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia with an age range 6-18 years old which comprised of 50(Hearing Impaired children with Dysgraphia (writing difficulties), 20 girls and 30 boys) and 60 slow learners with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia (reading, writing and difficulty in mathematics), (30 boys and 30 girls) with an IQ ranges from 70-90 on standardized intelligence test(WISC) was drawn from Government Institute for Slow Learners, Okara and Government secondary school for hearing impaired, Chiniot using purposive sampling technique where children were pre-assessed by the admission committee and school psychologist before admission and during classes in institution. Before getting data, children were re-assessed by the researcher with the help of Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-5) after getting consent from the administration of the institutions.

The present research used a mixed design approach. It was a two-phase design approach. At phase-1, a qualitative analysis was conducted using semi structured interview guide that was developed using review of previous literature in this area. Children with learning disabilities, their parents and teachers were interviewed in this regard.

At phase-II, a quantitative analysis was done using Child Behavior Observation Checklist and Psychological Adjustment Scale to measure their level of adjustment and behavioral problems. Psychological Adjustment Scale was developed by Jain in 1972 to measure psychological...
adjustment level and cut off score of psychological adjustment scale is 28-46 that describes level of adjustment and maladjustment. After getting data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS:

Results of present study showed that 0.9% of children with LD were well adjusted, 11.8 were adjusted, 44.5% less adjusted, 37.3% were maladjusted and 5.5% were severe maladjusted out of 110 population of special children with learning disabilities on adjustment scale as cut off score is 28-46 (figure 1). Further descriptive analysis showed that (Mean=56.95, SD=23.889) on behavioral checklist of 110 population of special children with learning disabilities whereas, Independent Sample t-test showed that there was statistically not significant difference on Psychological Adjustment Scale as Girls have (Mean=3.2400, SD=.84600) and Boys have (Mean=3.4333, SD=.74485) and t= -1.274, P-value=.816 >0.05 (table 1) and on Child Behavioral Checklist Girls have (Mean=49.58, SD=21.435), Boys have (Mean=63.10, SD=24.254) and t= -3.067, P-value=.186 >0.05 (table 2) as per gender.

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<th>Table No. 1</th>
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DISCUSSION:

This exploratory study investigated psychological adjustment and behavioral problems (irritation, aggression, quarreling and beating other children, crying) of special children with learning disabilities. Overall result of behavior observation checklist showed that children have behavioral problems as Mean =56.95 & S.D=23.889 of sample of 110 and gender based findings showed that there was statistically non-significant differences among boys and girls with learning disabilities in adjustment problems as (t=-1.274, p=.816 >0.05) and as well as in behavioral problems as (t=-3.067, p.186 >0.05).

Wski and Micheals (2014) investigated psychological adjustment and family functioning of boys with learning disabilities and found that families of boys with LD tended to score more frequently in the extreme (disturbed) range of family functioning. However, greater than average proportion of boys with LD are at risk for developing psychological adjustment problems. Boys with LD were reported as having significantly more behavior problems than without LD8. Another findings of present study indicated that special children with learning disabilities have strong adjustment problems in their social relationship, family, school, teachers and friends as well adjusted are .9%, whereas 11.8% are adjusted, less adjusted 44.5%,
maladjusted, 37.3% and severe maladjusted 5.5% out of sample of 110 children with LD. Pham and Murray (2015) investigated that students’ social relationships are significantly associated with life satisfaction, problem behaviors and trust or alienation in teacher–student relationships are particularly strong predictors of adjustment.9. Bonifacci (2015) investigated that Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) are associated with some emotional disturbances, higher parental distress, and poorer reading history, more anxious, depressed and interpersonal self-esteem.10. Learning Disabilities represent important comorbidities among children with special health care needs.11. After interview with parents, teachers and review of records, this study explored that special children with learning disabilities also have morbidity of behavioral problems (irritation, aggression, quarreling and beating other children, crying and obstinate behavior) and adjustment problems due to their morbidity of learning disability as well as impairment, however teacher–student relationships, home environment, peer relationship and Individualized Educational Programme (IPE) may contribute to minimize their learning difficulties, adjustment problems and as well as behavioral problems.

CONCLUSION:

Special children with learning disabilities have morbidity of psychological maladjustment and behavioral problems whereas, boys and girls with learning disabilities have same tendency to have adjustment problems and as well as behavioral problems.

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