

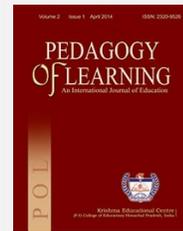


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Self-Esteem and Learning Style Preferences of Learning Disabled and Learning Non-Disabled Children of Primary Schools

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to find out the self-esteem and learning style preferences of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children. A sample of 300 primary school children studying in Vth class in government primary schools of Distt. Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh) were taken in the study. Primary school children learning difficulties questionnaire, Self-Esteem Questionnaire on Primary School Children developed by Lawrence (1982) and learning style inventory by Dunn *et al* (1996) was used. The data were analyzed by using 't' test. Analysis of results revealed that there is significant difference in self-esteem of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children. Learning non-disabled children seem to have significantly higher level of self-esteem than learning disabled children. Learning non-disabled primary school children are significantly higher on preference for intake and persistence elements of learning styles as compared to learning disabled primary school children. However, both the groups of learning disabled and non-disabled seem to have similar level of preference for visual, auditory, kinesthetic, morning, late morning, afternoon, evening, mobility, self motivation, adult motivation, teacher motivation, responsibility and structures learning preferences.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Learning Style Preferences, Learning Disabled, Learning Non-disabled, Primary School Children.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of education of learning disabled children presents a big challenge to educators everywhere. The problem assumes special significance in India in view of the rapidly growing school population and high degree of wastage in educational efforts at the primary level while this wastage may be due to a number of factors of socio-economic backgrounds. The learning difficulties of children to specific areas must also be considered a potent cause contributing to a large scale failure and drop-out in our schools. Although several categories of handicaps require special attention of the educators and provision beyond the scope of the ordinary school, category of learning disabled children at primary school level contribute a large group and deserve serious attention of educationists, researchers and educators. If teachers have an understanding of their self and learning style characteristics, their education may be made effective by adapting matching learning environment and teaching strategies.

The origin of learning disabilities of children can be traced to the Straussian legacy according to which learning disabled children have developed the concept of "brain-damaged child". They conducted their study on the impact of brain injuries on the behaviour and psychological development of children over thirteen years. The need for learning disabled children was realized since the 1940s. Learning disabled children are thought to be as unable to think in an organized and clear manner. That is why they are normally perceived as uncreative educators and psychologists believe that there is a group of children of normal or superior intelligence who fail to learn because of neuro-genetic learning disabilities. These children have been characterized as minimally brain-damaged, chronic brain syndromes, minimal brain dysfunction or psycho-neurological learning disabilities.

Self-esteem is the individual's evaluation of the discrepancy between self-image and ideal self. It is an affective process and it is a measure of the extent to which the individual cares about this discrepancy. The child with high self-esteem is likely to be confident to social situations and in tackling school words. He/she will have attained a natural curiosity for learning and will be larger and enthusiastic when presented with a new challenge. The child with low self-esteem will lack confidence his/her ability to succeed. Consequently, he/she may try to avoid situation, which he/she sees as potentially personally humiliating.

Learning style is a characteristic or individual way of the learner which he/she prefers to adopt during learning. Vermont and Van Rigswigk (1988) stated learning styles as synonymous of learning approaches. According to them, a coherent whole of the learning strategies, learning orientations and mental learning models w characterize each student as a learning style. The importance of learning styles of the children is important than even intelligence in improving the achievement of children, in developing positive attitude towards learning and harnessing the motivation of the children. Necessary confidence building excellence in learning is

possible through teaching based on learning styles of children. In fact, an individual learning style preference is the key to academic success.

Even as an acceptably large number of habitations are still without primary schools and nearly one-third of the schools in rural areas have only one teacher. The emphasis so far has been on enrolment of children. In urban areas, there is overcrowding in schools, furniture facilities and equipment are insufficient in almost all parts of the country. Rapid expansion not accompanied by sufficient investment of resources has led to deterioration in academic standards. A programme of non-formal education has been started but it is still unsatisfactory in terms of spread and quality.

Rationale of the Study

The learning disabled children are deficient in academic skills of one or the other kind. Their creativity may be carefully studied and identified so that splinter skills can be developed to shadow their behavioural deficiencies. Since creativity is a basis for good living, the children need be encouraged for being engaged in creative behaviour. This will be helpful for the learning disabled children to overcome some of the difficulties.

Therefore, it is suggested that intensive study should be done to explore creative potential of children with such disabilities. A sound programme needs to be developed based on their learning characteristics and personality. There is improvement in self-esteem of the students and specific intervention programme may be used to boost up self-esteem level of learning disabled primary school children. Through conferences, classroom teacher may inform the parents of such children to take precautionary measures. So that self-esteem of the children does not remain low. Different teaching strategy affects the academic achievement of the students. So, if children prefer learning through visual style, they should be presented instruction in visual mode. However, studies are done on learning disability and self-esteem separately but these aspects regarding learning disabled children are often overlooked and left untouched. In view of the above, the investigator selected this topic to study and suggest remedial measures for an improvement of the learning disabled students at primary school level.

Objectives

The following were the objectives of the present study;

1. To compare self-esteem of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children.
2. To compare learning style preferences of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children.

Hypotheses

The following were the null hypotheses of the present study;

Ho₁ There is no significant difference in self-esteem of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference in learning style preferences of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children.

Delimitation of the study

The present study was delimited to the following aspects;

The study is delimited to government primary school children of district Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh). The study is delimited to primary school children of Vth class. The sample for the study consisted of 300 students which was selected through random cluster method.

METHODOLOGY

In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study, the descriptive survey method of research was considered appropriate to study the self-esteem and learning style preferences of learning disabled and non-disabled primary school children. The scores of $M + 1$ S.D. considered as learning disabled and the score of $M - 1$ S.D. considered as learning non-disabled children.

This study was carried out on a sample of 300 primary school students studying in Vth class of district Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh). It included 165 male and 135 female students. The sample was drawn from 10 primary schools of district Hamirpur. The schools were selected through random method. But subjects were selected through cluster method.

In order to fulfill the objectives of the present study, Lawrence self-esteem questionnaire, Dunn's learning style inventory and Primary School children's learning difficulty questionnaire of Madhosh (1982) was used as the tools for data collection for the present study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

For further analysis and interpretation, the investigator has used 't' test to find out the significance of difference between the two variables.

Table-1: Significance of difference between self-esteem scores of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children.

S.N.	Group	N	M	S.D.	't' Value	Remarks
1.	Learning disabled	53	15.49	3.297	2.12	Significant at 5% level
2.	Learning non-disabled	58	17.5	4.15		

From the above table-1, it is clear that there is significant difference between self-esteem of learning disabled and learning non-disable primary school children. It is evident from the table that the obtained 't' value was significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mean scores of learning non-disabled group M=17.5 is higher than the mean scores of learning disabled group M=15.48. From this, it may be inferred that learning non-disabled children have higher level of self-esteem than learning disabled children. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected.

Table-2 : Significance of difference in mean scores of learning style preferences of learning Disabled and learning Non-disabled primary school children.

S. N.	Variable	Learning Disabled Group	Learning Non-disabled Group	't' Value
1.	Visual Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.36 SD = 0.79	N = 58 M = 2.5 SD = 0.9	0.81 NS
2.	Auditory Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.36 SD = 1.00	N = 58 M = 2.62 SD = 0.99	1.37 NS
3.	Kinesthetic Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 7.11 SD = 1.61	N = 58 M = 7.59 SD = 1.47	1.63 NS
4.	Intake Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 1.57 SD = 0.93	N = 58 M = 2.0 SD = 1.27	2.06*
5.	Morning Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 4.02 SD = 1.36	N = 58 M = 4.27 SD = 0.95	1.09 NS
6.	Late Morning Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.55 SD = 1.07	N = 58 M = 2.396 SD = 1.025	0.77 NS
7.	Afternoon Learning Preference	N = 53 M = 3.28 SD = 1.28	N = 58 M = 3.43 SD = 1.23	0.63 NS
8.	Evening Learning	N = 53	N = 58	1.167

	Preferences	M = 0.698 SD = 0.46	M = 0.60 SD = 0.49	NS
9.	Mobility Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.23 SD = 0.91	N = 58 M = 2.069 SD = 1.153	0.82 NS
10.	Self-Motivation Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 5.36 SD = 1.04	N = 53 M = 5.29 SD = 1.109	0.35 NS
11.	Adult Motivation Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 4.45 SD = 0.798	N = 58 M = 4.36 SD = 0.949	0.54 NS
12.	Teacher Motivation Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 3.698 SD = 0.75	N = 58 M = 3.76 SD = 0.57	0.46 NS
13.	Un-motivation Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.29 SD = 1.31	N = 58 M = 2.62 SD = 1.04	1.43 NS
14.	Persistence Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.64 SD = 0.92	N = 58 M = 3.05 SD = 0.94	2.33*
15.	Responsibility Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 2.62 SD = 1.13	N = 58 M = 2.93 SD = 0.95	1.55 NS
16.	Structures Learning Preferences	N = 53 M = 3.09 SD = 0.92	N = 58 M = 3.14 SD = 0.78	0.31 NS

It is clear from the above table-2 that there is significant difference between learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children on intake and persistence learning style preferences. The obtained 't' value was significant at 0.05 level of significant at both styles. It means that there is significant difference in intake and persistence learning style preferences of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children. Hence null hypothesis is rejected.

It is evident from the above table-2 that the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, morning, late morning, afternoon, evening, mobility, self-motivation, adult-motivation, teacher motivation, un-motivation, responsibility and structure learning style preferences exhibited no significant difference between learning disabled and learning non-disabled groups of primary school children. So the null hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main findings of the study were as following:

1. There was significant difference in self-esteem of learning disabled and learning non-disabled primary school children. Learning non-disabled children seem to have significantly higher level of self-esteem than learning disabled children.
2. Learning non-disabled primary school children are significantly higher on preference for intake and persistence elements of learning style as compared to learning disabled primary school children. However, both the groups of learning disabled and non-disabled seen to have similar level of preference for visual, auditory, kinesthetic, morning time, late morning time, afternoon time, evening time, mobility, self motivation, teacher motivation, adult-motivation, non-motivation, persistence, responsibility and structure learning preferences.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Learning disabled students were found to have lower level of self-esteem than learning non-disabled children. Since self-esteem has been reported by the researchers to have positive relationship with academic preference, the present finding has the implication for improvement of self-esteem of learning disabled children. The teachers are required to teach in an informal and affectionate manner by employing teaching strategy which are liked by the children. Specific intervention programme may be used to boost up self-esteem level of learning disabled primary school children. Parents also play an important role in the development of a healthy self-esteem that leads to happy life. Through meetings, conferences classroom teacher may inform the parents of such children to take precautionary measures so that self-esteem of learning disabled children does not remain low.

The teaching strategies which take care of learning style preferences of children should be used to enhance the academic achievement of children. It calls for diagnosing the learning style of learning disabled children and using complementary strategy and building conducive learning environment. For instance, if children prefer learning through visual style, they should be presented instructions in visual mode.

CONCLUSION

The problem of the education of learning disabled presents a big challenge to the educators. If the teachers have an understanding of self-esteem and learning styles characteristics of learning disabled students, their education may be made effective by adopting matching learning environment and teaching strategies. In order to teach these children, general instructional techniques, use of memorizing strategies, basic reading, phonic approach, language experience approach, programme instructions, multi-sensory approaches etc are used with differential effectiveness. Specific methods/procedures can also be adopted for improvement of handwriting, spelling, reading and problem solving. Therefore, the regular teacher has to make

classroom personalized and encouraging for motivating the children with appropriate task analysis and both special education and integration are recommended for learning disabled children.

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