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Investigating the Educational and Behavioral Problems of Slow-Learners of Neka during 2013-2014

Ebrahim Mohammadian Akerdi[a], Seyedeh Fatemeh Razavi Sadati[b], Seyyedeh Taraneh Alavi Moghaddam[c], Farhang Fereydooni[d], Mannaneh Moafi[e]

a. *Instructor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University Sari branch.*
b. *Instructor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University Sari branch.*
c. M.A. in general Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University Sari branch.
d. M.A. student in general Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University Sari branch.
e. M.A. in clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, mazandaran.

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the educational and behavioral problems of slow-learners of neka. Therefore, 79 of slow-learners of Sari were selected through the available sampling method. The research method was descriptive. To collect data, Achenbach behavioral questionnaire and the researcher-made questionnaire were used and the data were analyzed using SPSS and descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The results showed that slow-learners were slower at comprehension skill compared to others in the classroom.

Keywords: educational problems, behavioral problems, student, slow learner

Introduction

The education system of each society follows certain goals according to its aspirations and in order to achieve these goals, the education system should provide equal opportunities for everybody. Scholars believe that one of the major responsibilities of the education system is to identify individual differences of students. Despite individual differences, the education system provides equal opportunities for students while there is a significant difference in their interests, abilities and goals (Ghazi, 1998).

Learning is an innate ability that has always existed in human beings that do not consider individual abilities and is highly dependent on environmental stimuli. This innate process in formal schools continues by tasks and homework, but the speed of learning is not equal among students (Malik, 2009).

According to a vast range of abilities that exist in classrooms, there is a group of students that have educational limitations and are considered as slow-learners. The presence of these students can be due to the results of the entrance exams. Therefore, those are the students that are introduced through learner assessments, specialized intelligence test centers, and exceptional student education centers as slow-learners (Tat and Hovsepian, 1999).

Studies show that about 8 to 9 percent of students that are educating in primary schools have lower IQ than the average level. Children with low levels of IQ can constitute a large group called slow-learners. This group of learners is not under sufficient attention. They usually fail in exams and finally leave school (Komar, Gita and Palat, 2006).

The only significant evidence of these students that directs us towards the existence of limitations in their performance refers to the educational problems. So far, there has not been mentioned any specific reason for educational performance limitations of these students, but a series of factors including environmental factors, environmental and educational limitations can be considered for the occurrence of these limitations (Tot and Hovsepan, 2000).

Although these students are educationally weak, regarding physical, sensual, motor, and emotional aspects, they do not show differences compared to their classmates. Due to the characteristics of slow-learners, educators believe that it is better for these students to educate in normal schools. Obviously, these students need consultation and guidance in school (Afrooz, 2004).

Generally, by ignoring the intellectual conditions of these students, teachers humiliate them by choosing unpleasant nicknames or comparing them with others. These labels provide failure and disgust of students towards education (Naraghi and Naderi, 2009).

According to the conducted studies on the problems of slow-learners, the significant effect of these problems on these children can be realized. Therefore, the present study was conducted to investigate the educational problems of slow-learners in Sari.

Methodology

The design of this study is descriptive. The sample of this study consisted of all slow-learners of neka. Among the available population, a number of 79 students were selected through the available sampling method. To collect data, Achenbach behavioral questionnaire and the researcher-made questionnaire were used. Also, Slosen and Rion IQ tests were used to estimate IQ level and identify slow-learners.

Achenbach behavioral questionnaire assesses emotional-behavioral problems as well as educational and social capabilities and competencies of slow-learners and generally is completed between 20 to 25 minutes (Minaei, 2004). That part of TRF that assess emotional-behavioral problems has 113 main questions and 8 minor questions that are scored based on 3-pont scale (0. False; 1, sometimes true; 2. Absolutely true). This form measures emotional-behavioral problem or syndrome.

To investigate the educational problems of students, the researcher made questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was prepared at the stages. First, during an interview with teachers, this question was asked: "according to your opinion, what are the main educational problems of slow-learners?" According to the responses by teachers as well as texts and articles about slow-learners, the main problems were classified and accordingly, the initial questions were proposed. This questionnaire is consisted of two parts. The first part is dedicated to personal information of students such as age, sex, parents' education, and economic status. The second part includes questions. This part consists of 28 questions that the teacher should answer to them by "Yes" or "No". Questions 1-14 are exclusively about the educational problems of slow-learners in reading, math, and writing. Questions 16 and 17 examine two cognitive concept of attention and concentration about slow-learners. Question 15 as well as questions 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 investigate the communicative issues of these students in school and regarding the relationship with school, teacher, and classmates. Questions 23-28 investigate the supportive sources regarding the educational problems of slow-learners. The validity of this questionnaire has been confirmed based on content validity. In order to confirm the validity, this questionnaire was examined by psychology experts. The reliability coefficients of each parts as well as the whole questionnaire were determined as 88/7% using Cronbach's alpha.

Findings

The data were collected and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

A) Descriptive analysis of data

Table 1. Frequency of sex, number of brothers and sisters, educational status, parents' job, economic status

Density	Percentage	Frequency	**Sex**
55.4	55.4	36	Male
100.0	44.6	29	Female
	100.0	65	Total

Density percentage	Percentage	Frequen	Percentage	Frequency	**Mother's education**
17.9	15.4	10			
46.4	24.6	16			
76.8	26.2	17			
92.9	13.8	9			
98.2	4.6	3			
100.0	1.5	1			
	86.2	56			
	19.8	9			
density					
17.7			16.9	11	Illiterate
43.5			24.6	16	Primary
69.4			24.6	16	Middle school
98.4			27.7	18	High school
100.0			1.5	1	B.A
100.0			0	0	M.A
			95.4	62	Total
Density percentage			Percentage	Frequency	**Mother's job**
96.9			96.9	63	Household
100.0			3.1	2	Governmental
100.0			0	0	Free
			95.4	65	Total
			0	0	Blank
Density percentage			Percentage	Frequency	**Father's education**
23.3			21.5	14	Illiterate
53.3			27.7	18	Primary
90.0			33.8	22	Middle school
98.3			7.7	5	High school
98.3			0	0	B.A
100.0			1.5	1	M.A
			92.3	60	Total
			7.7	5	Blank
Density percentage			Percentage	Frequency	**Father's job**

100.0		6.2	4	Governmental
93.8		92.3	60	Free
		98.5	46	Total
		1.5	1	Blank
Density frequency		Percentage	Frequency	**Economic status**
9.5		9.2	6	Above average
77.8		66.2	43	Average
100.0		21.5	14	Lower than average
		96.9	63	Total
		3.1	2	Blank
variance	SD	Mean	Number	Statistical indicators / Variables
18.200	4.266	78.16	65	**IQ**

B) Inferential statistics

Table 2. Educational problems of slow-learners

No		Yes		Questions	Row
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency		
9.2	6	90.8	59	Is the student slow in comprehension compared to the average level of the classroom?	1
75.4	49	23.1	15	Can the student read his Persian book without problem?	2
47.7	31	47.7	31	Can the student understand and identify written or printed signs?	3
69.2	45	30.8	20	Can the student understand the meanings of sentences he reads?	4
33.8	22	66.2	43	Has the student problem in satirizing words?	5
44.6	29	52.3	34	Is the student's hand writing illegible?	6
30.8	20	67.7	44	Is there any serious and significant problem is student's spelling?	7
12.3	8	81.5	53	Has the student problem in essay writing?	8
23.1	15	76.9	50	Has the student basic problems in math?	9
26.2	17	70.8	46	Has the student problem in calculation?	10
24.6	16	72.3	47	Has the student problem in four main tasks?	11
38.5	25	60.0	39	Has the student problem in understanding the numbers?	12
66.2	43	30.8	20	Has the student problem in reading and writing?	13

30.8	20	67.7	44	Is the student bored during homework and avoids them?	14

According to the results, in comprehension, 90/8% are lower than average. In essay writing, 80/5% have problem. In math, 76/9% have problem and also 67/7% are reluctant regarding doing homework.

Table 3. Cognitive problems, supportive sources, communicative issues, emotional problems, anxiety problems, attention deflect/hyperactivity problems, coping behavior problems, and physical problems of slow-learners.

No		Yes		Questions	Row
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency		
90.8	59	7.7	5	Can the student transfer the learning material?	16
78.5	51	18.5	12	Has the student concentration in the classroom?	17

No		Yes		Questions	Row
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency		
60.0	39	28.5	25	Is the student using educational facilities such as mobile teacher or additional training programs?	1
49.2	32	7.7	5	Are the parents taking care of their children's homework in house?	2
40.0	26	58.5	38	Are the facilities in the school enough for students' problems?	3
No		Yes		Questions	Row
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency		
49.2	32	49.2	32	Is the student willing to have interaction with his classmate?	1
49.2	32	50.8	33	Has the student cooperated well with his teacher?	2
49.2	32	50.8	47	Is the student competent enough for group activities?	3
27.7	18	72.3	47	Is the student accepted as member of the class?	4
53.8	35	43.1	28	Is the student able to have group activities?	5
80.0	52	18.5	12	Is the student indomitable in the class and ruins the discipline?	6

Percentage	Frequency	The statistical index of emotional state
24.6	16	With problem
75.4	49	Without problem
100.0	65	Total
Percentage	Frequency	The statistical index of emotional state
15.4	10	With problem
84.6	55	Without problem
100.0	65	Total

Impulsive hyperactivity		Attention deficit		Attention deficit/hyperactivity		The statistical index
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	
9.2	6	38.5	25	7.7	5	With problem
90.8	59	61.5	40	92.3	60	Without problem
100.0	65	100.0	65	100.0	65	Total
Percentage		Frequency				The statistical index of emotional state
4.6		3				With problem
95.4		62				Without problem
100.0		65				Total
Percentage		Frequency				The statistical index of emotional state
6.2		4				With problem
93.8		61				Without problem
100.0		65				Total
Percentage		Frequency				The statistical index of emotional state
13.8		9				With problem
86.2		56				Without problem
100.0		65				Total
Percentage		Frequency				The statistical index of emotional state
73.8		48				With problem
26.2		17				Without problem
100.0		65				Total
Percentage		Frequency				The statistical index of emotional state
81.5		53				Weak
18.5		12				Appropriate
100.0		65				Total

According to the results, 78/5% of students have problem in concentration; 38/% of slow-learners use educational assistance; 58/8/% of students in school benefit from supportive sources; 7/7% of students have supportive sources in house; 72/3% of slow-learners are accepted by their classmates; 18/5% have desired behavior in the class; 24/6% have emotional problems; 75/4% lack emotional problems; 15/4% have anxiety problems; 84/6% lack anxiety problems; 7/7% have attention deficit/hyperactivity; 38/5% have attention deficit problem and; 9/2% are hyperactive.

Discussion and Conclusion

The term "slow-learner" is somehow ambiguous and is generally used for students who need specific considerations. In most of the classrooms, there are students who are not capable of competition with their classmates and at the end of the year, they experience educational failure. These students who are called slow-learners, are not capable of learning like their partners (Khnzadeh, 2008). Slow learners are

those children that have weak performance in school and cannot receive specific instructions. They have their own educational needs. In fact, they perform slower in understanding specific concepts that normal people understand easily. These children finally learn the main issues but one or two years after their classmates (Malik, 2009).

The purpose of the present study was to investigate educational and behavioral problems of slow-learners of Neka. According to the results, we conclude that 90% of slow-learners are weak in learning and comprehension that has the higher frequency in educational problems; 75% have problem in reading; 69% in comprehension; 67% in spelling; and 81% in essay writing. In math, 76% showed problem. In calculations, 70% and in four main tasks, 72% showed problem. Meanwhile, 43% upside-down reading and writing and 54 subjects had illegible handwriting. The present study is consistent with Behnia (2002), Jabari (2005), Visme (2005), Komar et al. (2006), Karand et al. (2008), and Malik (2009).

The limitations regarding sample size, lack of control over all variables, and limitation in data collection tools are among the main limitations of this study that can negatively affect the interpretation and generalization of results.

According to the findings of this study and considering this fact that family has been identified as the weakest supportive source, it is recommended to the Department of Education to increase the awareness level of parents regarding the needs and features of slow-learners. According to the educational problems of these students in learning process as well as the integration principle, it is suggested to have extra-curricular classes for these students.

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