

The Degree of Awareness of Basic Classroom Teachers About Reading Disabilities in Jordan

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about reading difficulties. The study included 151 teachers. The researcher prepared the study tool, and its validity and reliability indications were verified. The results indicated a moderate to high degree of awareness. The results revealed that males are more aware than females of the characteristics. The study recommended the necessity of educating teachers about the difficulties of reading and identifying the teachers' needs necessary to teach this group of students.

Key words: Awareness of basic classroom teachers; Reading disabilities; Jordan

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INTRODUCTION

The IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act defines learning disabilities as: "Children with specific learning disabilities are those children who have a disturbance in one or more of the major psychological processes used in the understanding or use of spoken language, or written, which manifests itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, dictate/spelt, write, or do arithmetic. Such disorders include conditions such as cognitive disabilities, brain injury, minimal cerebral dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental

aphasia. This concept or term does not include children with learning problems resulting mainly from visual, hearing, motor, or mental disabilities, emotional disturbance, or from poor environmental, cultural or economic conditions" (Kuder, 2012).

In general, students with learning disabilities are characterized by one or more of the following characteristics: low academic achievement, especially in the areas of reading, its requirements or skills, written expression skills, spoken language and mathematics, which is reflected in the low level of academic achievement in general. Furthermore, they suffer from cognitive and perceptual difficulties, and problems with general coordination. Some students' find that they suffer from auditory perceptual difficulties, visual perceptual difficulties, or both, and difficulties in physical or physical activities or motor skills. Also, many of them faces problems in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is also characteristic of students with learning difficulties and its effects on academic achievement and problems of social interaction and adaptation. Students with learning disabilities have difficulties in memory that appear to parents and teachers in the student forgetting duties or things, as well as difficulties in social and emotional adjustment, and challenges in motivation which appear in the lack of desire or even lack of desire to control situations or influence them (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2015; Alreihani, El-Zraigat, and Tannous, 2018).

Firat and Koçak (2020) studied the basic school teachers opinions about identifying students with learning disabilities and the methods they use when confronting students who are perceived to have learning disabilities. The sample consisted of 23 female teachers and 26 basic teachers. Four different themes (developmental, demographic, academic values, personal ideas and communication-based behaviors) were identified for teachers' views about students' identification of learning disabilities. The study confirmed the practical education

in relation to learning disabilities during training during learning training at the university level. Furthermore, the study (Menon, 2016) aimed to know the awareness of learning difficulties among basic school teachers. The sample of the current study included of 500 basic teachers in Kerala. The researcher used the Learning Disabilities Awareness Test to measure awareness of learning difficulties among basic school teachers. The results indicated that basic school teachers have an average level of awareness of learning difficulties.

On the other hand, Aktan (2020) was concerned with the study of the educational needs of teachers regarding the education of university students with learning difficulties in their classrooms, and the study group consisted of 20 teachers working in basic, secondary and secondary schools in the city center of Duzce in the academic year 2018-2019 and they had students diagnosed with learning difficulties in their classrooms. The results indicated that teachers need to be taught to identify learning difficulties and the characteristics of students with learning difficulties. In addition, it was found that they need to learn to use and interpret assessment tools and that they lack knowledge in establishing support and collaboration mechanisms, have content knowledge regarding the preparation of an IEP, and provide expert support as well as educational interventions before, during and after training in order to educate the family. While, the results of Sowell and Sugisaki (2020) revealed that the majority of English language teachers surveyed received little or no training to accommodate learning difficulties, and the majority indicated that they did not feel confident in helping students with learning disabilities. also, Gottfried and Kirksey (2020) identified in preparing teachers to teach students with learning disabilities the components of pre-service preparation associated with the perceived readiness to teach students with learning difficulties.

STUDY PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

Some students in the basic grades show a number of academic problems, especially those related to reading skills. These problems may be an indication and a symptom of reading difficulties and not because of the student's lack of effort. Therefore, the teacher's knowledge of the symptoms and characteristics of students with reading difficulties in the classroom is important. The knowledge also helps in identifying students, referring them to diagnosis, and providing the necessary educational services to improve their educational levels. The current study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the degree of teacher awareness of basic classes with reading difficulties?

- Does the degree of teachers awareness of reading difficulties differ according to the gender of the teacher?

- Does the degree of teachers awareness of reading difficulties differ according to their academic qualification?

Methodology

The present study considered a survey study that organizes the results in numbers.

Participants

The study sample consisted of (151) basic school teachers in Jordan.

Study tool

The researcher constructs a scale to measure the degree of awareness of basic classroom teachers about reading disabilities in Jordan. The scale consisted of 13 items were selected related literature such as Mayo Clinic Staff (2021), Heather Urschel (2018), and Alreihani, El-Zraigat, and Tannous (2018).

Content Validity

The significance of the scale's validity was reached through the content validity by presenting it to expertise persons of faculty members in Jordanian universities with specialization in special education and psychology. The arbitrators were asked to arbitrate the scale according to the extent to which the item belongs to the dimension, the extent of its target measurement, in addition to the integrity of the language. And adopted 80% of the arbitrators to keep the items.

Construct Validity

In order to extract the significance of the construct validity of the scale, the correlation coefficients of the item with the total score of the scale were extracted in an pilot sample from outside the study sample that consisted of (30), and the coefficients of the item's correlation with the total score of the scale ranged between (0.48-0.82).

Reliability of the Study Tool

To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the test-retest method was used by applying the tool, and reapplying it after two weeks on a group outside the study sample consisting of (30), and then the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between their estimates in both times which reached (0.90).

The stability coefficient was also calculated by the internal consistency method according to Cronbach's alpha equation, that was reached (0.88), and these values were considered appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection

The meeting was held with the teachers and clarification of the purpose of the study and how to respond on the study scale and the process of placing an estimate on each item (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). After collecting the data from the teachers, a statistical analysis was carried out to answer the study questions and reach the results.

Study Methodology

The current study is a descriptive survey that aims to

measure the degree of awareness of basic classroom teachers about reading disabilities in Jordan. The study included the following variables:

- Gender.
- Academic qualifications.

To answer the study questions, the statistical methods used in calculating the means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients were used in order to identify the significance of the differences between the mean scores, and the (t-test).

THE RESULTS

Statistical Standard

The Quadruple Likert scale was adopted to identify the response on the study tools, by giving each of its items one degree out of its four degrees (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), and they are digitally represented (4, 3, 2, 1) respectively. Adopt the following scale for the purposes of analyzing the results:

- Low: 1-2
- Average: 2-3
- High: 3-4

The scale was calculated by using the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{Upper end of scale (4) - lower end of scale (1)} / \text{divided by}}{\text{Number of classes required (3)}}$$

Answering of the Questions

• What Is the Degree of Teacher Awareness of Basic Classes With Reading Difficulties?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about reading difficulties were extracted, and the table below illustrates this.

Table 1
Means and standard deviations of items related to the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about reading difficulties, arranged in descending order according to the means.

Rank	No.	Items	Means	S.D	Level
1		Writing sentences with little grammatical complexity (doesn't take into account grammar while writing)	3.14	.800	high
2		It takes a long time to write a sentence or even a word	3.13	.774	high
3		He has a problem with long-term memory	3.08	.919	high
4		Very poor performance on essay or timed tests	3.07	.859	high
5		He complains that he knows what you want to say but doesn't seem to put it on paper	3.03	.817	high

To be continued

Continued

Rank	No.	Items	Means	S.D	Level
6		double handwriting	3.00	.788	high
6		He has difficulty writing legibly	3.00	.836	high
6		He has difficulty reading regularly	3.00	.846	high
9		He writes sparsely and disorganized	2.97	.860	average
10		incoherent writing (sentences do not have a specific order (2.95	.868	average
11		He has difficulty transcribing from the board or taking lesson notes orally	2.93	.857	average
12		Has trouble keeping word placement on page	2.87	.833	average
13		He suffers from visual problems that lead to the letters dancing on the page	2.59	.935	average

The Table 1 shows that the ranged between means (2.59-3.14), where item No. (6), which states “writing sentences with little grammatical complexity (does not take into account the rules of the language while writing)” came in the first place with an means of (3.14), while item No. (13) and its text “suffers from visual problems that lead to the letters dancing on the page” ranked last, with an mean of (2.59). The arithmetic mean of the degree of awareness of basic classroom teachers about the difficulties of learning to read as a whole was (2.97).

• Does the Degree of Teachers Awareness of Reading Difficulties Differ According to the Gender of the Teacher?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about the reading difficulties were extracted according to the variables of gender, and to indicate the statistical differences between the means, a t-test was used, and the tables below illustrate this.

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, and the t-test for the effect of gender on the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about reading difficulties

Gender	No.	Means	S.D	t	Freedom degree	Sig.
Male	75	3.10	.525	2.390	149	.018
Female	76	2.86	.695			

It is evident from the Table 2 that there are statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of gender in all fields and in the total score, and the differences were in favor of males.

• Does the Degree of Teachers Awareness of Reading Difficulties Differ According to Their Academic Qualification?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the degree of awareness of basic grade

teachers about the reading difficulties were extracted according to the variables of academic qualifications, and to indicate the statistical differences between the means, a t-test was used, and the tables below illustrate this.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, and the t-test for the effect of academic qualifications on the degree of awareness of basic grade teachers about reading difficulties

Gender	No.	Means	S.D	t	Freedom degree	Sig.
Bachelor	83	2.90	.679	-1.604	149	.111
Graduate studies	68	3.06	.547			

It is clear from the Table 3 that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of the academic qualification in all fields and in the total score.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicated that teachers have moderate to high awareness of the paragraphs, and this reflects that they need more knowledge in identifying students who show difficulties in reading. Therefore, it is important that these teachers be trained more on the characteristics of students with learning disabilities and reading difficulties so that they can identify them and refer them to diagnostic centers and develop reading remedial programs for them. This requires training for teachers to recognize and refer these students. The researcher recommends the following:

- Educating teachers about the characteristics of students with reading difficulties.
- Determining the needs of teachers with regard to teaching students with learning disabilities in regular classes.

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