



Behavioural Problems Among Students with Disabilities in East Medinipur District

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine the interaction between behavior problems among students with disabilities in East Medinipur, West Bengal and a number of dependent variables (gender, age, type of disability and severity of disability). The study sample consisted of 300 students enrolled in rehabilitation centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs. A questionnaire was designed and developed on the basis of its content validity and its reliability. Findings indicated that significant differences in the behavior problems were found for the independent variables of gender, age, type of disability and severity of disability. Male students above eight years old, students with intellectual disability and students with severe disabilities were most likely to exhibit behavior problems. The occurrence of certain behavior problems was found to be relevant to the type of disability. Based on the results of this study, a number of recommendations are provided to help ameliorate behavior problems associated with the variables addressed above.

Keywords: Behavioral problems, Students with disabilities, East Medinipur

1. Introduction

A behavior problem is defined as a socially inappropriate or harmful behavior to self or to others. Kirk (2003) defines a behaviour problem as a deviation from the conduct that is appropriate for a specific age and also interferes with an individual's growth, development and the lives of others. Ibrahim (1993) believes that children in the East Medinipur suffer from many behavior problems as a result of social changes in their communities and the lack of specialized rehabilitation services. Criteria used to quantify behavioral problems are, to some degree, dependent on the context in which the child lives. Thus, a given behavior may be considered a behavior problem in one community, while it is not so in another. In addition, other characteristics of behaviors, such as their shape, frequency and contextual appropriateness should be considered when determining whether they meet the criteria for being a labeled behavioral problem.

Viewing the frequency and the role of behavioral problems of students with disabilities in preventing their psychological and social adaptation as well as in hindering the benefits of providing educational and therapeutic services, this study aims to identify the most frequent behavioral problems of students with disabilities who are enrolled in centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs in the West Bengal. Behavior problems are examined as they relate to several independent variables, including gender, age, type of disability and severity of disability. The significance of this study is related to the fact that students with disabilities are vulnerable to behavioral problems resulting from their failure to adapt to the demands of their surrounding communities, their intellectual difficulties and their sensory and motor deficits that impact perceiving stimuli around them. These problems affect students' abilities in acquiring the necessary skills for adapting to the social and academic contexts of their schools. Considering the importance of this subject and the scarcity of studies that address this problem in the West Bengal, especially in the East Midnapore.

2. Objectives of the study

This study is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To identify the behavior problems exhibited by students with disabilities.
2. To determine how gender, age, type of disability and severity of disability impact the occurrence of behavior problems in students with disabilities who attend rehabilitation centers.

3. Methodology Participants

Participants in the present study included students with disabilities enrolled in the five main rehabilitation centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs in the West Bengal. These centers provide services for students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities. Those students are suffering from intellectual, hearing, physical, and visual disabilities. A total of 512 boys and girls between five and twenty years of age attend these centers. All students whose parents agreed to participate in the study were included and considered to be the sample of the study. Thus, the study sample was 297 boys and girls, which represents 58% of the total student population. Table 1 shows the distribution of participants according to the study variables.

Table 1 Distribution of the sample of the study according to gender and age of subjects and type and severity of disability

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	158	53.2%
Female	139	46.8%
Age	Number	Percentage
Less than 8 years	84	28.3%
8- 12 years	129	43.4%
13 years and more	84	28.3%
Type of Disability	Number	Percentage
Intellectual	202	68%
Hearing	56	18.9%
Visual	11	3.7%
Physical	28	9.4%
Severity of disability	Number	Percentage
Mild	63	21.2%
Moderate	86	29%
Severe	148	49.8%
Total	297	100%

4. Instrumental Tools

The researcher developed a questionnaire to identify behavior problems that were exhibited by students with disabilities. The questionnaire was filled in by social workers and psychologists for each student based on his/her portfolio and consultations with parents. Items of the questionnaire were developed according to the following procedure. All behavior problems recorded in each student's portfolio were specified and converted to a question format. To verify the significance of each problem, frequency, continuity, severity and the need for intervention were taken into consideration. Finally, parents' approval was a factor considered when deciding whether a question would be included in the questionnaire or not.

5. Results and Discussion

The four main types of identified behavior problems are intellectual, hearing, visual and physical problems.

5.1 Do Behaviors Differences Exist for Gender?

Behavior problems were found to be more common among males than females. The significant differences between the observed and expected values were 19.4 among females with no behavioral problems. To verify the result of the current study, an Odds Ratio of 1.936 was calculated. Since it exceeded 1.0, the statistical analysis indicates that there are differences among students with disabilities in relation to behavioral problems. In addition, Risk Ratios exceeded one (1.365) and indicated that male students exhibit more behavioral problems compared to female students.

Table 2 shows that the most common behavior problems among males are obstinacy, aggression and hyperactivity. The significant differences between the observed values and the expected ones were 8.4, 6.6 and 5.7 respectively.

Table 2
Chi Square test of behavioral problems differences according to gender

Behavior problems	Observed Value		Expected Value		Residual		Person Chi-square	df	Sign.
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female			
No problems	21	55	40.4	35.6	-19.4	19.4	64.644	14	*0.000
Anxiety	26	18	23.4	20.6	2.6	-2.6			
Aggression	21	6	14.4	12.6	6.6	-6.6			
Emotional sag	7	1	4.3	3.7	2.7	-2.7			
Impudence	0	2	1.1	0.9	-1.1	1.1			
Obstinacy	27	8	18.6	16.4	8.4	-8.4			
Lying	4	2	3.2	2.8	0.8	-0.8			
Phobia	12	8	10.6	9.4	1.4	-1.4			
Isolation	7	11	9.6	8.4	-2.6	2.6			
Shyness	6	21	14.4	12.6	-8.4	8.4			
Hyperactivity	19	6	13.3	11.7	5.7	-5.7			
Stealing	1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	-0.5			
Bedwetting	3	1	1.6	1.4	1.4	-1.4			
Nail-biting	2	1	1.6	1.4	0.4	-0.4			
Sucking fingers	2	0	1.1	0.9	0.9	-0.9			
	158	139							

5.2 Do Behavior Differences Exist for Age Groups?

Results in Table 3 indicate that there are significant differences in behavioral problems according to the age of the sample of the study in favor of students aged 8 years and above. This is in contrast to those students aged below 8 years, among whom behavior problems did not appear significant since the difference between the observed and expected value between them was 20.5. This result is in conflict with Karen et al. (2007) which concluded that behavioral problems among intellectually disabled males decrease over time. However, that study was only restricted to students with intellectual disabilities.

Findings also show that anxiety is the most common problem among students aged 13 years and above with a difference between observed and expected value at 12.4. This may be due to the fact that those students had reached the adolescent stage and began experiencing changes that might determine their future identity. Findings also indicate that the most common behavior problems among students aged 8-12 years are anxiety, aggression, obstinacy and isolation. The variations calculated between observed and expected values for these problems were 19.1, 10.3, 9.8, and 8.2 respectively. Moreover, the study finds that the most common behavior Behavioral problems among students who are less than 8 years old are shyness and phobia with a difference of 7.4 and 7.3 respectively between observed and expected values. This may be due to the insufficient development of social communication skills at this stage and non-adaptation to disability.

Table 3 Chi Square test of behavioral problems differences according to age

Behavior problems	Observed Value			Expected Value			Residual			Person Chi-square	df	Sign
	Less than 8	8-12	13 & over	Less than 8	8-12	13 & over	Less than 8	8-12	13& over			
No problems	42	22	12	21.5	33	21.5	20.5	-11	-9.5	211.74	28	*0.000
Anxiety	0	8	36	12.4	19.1	12.4	-12.4	19.1	12.4			
Aggression	2	22	3	6.7	11.7	7.7	-5.6	10.3	-4.6			
Emotional sag	0	1	7	2.3	3.5	2.3	-2.3	-2.5	4.7			
Impedance	0	0	2	0.6	0.9	0.6	-0.6	-0.9	1.4			
Obstinacy	3	25	7	9.9	15.2	9.9	-6.9	9.8	-2.9			
Lying	0	0	6	1.7	2.6	1.7	-1.7	-2.6	4.3			
Phobia	13	6	1	5.7	8.7	5.7	7.3	-2.7	-4.7			
Isolation	0	16	2	5.1	7.8	5.1	-5.1	8.2	-3.1			
Shyness	15	9	3	7.6	11.7	7.6	7.4	-2.7	-4.6			
Hyperactive	5	16	4	7.1	10.9	7.1	-2.1	5.1	-3.1			
Steeling	0	0	1	0.3	0.4	0.3	-0.3	-0.4	0.7			
Bedwetting	2	1	0	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.2	-0.3	-0.8			
Nail-biting	0	3	0	0.8	1.3	0.8	-0.8	1.7	-0.8			
Sucking Fingers	2	0	0	0.6	0.9	0.6	1.4	-0.9	-0.6			
Total	84	129	84									

6. Summary and Conclusion

This study confirms the findings that male students face more behavioral problems than their female peers. These problems tend to increase by age and severity of the disability. Students with intellectual disabilities exhibit more behavioral problems in comparison with students who are categorized with hearing or visual impairment or with a physical disability. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that rehabilitation centers:

- Provide appropriate behavior modification programs for students with intellectual disabilities since they are the majority of those suffering from behavior problems.
- Develop psychological and social programs for students with severe disabilities to promote their adaptation and communication skills.
- Support female disabled students psychologically, emotionally, and socially in order to raise their self-confidence to participate in social activities.
- Provide screening services to detect early indicators of behavior problems in order to solve them before they become exacerbated and before they influence other aspects of students’ development.
- Provide programs that help students with disabilities to be aware of their abilities. Advising services should be offered to help them take advantage of those abilities. This will reduce the anxiety they may experience as a result of feeling insecure.

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