Volume 21 Issue 38
Originally issued as G9



Global Journal of human-social science: G
Linguistics & Education
Volume 21 Issue 9 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

The Level of Emotional Intelligence of English Language Students with Learning Disabilities from the Point of View of their Parents

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Keywords: *emotional intelligence, english language, students with learning difficulties.*

GJHSS-G Classification: *FOR Code: 200302*



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The Level of Emotional Intelligence of English Language Students with Learning Disabilities from the Point of View of their Parents

Mohamad Ahmad Saleem Khasawneh

Abstract- Emotional intelligence is an important factor in the well-being of students, whether regular students or students with learning disabilities. The category of students with LDs always face challenges to adapt and adjust in society and in the school environment. This study aimed at revealing the emotional intelligence of English language students with learning disabilities in Aseer region. The study sample consisted of (140) students with learning difficulties. To achieve the objectives of the study, the emotional intelligence questionnaire was developed and consisted of (45) items, divided into five areas: knowledge of emotions, emotional management, sympathy, empathy, and social competence. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire was ensured before application and data analysis. The results showed that the overall degree of emotional intelligence among students with learning disabilities was low. The results also found that regular students have higher emotional intelligence than students with LDs. The study recommended developing training programs to develop emotional intelligence for students with learning difficulties, and conducting a descriptive and experimental study dealing with other types of intelligence among students with learning disabilities and other special education categories and comparing them with regular students.

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I. Introduction

Goleman (2012) indicated that emotional intelligence helps an individual succeed in life, maintain healthy relationships with friends and family, as well as in the processes of social adjustment. Determining the level of emotional intelligence of children in school is necessary for teachers, parents, counselors and teachers of learning resource rooms. It provides them with an important picture of the child's performance in classroom situations, and important data on the child's personal aspects, his social and emotional skills and his level of development, which helps them to provide the child with appropriate programs and activities for their social and emotional growth and progress (Qatami, 2009).

Individuals' learning disabilities are linked to their emotional intelligence. Al-Zayyat (2007) argues that there is a close relationship between developmental learning difficulties, academic learning difficulties, and social and emotional behavior difficulties. Behaviors related to emotional intelligence became important in the field of learning difficulties. There is consensus among different organizations concerned with learning disabilities to include the definition of learning difficulties, social and emotional behavioral difficulties, and social skills difficulty as a qualitative area of consequential learning disabilities or associated with developmental and academic difficulties.

Therefore, it is important to study emotional intelligence among students with learning difficulties, as it is directly related to the educational and social difficulties that this group of students face. The purpose of this study is to reveal the differences in emotional intelligence among English language students with learning disabilities in Aseer region, Saudi Arabia.

a) Research Questions

The present study seeks to give answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the level of emotional intelligence among English language students with learning difficulties?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at (α=0.05) between the level of emotional intelligence among students with learning disabilities and regular students?

b) Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study is determined in two aspects:

The theoretical significance: Identifying the differences in emotional intelligence and its level among students with learning disabilities will add an important aspect in defining the concepts of learning difficulties. This will happen by shedding light on an important topic that combines cognitive mental abilities on the emotional side and the social behavior of students with learning difficulties. This study may provide educational and psychological literature in the field of human intelligences and the field of learning disabilities by focusing the research on concepts and theories of emotional intelligence for the category of students with learning disabilities and regular students.

The practical significance: This study will inform those in charge of special education programs in the Ministry of Education to design programs that develop emotional intelligence among students in general, and students

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with learning disabilities in particular. The study will also direct the attention of researchers and specialists in this field on one of the aspects of learning disabilities related to emotional intelligence.

c) Delimitations of the Study

Human limitations: This study was limited to students with learning disabilities and regular students in Aseer region, Saudi Arabia.

Spatial limitations: This study was applied in the elementary schools within the Educational Administration in Aseer region.

Time limitations: This study was applied during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021.

II. Literature Review

This literature review includes educational and psychological literature related to learning disabilities and the characteristics of this emotional and social group, and their impact on human intelligence. This section explains modern theories on multiple intelligences and the types of human intelligence, and then reflects on the topic of emotional intelligence, and its relationship with learning difficulties.

a) Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities as a type of disability are relatively recent. This term gained popularity in the mid-sixties and early nineties, and research in it extended to several other branches of science such as psychiatry, neurology, psychological counseling, and the field of people with special needs.

Hallahan & Mock (2013) pointed out that learning disabilities are defined according to the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (1968) as disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes, which entail understanding or using language, whether verbal or written. This disorder becomes apparent as the inability to listen, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical operations.

b) Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is "the ability of the individual to control impulses, whims, and the ability to read and understand the feelings of others, and to deal with flexibility in the relationships with others." Bar-On (2000) defines emotional intelligence as "the ability of the individual to understand, know and describe himself, to know, understand and relate to others, and to deal with strong emotions and control his impulses, and prepare for change and solve various problems, whether on the personal or social level."

When the theory of multiple intelligences, which includes eight types of intelligence, emerged, it greatly affected the field of learning difficulties. It considered any individual as an integrated person, and if he had deficiencies in a particular field, he would have strengths and creativity in other areas, which leads to a focus on aspects of strength and addressing areas of weakness (Armstrong, 2013).

The importance of the theory of multiple intelligences in explaining the learning difficulties of individuals emerges in terms of the necessity not to view some of the difficulties of individuals as being an obstacle to their creativity and superiority in other areas. A student could be superior in academic performance and could suffer from a series of failures in academic achievement, but it may appear in various other and multiple fields. This may lead teachers and those in charge of the educational process to the need of diversification in the different teaching methods, which are suitable with their different abilities, according to the intelligence that characterizes each individual, and the loss of their abilities and preparations, and this in turn may reduce the problems facing the student.

c) Previous Studies

Ibrahim and Ghanayem (2020) investigated the contribution of emotional intelligence components of predicting social behavior for people with nonverbal learning difficulties in the primary. The study was applied to a sample of 20 male and female students from a primary school in Eltal Al-Kabir city in Ismailia. They were divided into two groups, experimental and controlling group, each of 10 students. This study used the descriptive method and quasi-experimental as well. The findings of the study showed that components of emotional intelligence contributed in predicting positive social behavior among primary school students with nonverbal learning difficulties.

Elsebaey (2019) identified the impact of a training program based on the skills of emotional intelligence in improving the quality of life and the improvement of optimism among a sample of fifth grade students with learning disabilities. The study included a sample of 20 students from the fifth grade of girls' primary school with learning difficulties in reading, divided into 2 groups, experimental and control groups. To find the significance of differences between the mean score, a t-test was used. The quasi-experimental method and the quasi-experimental design was used in this study. This study concluded that the used program has contributed to the development of the sense of quality of life, and also the ability of the individual to process his emotions, feelings, letting go of negative emotions helps to increase the feeling of joy, happiness, calmness, tranquility and reassurance.

Aljumaiah (2018) investigated the level of emotional intelligence among some students with learning difficulties. The study sample consisted of 72 students aged between 10 and 12 years old, this study applied and modified the emotional intelligence scale designed by (Aldidi) and it consists of (63) paragraphs that measure student's emotional intelligence level. This

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study followed the descriptive survey method. The results of the study showed that the average answers of the study sample individuals ranged between low, medium and high.

Rivera-Pérez et al (2020) inspected the relations between cooperative Learning and emotional intelligence in physical education. The study also aimed to discover and compare the using cooperative learning in primary education, secondary education and baccalaureate. The sample of this study consisted of 1332 students (682 males and 650 females), from 13 different schools in Southwest Spain. The participants had to complete emotional intelligence questionnaire in physical education and a cooperative learning questionnaire. This study followed the quantitative method. The results showed the positive association observed between cooperative learning and emotional intelligence. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers should be trained in cooperative learning and its implementation. In addition, teachers should use cooperative learning basic principles in their classes.

Zysberg and Kasler (2017) conducted two studies aimed to investigate the role of emotional intelligence in specific learning disability among students in learning environments and settings and also to test the differences between college students with and without specific learning disability. This study followed the descriptive statistics methodology, and was applied to a sample of 100 students from undergraduate programs in Northern Israel who were selected after advertising the study via email. The mean age of students was 25.77 years old (55% were women). Data such as gender, age, ethnic background, program and year of study was collected online. The results of this part showed appropriate use of the emotional intelligence and self-esteem measures. As for the second part, a sample of 584 senior year college the social sciences students were recruited, the mean age was 24.32 from whom 76% were women and the rest were men. The same measures were used as the first part. For the main variables in this study, the descriptive statistics was reviewed to make sure parametric statistics were applicable. The results were similar to those of the first study, where no differences in the scores among the groups.

III. Research Methodology

a) Population and Sample

The study population consisted of regular students and students with learning disabilities in the elementary schools within the Education Department in Aseer region. The sample of the study consisted of (140) students with learning disabilities, who were randomly selected from students with learning disabilities (50%). This percentage was chosen due to the small number of students with learning disabilities. Regular students were randomly selected as the same number of students with learning disabilities (140 students) as shown in Table (1).

Table 1: The distribution of the study sample

Student	Frequency	Percentage
Regular students	140	50%
Students with LD	140	50%
Total	280	%100

b) Research Instrument

Emotional Intelligence questionnaire: To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared the Emotional Intelligence questionnaire, consisting of (45) items, in which the researcher used the five-point Likert scale as follows: always (5), often (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), and never (1).

c) The validity of the instrument

The validity of the emotional intelligence questionnaire was ensured using the validity of the content/the validity of the judges by presenting the initial instrument to (10) judges in special education and psychology. They were asked to express their opinion on the paragraphs of the questionnaire and the accuracy and integrity of the wording of the paragraphs. They provided their notes and their agreement percentage was (80%).

d) The reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by using the test-retest method, by selecting an exploratory sample consisting of (30) male and female students from the same population of the study. This sample was not from the sample of the study. This exploratory sample included (15) students with LDs and (15) regular students. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table (2).

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Table 2: The coefficients of emotional intelligence questionnaire using the test re-test method and the internal consistency Cronbach Alpha

Dimension	Test re-test	internal consistency
managing emotions	0.87	0.93
Sympathy	0.90	0.92
Social competence	0.93	0.91
The total for the questionnaire	0.90	0.95

It appears through Table (2) that the coefficients of the stability by the test re-test method on the areas of emotional intelligence ranged between (0.87 - 0.93), and all of these coefficients are acceptable for the purposes of this study.

IV. Findings and Discussion

a) Results of the first question

To answer the first question of the study, the mean scores and standard deviations of the emotional intelligence level of students with LDs were extracted as shown in Table (3).

Table 3: The mean scores and standard deviations of the emotional intelligence level of students with LDs arranged in descending order according to the mean score

Rank	No.	Dimension	Mean score	Standard deviation	Level
1	3	Sympathy	2.44	0.77	Medium
2	4	Social competence	2.15	0.73	Low
3	2	managing emotions	2.12	0.74	Low
Total			2.23	0.75	Medium

Table (3) shows that the mean scores were (2.12-2.44). The sympathy dimension came in first place with the highest mean score of (2.44), while the dimension of managing emotions came in last place with a mean score of (2.12). The mean score for the emotional intelligence in total was (2.23).

The mean scores and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample were calculated for each paragraph of each dimension separately.

i. *Managing Emotions*

Table 4: The mean scores and standard deviations of the dimension of managing emotions arranged in descending order according to the mean scores

Rank	No.	Paragraph	Mean score	St. Dev	Level
1	12	He is calm when doing his work.	2.54	1.33	Medium
2	11	He has positive emotions like funny and joking.	2.52	1.07	Medium
3	20	He knows how to stay calm.	2.08	0.97	Low
4	15	He avoids negative feelings affecting his social relationships	2.06	0.90	Low
5	14	He has patience to perform duties.	2.05	0.86	Low
5	16	He can switch from negative feelings to positive ones.	2.05	0.97	Low
7	13	He is focused on performing duties.	1.99	0.86	Low
7	18	He controls his temper when angry.	1.99	0.77	Low
9	17	He can overcome feelings of frustration.	1.98	0.93	Low
10	19	He organizes playtime and fun activities.	1.89	0.83	Low
Total			2.12	0.74	Low

Table (4) shows that the mean scores were (1.89 - 2.36). Paragraph No. (12) which states “He is calm when performing his work” came in first place with a mean score of (2.36), while Paragraph No. (19), "He

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regulates play and fun" in last place, with a mean score of (1.89). The mean score of emotional management as a whole was (2.11).

ii. *Sympathy*

Table 5: The mean scores and standard deviations of the sympathy paragraphs as arranged in descending order according to the mean scores

Rank	No.	Paragraph	Mean score	St. Dev	Level
1	30	He avoid hurting others.	2.86	1.37	Medium
2	25	He loves his friends.	2.78	1.07	Medium
3	26	He loves helping others.	2.72	1.19	Medium
4	29	He enjoys his friendships at school.	2.53	1.07	Medium
5	24	He cares about what happens to others.	2.49	0.87	Medium
6	28	He cooperates with his colleagues.	2.34	1.08	Low
7	22	He understands the feelings of his colleagues.	2.27	1.09	Low
8	27	He can create friendships.	2.24	1.12	Low
9	23	He visits colleagues on their occasions.	2.09	0.92	Low
10	21	He feels the needs of his colleagues.	2.02	0.91	Low
Total			2.44	0.77	Medium

Table (5) shows that the mean scores were (2.02 - 2.86). Paragraph No. (30), “He avoids harming others” came in first place with a mean score of (2.86), while Paragraph No. (21), "He feels the needs of his colleagues" in the last place, with a mean score of (2.02). The total mean score of the sympathy dimension as a whole was (2.44).

iii. *Social competence*

Table 6: The mean scores and standard deviations of the social competency dimensions as arranged in descending order according to the mean scores

Rank	No.	Paragraph	Mean score	St. Dev	Level
1	35	He respects others.	2.59	1.23	Medium
2	39	He likes teamwork.	2.44	1.09	Medium
3	38	He deals with others sincerely.	2.42	1.14	Medium
4	31	He feels being in his group of friends is important.	2.39	1.06	Medium
5	40	He has a good appreciation for the moods of others.	2.05	1.10	Low
6	36	He has good ideas for everyone.	1.99	0.95	Low
7	37	He exercises the role of the leader in his group.	1.95	0.96	Low
8	32	He can solve conflicts within his group.	1.92	0.83	Low
9	33	He can convince others of his point of view.	1.88	0.96	Low
9	34	He can express his group's opinion clearly.	1.86	0.98	Low
Total			2.15	0.73	Low

Table (6) shows that the mean scores were (1.86 - 2.59). Paragraph No. (35), “He respects others” came in first place with an mean score of (2.59), while paragraphs No. (33 and 34) cam in the last place, with a mean score of (1.86). The mean score of the social competency dimension as a whole was (2.15).

The results of the first question revealed that the level of emotional intelligence among students with LDs

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was low. All dimensions of the questionnaire were at a medium level, with the exception of two dimensions, emotion management and social competence, as they came at a medium level. Sympathy came first while the dimension of emotional management came last.

This result could be explained by the way the child perceives himself and others, as it contributes to the high degree of his emotional intelligence. The low perception of students with LDs towards themselves and their abilities led to a decrease in their emotional intelligence level and to the lack of acceptance by peers. This also led to their inability to establish relationships or friendships with their peers, or the inability to continue and maintain relationships, their lack of awareness of the social implications of the various patterns of behavior, their low level of responsibility compared to their peers, and the presence of some problems in controlling their motives and emotions.

The low level of emotional intelligence among students with LDs is due to the existence of developmental and cognitive difficulties that occur for this category, including weakness or poor in social perception. Students who have learning disabilities have reactions in various types of social activities, which are less than the reactions of their peers. They have misunderstanding of situations, and they also have difficulty receiving the feelings of others because of their lack of appreciation for the indications represented by the signs and facial symbols.

b) Results of the second question

To answer the second question of the study, the mean scores and standard deviations of the emotional intelligence level were extracted for each of the students with LDs and the regular students. To find the statistical differences between the mean scores, the "T" test was used, as shown in the following table.

Table 7: Mean scores, standard deviations, and the "t" test for the level of emotional intelligence for both students with LDs and regular students

Dimensions	Students	No.	Mean score	St. Dev	T-Value	Freedom value	Sig.
Managing emotions	Regular	140	4.17	0.50	26.589	270	0.000
	LDs	140	2.12	0.74			
Sympathy	Regular	140	4.15	0.53	21.049	270	0.000
	LDs	140	2.44	0.77			
Social competence	Regular	140	4.16	0.55	25.439	270	0.000
	LDs	140	2.18	0.73			
The total emotional intelligence score	Regular	140	4.16	0.43	24.360	270	0.000
	LDs	140	2.24	0.75			

Table (7) shows that there are statistically significant differences (a = 0.05) between students with LDs and regular students in all dimensions and in emotional intelligence as a whole. The differences were in favor of regular students. The T-value for the emotional management dimension was (26,589), with a statistical significance of (0.000). The T-value for the sympathy dimension was (21.049), with a statistical significance of (0.000). The T-value for the social competence dimension was (25.439), with a statistical significance of (0.000). As for emotional intelligence as a whole, the T-value was (34.491), with a statistical significance of (0.000), which statistically significant at the level of (a= 0.05).

The results of this question revealed the existence of statistically significant differences between students with LDs and regular students in all dimensions and in the emotional intelligence as a whole. The differences were in favor of regular students.

The reason for the differences in emotional intelligence between regular students and those with LDs could be due to several reasons, including academic achievement. Students with LDs have low academic achievement, and this in turn contributes to

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low levels of emotional intelligence, which is different among regular students. The differences refer to different levels of individuals in social adaptation that lead to a high level of emotional intelligence. Students with LDs usually face difficulties in adjustment, unlike regular students, and this in turn leads to differences between them in levels of emotional intelligence.

V. Recommendations

In light of the results of the current study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Developing various training programs to develop social intelligence and emotional intelligence among students with LDs.
- Conducting a descriptive and experimental study dealing with other types of intelligence such as moral intelligence, spatial intelligence and others among students with LDs.
- Conducting a descriptive and comparative study that deals with social and emotional intelligence in different groups of special education, including children with autism, students with mild and moderate disabilities who are able to learn, talented and distinguished students, and comparing them with regular students.

Acknowledgments

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Small Research Groups under grant number (RGP.1 /40/42).

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