Attitudes of Learning Disabilities Teachers Towards the Learning Difficulties Program in Aseer Region
Abdullah Mohammed Hadi Hamdhi

INTRODUCTION
Recent decades have witnessed a real interest in educating children with special needs in regular classes as long as possible or in an appropriate educational environment close to normal education. Teaching them in their own classrooms limits the opportunities available to them in education and participation in normal classroom activities, as special classrooms for students with LDs is a restricted environment for the child (Al-Khatib, 2018). Among the children classified with special needs are children with learning disabilities, as they suffer from some deficiencies in educational skills such as reading, writing, and understanding mathematics. They make frequent mistakes, although they appear completely normal and intelligent and there is nothing in their appearance that may suggest that they are different from others. That is why teachers consider it difficult to teach them and think that they do not have the ability to succeed in normal classes in which others learn reasonably (Abdullah et al., 2009). As a result, there was a need to diagnose and provide services to a number of students who were failing in their school achievement despite not being classified in the categories of unusual students with programs that support them, provide them with educational and awareness services and highlight their best. The services provided to students with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia date back to the 90s, the first official experience of raising and teaching these students in education. The Kingdom has utilized in this regard the American model by virtue of the fact that the United States is a pioneer in this field in terms of theory and application (Al-Khatib, 2018).

As an initial phase to preparing male and female teachers in this field, the path of learning disabilities has been added to the Department of Special Education Plan at King Saud University, which provided graduates of that track with an active role in finding special education services for students who have learning disabilities. These graduates played an important role in raising awareness of the public on learning disabilities, and what must be provided for pupils of services. They also established programs to serve them and work in those programs as teachers of learning disabilities (Abu Nyan, 2019). The attitudes and opinions of these teachers towards the program are important because they affect the continuation of the program and the knowledge of its weaknesses and strengths. Taking their views will help in identifying the development of learning, raising the level of knowledge and skills of students, qualifying them to the community and serving them efficiently, and even predicting their behavior, and their positive and negative preparations for this program (Dahman and Bedewi, 2020). It is normal for teachers to express their opinions about the programs and tasks provided to them, and to question many of the teachers’ competencies and attitudes towards students with learning disabilities and the services provided to them. The current trends also include strengthening the roles of teachers and paying attention to their attitudes, desires, and motives. Professional growth for staff constitutes a necessary strategy to improve education and its outcomes (Al-Khatib, 2018).

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Keywords: Learning disabilities, teachers, learning disabilities program.
Several studies have advocated and recommended identifying the teachers' attitudes and motivation towards the learning disabilities program, such as (Al-Ajami and Al-Wadani, 2017; Hassan, 2020; Al-Khateriya et al, 2020).

Attitudes are a psychological and social phenomenon worthy of attention and represent the individual’s awareness of his/her feelings towards people, situations, and topics. Zaidan (1979) defined the attitude as the mental state that directs the individual's responses acquired from a non-critical acceptance of society standards, and the use of past experiences and linking them to the present, and through intense emotions. Amasha (2010) argued that the attitude is “a hypothetical concept that represents what an individual likes and dislikes for something, and attitudes are negative or positive views towards something, either a behavior, a person, or an event.” Bu’mar (2006) and Amouri (2011) clarified some of the characteristics of attitudes. Attitudes are acquired and not inherited. The individual learns them from his/her contact with the environment and interacts with it, thus representing the relationship between the individual, his/her subject, and the subjects of the environment. Attitudes are characterized by relative constant, so it is possible to predict the individual’s attitudes to a certain topic or event. We infer the attitude of the individual through his/her apparent behavior or verbal and non-verbal responses. The attitude's newness or oldness is important, as the older the attitude is for the individual the more complex and resistant it becomes. Attitudes can be evaluated and measured directly. The attitudes of individuals towards people, topics, issues, and accidents are the result of different components. First, affective component, especially when the conscience becomes directly related to the goal, such as feelings of hate, love, emotion, acceptance, and aversion. Second, behavioral component, especially when the individual has information and his/her beliefs about the subject of the attitude develop. Third, cognitive component, especially when the individual realizes himself and analyzes his behavior and previous actions towards the goal, he concludes his orientation towards these actions (Bu’mar, 2006; Nouri and Zayan, 2018).

**Learning Disabilities Program:**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has begun to engage in providing service to learners who face learning disabilities since the 90s in general education schools for boys, as 12 educational programs were opened and 23 specialized teachers were trained. The services included 187 students in the first year. The services were later provided for female students, where 12 programs were introduced to be provided for 165 female students (Abu Nyan, 2019). The role of the learning disabilities teacher in the program is an essential role. Teachers are the facilitators of the learning process, and they achieve the desired goals at the end of the program. In order to be able to play their role in this process, they must contribute to achieving different conditions. They must apply modern and appropriate teaching strategies and methods. They must also apply and activate the student's book and the student's activity book in the study material and other curriculum tools. They also follow up on students and their class work, activities and homework and provide feedback to them. They also must deal and cooperate positively with educational supervisors regarding the experiences and expertise they recommend. The researcher concludes from the foregoing that the learning disabilities program is an independent and partial system of the educational process that aims to raise the level of education in various possible ways. The program requires cooperation with the work team as a whole, starting with the education department, school management, parents, the teacher of LDs, and teachers of other curricula in order to achieve the desired objectives.

**Motivation And Achievement:**

Motivation represents a state of behavior that pushes the individual to achieve a specific goal. The individual attempts to reach the desired stage of good performance to achieve the ambitions, which is motivation and achievement. Despite the difference of specialists in this topic, they agreed that motivation is an internal factor that provokes the behavior of the individual, directs him, and achieves his integration (Murray, 2008). Motivation is important to both the public individuals and the organization in which they work. Halaymeh (2013) believes that the benefits of motivation achieve cooperation between employees, and between the worker and management. Motivation also helps in managing conflicts between individuals and groups within the organization or institution. Many studies indicate that individuals with high achievement motivation have distinctive characteristics and traits, and tend to act in certain ways and methods that distinguish them from other individuals (Al-Sheikhy, 2019). They have the desire to take responsibility for solving problems, as they are able to control them. They also have the desire to obtain real results from their work, which is usually in the form of an increase in profits, for example. The real goal here is not the material profit per se, but the
specific numerical meaning of the results of the work. They set reasonable and understandable goals that take a possible risk and set them with care and caution.

We notice a similarity of attitudes and motivations. They are all behaviors within the individual that are controlled by internal or external factors which affect the individual. They also result in the individual's movements, principles, and impressions, whether about a person, work or a specific program. Therefore, the researcher decided to identify the attitudes of teachers of learning disabilities towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation in Aseer region, to be a unique study of its kind in shedding light on teachers' attitudes towards the program, and to benefit researchers and specialists in learning disabilities programs.

The current study attempted to achieving the following objectives:
- Identifying teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and their motivation level in Aseer region.
- To reveal the teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and the level of motivation they have due to the variable of experience.
- To reveal the teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and the level of motivation they have due to the academic qualification variable.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study attempted to answer the following main question, “What are the learning disabilities teachers’ attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation in Aseer region?”

From this main question, the following sub-questions are formulated.
- What are the differences in teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation due to the experience variable?
- What are the differences in teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation due to the academic qualification variable?

The significance of this study stems from the importance of the topic it tackles. The field of research in learning difficulties is considered one of the important educational fields in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and it needs more research in this field. The study provides a theoretical framework and a questionnaire that is useful to researchers and those interested and can be used in other studies procedures. The results of the research may benefit those who are in charge of developing the level of the programs offered to students with learning disabilities and taking the teachers’ viewpoint. There are several limitations to the generalization of the results of this study. The topic of the research is limited to the attitudes of learning disabilities teachers towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation. The study was conducted in some schools in Aseer region during the semester on 2020 and the sample included only learning disabilities females and males teachers in Aseer region, Saudi Arabia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides information on the methodology of the present study, which includes population and sample, research instrument, and validity and reliability of the instrument.

Population and Sample

The research population consisted of all teachers of learning disabilities in public education schools in Aseer region and its governorates (Abha - Khamis Mushait - Ahad Rafidah) for the year 2020-2021. The sample of the study consisted of (69) teachers, who were chosen randomly. Table (1) shows the characteristics of the research sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic qualification</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From 5 to 10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From 10 to 20 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>%100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruments of the Study

The instrument of the study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher, which consisted of (18) phrases for the dimensions of the learning disabilities teachers’ attitudes towards the learning disabilities program and their level of motivation.

The questionnaire in its initial form was presented to five judges in the field of learning difficulties to verify its validity. The judges’ opinions resulted in the modification of some phrases, and accordingly, the questionnaire was modified to become in (16) phrases in its final form.

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale as a whole, and the results were as presented in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from Table (2) that the overall stability coefficient for the questionnaire as a whole was (0.791), which indicates that the study instrument (the questionnaire) is characterized by great reliability.

Findings

Results of the main question

To answer the main question, the researcher calculated the mean scores and standard deviation of the answers of the sample on the attitudes of teachers of learning disabilities towards the learning disabilities program and their level of achievement motivation, using descriptive statistics through the following table.

| Table 3. The frequencies, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations, and ranks of the research sample’s responses to the questionnaire statements |
The general mean score of the questionnaire was (3.90) with a standard deviation of (0.90), which means that the study sample agreed with the questionnaire, which led to the conclusion that the study sample (agree) on the learning difficulties program and their level of achievement motivation. The phrases were arranged according to the mean scores.

Statement No. (1) ranked first with a mean score of (4.80) and a standard deviation of (0.61). This means that the study sample strongly agrees with this statement. The second rank was for statement No. (2), which for a mean score of (4.65) and a standard deviation of (0.64), while statements No. (13) came in third with a mean score of (4.64) and a standard deviation of (0.73), and this means that the study sample strongly agrees with this statement.

The statements in the last ranks were statement (15), which got a mean score of (2.94) and a standard deviation of (1.36), which means that the study sample is neutral on this phrase. In the fifteenth rank came statement No. (5) with a mean score of (2.65) and a standard deviation of (1.19). The last rank was for statement No. (6)
with a mean score of (2.19) and a standard deviation of (0.93), which means that the study sample agreed with this statement.

Second: results of the sub-questions

The second question of the study was related to the variable of years of experience. To find out whether there are statistically significant differences between teachers' attitudes towards the learning disabilities program according to the difference in experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used for inequality between teacher categories, and this is illustrated in the following table.

Table 4. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test to indicate the differences between the opinions of the study sample according to the variable (years of experience)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Ranks average</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 5 to 10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.21</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 10 to 20 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) shows no statistically significant differences between the opinions of the study sample on the learning disabilities program and their level of achievement-motivation in Aseer region according to the variable (years of experience).

The second question of the study was related to the variable of academic qualification. To find out whether there are statistically significant differences between teachers’ attitudes towards the learning disabilities program according to academic qualification the Kruskal-Wallis Test was used for inequality between teacher categories, and this is illustrated in the following table.

Table 5. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis Test to indicate the differences between the opinions of the study sample according to the variable (academic qualification)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic qualification</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Ranks average</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.54</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the above table that there are no statistically significant differences between the opinions of the study sample on the learning disabilities program and their level of achievement-motivation in Aseer region according to the variable (academic qualification).

Discussion

The literature discuss this topic as several previous studies show different results. Al-Otaibi and Al-Sulaiti (2019) determined the reality of the educational supervisor’s application of tasks in the learning disabilities programs in Unaizah Governorate. The sample of the study consisted of (20) teachers and all (20) principals of primary schools that have learning difficulties programs. The study used a questionnaire as an instrument. The results showed that the members of the research sample are not sure of the extent to which the educational supervisor implements his tasks in the learning disabilities programs in Unaizah governorate. It was found that there are no statistically significant differences between the members of the research sample of teachers, and members of the research sample of principals towards (all research dimensions). It was also found that there were no statistically significant differences in the opinions of the members of the research sample about according to the variable years of work experience.

Abdul-Ghani (2019) conducted a study to improve achievement motivation and reduce oral reading difficulties for children with LDs using a remedial program based on a differentiated education strategy. The number of participants in the study was 20 students from the third and fourth grades of primary school, whose ages ranged between 9-10 years. The instruments of the study included an achievement motivation scale, a test of oral reading difficulties, the fifth version of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, and the rapid neurological survey test. The results of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences
in improving achievement motivation and reducing oral reading difficulties among the experimental group members compared to their peers in the control group. The continuity of the intervention results was also inferred through the absence of statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the sequential dimensional measurement of achievement motivation and oral reading difficulties.

Krischler and Pit-ten (2019) investigated pre-service and in-service teachers’ attitudes toward students with two types of special education needs, challenging behavior and learning difficulties. The three components of attitudes (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral) were assessed using indirect and direct measures. The results revealed that teachers had negative implicit attitudes towards challenging behaviors and learning difficulties. However, implicit attitudes did not differ as a function of SEN type. The rating of warmth and competency stereotyped dimensions and overall ratings of academic achievement were influenced by occupational status and SEN type. Occupational status, implicit attitudes, and stereotyped knowledge together explained 52 and 43% of the variance in teachers’ assessments of academic competence for students with challenging behaviors and learning difficulties.

Abu Rayan Study (2020) compared the attitudes of English language teachers to three supervisory styles and their relationship to their self-efficacy in teaching at the university district in the capital, Amman. The study sample consisted of (203) male and female English language teachers. Two scales were developed, one to identify the attitudes of English language teachers to the three proposed methods of supervision, and the second scale to detect self-efficacy in teaching. The results of the study found that participatory supervision is preferred by English language teachers in the first place, then supervision by objectives, then clinical supervision. The teachers’ self-efficacy came to a medium degree, where the cognitive dimension came in the first place, then the personal dimension, then the behavioral dimension, and finally the social dimension. The study found that there is a relationship between some dimensions of self-efficacy and supervisory trends and that teachers prefer clinical supervision compared to female teachers.

Nelson et al (2020) examined the effectiveness of proportional reasoning interventions for students with learning disabilities (LD) or math difficulty (MD). The study evaluated interventions from fifth to ninth grade on the content of relative reasoning, educational features, and disability identification and difficulty. The studies that fulfilled the nine inclusion criteria yielded intervention effects ranging from $g = -0.10$ to 1.87 and from $U = 0.88$ to 1.00. Two of the nine studies were considered to be of high quality, and very few studies included participants with learning disabilities. Although most studies identified the concepts addressed in the interventions, the authors rarely provided in-depth descriptions of how the concept was taught. The results indicate that interventions for proportional thinking for students with LD and MD are under investigation.

Dahman and Bedewi (2020) identified the reality of implementing learning disabilities programs in early childhood schools from the teachers’ point of view and the obstacles to their success. The study sample consisted of (123) general education teachers of learning disabilities in early-stage schools in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results revealed the unreadiness of learning disabilities programs in early childhood schools in terms of their components and mechanisms of implementation and evaluation, and the commitment of the ordinary classroom teacher to apply the regulations and procedures for learning disabilities programs.

Al-Dababneh and Al-Zboon (2020) investigated teachers’ attitudes regarding the use of assistive technologies (AT) in teaching children with specific learning disabilities (SLD) in inclusive settings in Jordan. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers developed a scale, “Teachers’ Beliefs and Professionalism”, which was applied to a sample of 157 teachers, who were randomly selected. The results showed that teachers’ perception of their profession in using assistive technology in the teaching process subscale had the highest average, while the availability of assistive technology was the lowest. The results also showed a statistically significant correlation between teachers’ professional beliefs and there were no statistically significant differences between SLD teachers according to the teacher’s gender, level of experience, or the level of the child’s disability.

Mazghrani (2020) revealed the relationship between the mental health of teachers and their motivation for achievement and to study the differences in mental health as well as the motivation for achievement according to the variables of gender and seniority of teachers. The analytical descriptive approach was used in the subject of the study and two instruments were used to collect data, the Cornell Mental Health Scale and the Achievement Motivation Scale. The results found a correlation between teachers’ mental health and
achievement motivation, and there were no differences in the mental health of school achievement according to the variables of gender and seniority. There were no differences in achievement motivation according to the gender variable and were differences in achievement motivation according to the variable of seniority. Saed (2021) identified the importance of achievement motivation by clarifying the nature of achievement motivation, its components, types of motivation, as well as the dimensions of motivation. The study also dealt with the impact of achievement motivation on the behavior of the individual and society. It is clear from the hierarchical organization of motivations that achievement motivation is linked to achieving goals, self-esteem, and self-satisfaction, which are the basic concepts that we seek to instill in the hearts of young children through kindergarten teachers. The motivation for achievement is affected by many variables and circumstances. It can be changed by increasing, improving, developing, weakening, or dressing. Among the most important characteristics that affect motivation are its ability to excite, its ability to grow, and direct.

Capin et al (2021) investigated reading and listening comprehension difficulties among fourth-grade students who suffer from significant reading comprehension deficiencies and cognitive difficulties that underlie the weaknesses. Latent profile analysis was used to classify a sample of fourth-graders (n = 446) who scored less than the 16% on the reading comprehension scale. Three latent features emerged: (a) moderate deficits in both WR and LC of similar severity (91%), (b) severe WR deficits combined with moderate LC deficits (5%), and (c) severe LC deficits with moderate WR difficulties (4%). Analyzes examining associations between cognitive traits and group membership indicated that students with lower performance on cognitive predictors were more likely to belong to a severe subgroup. The implications for teachers who aim to improve reading performance for upper elementary students with significant reading difficulties were discussed.

Abdel Wahab (2021) investigated the effect of the interaction of the level of achievement motivation, metacognition, and academic self-esteem on academic resilience among undergraduate students. The researcher used the descriptive/causal-comparative. The study sample included (483) students at the University of Jeddah. The Academic Resilience Scale, the Achievement Motivation Questionnaire, the Metacognition Scale, and the Academic Self-Esteem Scale, were applied as instruments of the study. The results of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant effect of the interaction of the level of achievement motivation, metacognition, and academic self-esteem on the academic resilience of undergraduate students. There was a presence of statistically significant differences in academic resilience between groups of students of varying levels of achievement motivation, metacognition and academic self-esteem on the academic resilience among undergraduate students. There was a statistically significant correlation between achievement motivation, metacognition, academic self-esteem and academic resilience among undergraduate students.

The aim of the current research was to identify the attitudes of teachers of learning disabilities towards the learning disabilities program and their level of achievement-motivation in Aseer region. By extracting the results for the main research question, it is clear that the questionnaire’s (16) paragraphs have been arranged according to the mean scores in the table of frequencies for their response to identification from their point of view. It was found through the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test and the extraction of the mean value of the research questions that there were no differences in the attitudes of teachers of learning disabilities towards the learning disabilities program and their level of achievement motivation. This result agreed with previous studies (Woodcock, 2013; Al-bahraini et al., 2014; Al-Ajmi et al., 2017; and Abu Rayan, 2020). We note by reviewing the results of research and previous studies that the attitudes of teachers of learning disabilities were positive towards the learning disabilities program, which proves its effectiveness for students with LDs. The level of experience and their educational qualifications do not affect their attitude and the level of their motivation towards the program. In contrast, previous studies have proven that teachers’ attitudes are affected by such variables. However, the LDs programs offered to them will be positively affected if these programs concern all aspects and cover all areas.

In light of these results, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Paying attention to the development of the learning disabilities program on a permanent basis according to the needs of students with LDs.
2. Providing training courses for teachers of learning disabilities to change their attitude towards the learning disabilities program.
3. Providing material and moral incentives for teachers of learning disabilities to ensure that their motivation continues in a positive manner for the programs offered for students with LDs.

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