

Measuring Effectiveness of the Proposed Curriculum for Persons with Disabilities in Improving Their Life Skills in Jordan

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Abstract

The current study aimed to reveal the effectiveness of a proposed curriculum for people with disabilities in light of global standards and trends in improving life skills in a sample of children with disabilities, and the sample of (10) children with minor mental disabilities was selected in the intended manner of the Al Manar Center for Intellectual Development in Amman, Jordan. The current study relied on the quasi-experimental approach, to achieve the objectives of the current study by measuring the impact of a Proposed Curriculum for people with disabilities in the light of standards and global trends in improving their life skills. The results were obtained are that there are statistically significant differences between the average marks of the study members in the pre and post-measurements on the life skills scale in favor of the post-measurement, which indicates the effectiveness of the proposed curriculum for people with disabilities in improving their life skills. The study recommended adopting the curriculum that was proposed by the centers for children with disabilities, due to its effectiveness in improving the life skills of children with disabilities. In addition to expanding this study by conducting more studies on a larger sample of children with simple mental disabilities in order to generalize the results more and for a longer period of time and obtain more accurate results.

Keywords: Proposed Curriculum, Disabilities, Standards, Global Trends, Life Skills.

Introduction

Education is one of the components of life, as it is an important thing in the happiness and stability of mankind. Through it, people advance and are distinguished. By education, the competition and life prosper, as everyone benefits from it and the individual builds and achieves himself and feels his humanity and distinction in life. Moreover, by education, the individual overcomes the various difficulties of life (<https://mawdoo3.com>). Education is

inclusive of all segments of society, especially the mentally disabled. The field of special education is one of the fields that has received clear and remarkable attention from all specialists and workers in this field. This interest came as a result of a number of cultural, economic, social, and educational factors that helped mental disability individuals in all areas of their lives. As individuals with disabilities are extraordinary individuals who need assistance in their school life in order to achieve their needs and

adequacy of education and training (Lindsey, 2002).

People with mental disabilities became to have a different view. As they are seen as individuals who deserve more care and attention. Society's acceptance of them in all its categories and institutions without pity or condescension is the first step to truly stand by them in order to overcome their disability or reduce its impact on them (Shawahin, et al., 2010). The Jordanian state, with its lofty ideals derived from the Islamic faith, Arab values, and humanitarian principles, has paid great attention to people with mental disabilities. It worked to integrate them into society and provided them with many services that helped them face the challenges of disability. In addition to and work to ease the way for them to lead a dignified life so that they can become active members in advancing the march of society.

The Ministry of Education was one of the first national institutions that translated the state's direction and plan in supporting people with disabilities. It was granted them their rights guaranteed by the constitution and stipulated in international charters and agreements. The Ministry participated in the completion of a number of national strategies concerned with persons with disabilities, such as the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2015) and the National Strategy for Human Resources Development (Public Education Sector 2017-2025) (<https://alghad.com>).

Among the rights of persons with disabilities is their right to participate fully in all aspects of life in society. The value and dignity of the individual are not measured by his personal effectiveness and his ability to compete. Rather, he is a citizen with basic

rights, the most important of which is the right to appropriate and effective education in an appropriate, non-isolated, and supportive educational environment (Al-Khatib, 2010). Jordan has achieved tangible progress in development indicators, legislation, and policies for persons with disabilities that preserve their rights and secure a decent life for them. Then the quantitative expansion and qualitative development in educational and social services which enable them to rely on themselves and integrate into the contemporary life of society (The Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, 2007).

Learning disabilities are one of the hidden disabilities that hinder and disrupt school performance among students. Moreover, special education services become necessary for these students did not available, in order to help them develop their personal skills and abilities. In addition to services rehabilitate them to connect with their world, regardless of their disability. Also, there is no special curriculum for them or educational guides on how to deal with them (Beljoun, 2009).

Study problem

People with disabilities in general face many obstacles that limit their integration and adaptation in society, especially the Arab society. Which still lacks many legislations and regulations that help this category of integration into society and interaction with it as much as their capabilities and capabilities. In addition, it facilitates rehabilitation and training opportunities for them, which avoids them looking at them with pity and sympathy. The educational system is one of the

components of the development of any society. The disabled with a simple disability suffer from academic, and social challenges and difficulties in school life, so this group has the right to take care of it by providing their own curriculum that achieves the desired goals for this group. Societies with different cultures have taken an interest in the issue of educational programs and the upgrading of the student level and performance. There is a rapid increase in global concerns to achieve maximum care for people with disabilities. Recent global trends call for the necessity of educating children with disabilities in order to prepare them for life. Furthermore, to provide programs based on basic self-care, such as nutrition, clothing, personal hygiene training, and various training on daily life skills and link them to scientific concepts. Given the researcher's work in a field related to the education of people with disabilities, and direct contact with individuals with disabilities in general. It was noted that there is no special curriculum for persons with disabilities and that the Jordanian curriculum does not achieve the desired aims for the development of this category. In addition to the questions of parents about the quality and method of education for their children in order to guarantee their care, education, and sound health.

The researcher also noted, after reviewing previous research and studies, that there is a clear deficiency in life skills in the curriculum for people with mental disabilities. Among these matters, the study problem can be formulated and solved by building a proposed curriculum for people with disabilities in the light of global standards and trends and measuring the effectiveness of this proposed curriculum in improving persons with disabilities' life skills in Jordan.

Study questions

- What is the impact of the proposed curriculum for people with disabilities, in light of global standards and trends, in improving their life skills?
- Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the mean scores of the experimental group members in the post- and pre-measurement of the proposed curriculum axes?

Importance of study

The importance of the study is evident through the importance of the topic which is addressed, which is to measure the effectiveness of the proposed curriculum for persons with disabilities in improving their life skills in Jordan. It also derives its importance from relying on a list of global standards and trends in building the curriculum and benefiting from them in building similar tools. Also, the results of this study may be used when planning to build new curricula for people with disabilities, and this importance is classified into theoretical and practical importance.

Theoretical importance

Curricula for people with mental disabilities occupy a great place in the educational process. Accordingly, the theoretical importance lies in:

1. Providing all forms of assistance to people with mental disabilities and working to teach those ways and methods that are easy for them, which will bring them some success in their lives.
2. The success of any curriculum is highly dependent on the teacher who will teach it. Therefore, a curriculum that fits this category must be built and developed,

and at the same time, teachers can control it and the terminology contained in it.

Procedural importance

1. Workers in the field of special education can benefit from the results and recommendations made by the current study in providing a curriculum for people with disabilities.
2. Benefiting from the proposed curriculum for adoption as part of the general curriculum for people with disabilities.

Study objectives

The current study seeks to achieve the objectives, which are as follows:

1. Identifying the general characteristics of people with mild mental disabilities and the academic difficulties facing this category.
2. Identifying the global standards and trends that must be available in the curriculum for people with disabilities in Jordan.
3. Working on developing life skills for people with disabilities in Jordan.

Study limits

Human limits: The current study was limited to students with simple mental disabilities in the lower basic stage, who numbered (10) students of both sexes, and their ages ranged between (6-9) years.

Spatial limits: The current study was applied at the Al-Manar Center for Special Education of the Ministry of Social Development in Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Time limits: This study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year (2021/2022).

Topic limits: related to the problem with the tools used.

Terminology and Procedural definitions of study

Standards: directives or guidelines formulated in a descriptive manner that define the image that we which should be available in the thing for which it is placed, or that we seek to achieve. These are agreed upon by a group of experts and specialists that determine the optimal picture that should be available in the thing for which the standards are set (Al-Hajrysi, 2011).

The researcher defines them procedurally: they are global models or principles that aim to determine the appropriate methods for building a special education curriculum for people with intellectual disabilities. These standards are divided into four axes: objectives, educational content, means, methods, teaching methods, and evaluation.

Persons with disabilities: it is a state of mental, neurological or motor impairment. Or it is a chronic disease condition that requires therapeutic and educational intervention so that the disabled can benefit. Those needs include cases of cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and epilepsy, which are disabilities that limit the ability of people to use their bodies normally like normal people, which negatively affects their participation in any of life activities (Al-Rosan, 2010).

The researcher defines it procedurally: it is the category of simple mental disability,

which was studied in Al-Manar Centers for Special Education.

Curriculum: a sub-system of the education system, which includes a set of mutually linked and functionally integrated elements, and proceeds according to a comprehensive working plan, through which the student is provided with a set of educational opportunities. Which will achieve the comprehensive and integrated growth of the learner, which is the supreme aim and the general aim of the educational system (Ali, 2011).

The researcher defines it procedurally: the set of objectives, content, knowledge, teaching methods and means, activities and assessment tools prepared in the light of global standards for the curriculum for people with mental disabilities that are taught to the study sample.

Global trends: programs, methods, and ways that have been developed in developed countries to improve the educational aspect (Zaghloul, 2014).

Life skills: it is defined as the ability of the individual to independently manage the personal and social skills necessary for the appropriate job (Leeuw, F, & Vaessen, J, 2013).

The researcher defines it procedurally: the set of skills that contribute to helping the disabled child to meet the simple requirements of a life well, which help students to be independent and adapt to society include skills (self-reliance, dealing with others).

Theoretical framework

The problem of intellectual disability is one of the most common problems that occupy human thought as a humanitarian, economic and social problem. this problem has a negative impact on the family in particular and society in general, and it needs

concerted efforts to work to mitigate its impact. There are many names used to refer to these individuals, such as the mentally disabled or the handicapped (Mohammed, 2017).

The educational definition of disability indicates that mental performance is less than average, which is accompanied by deficiencies in adaptive behavior and appears in the developmental period, which affects the educational performance of the disabled (Bradley et al., 2000). It can also be defined as a state of deficiency, delay, or incomplete mental development that a person is born with. This occurs at an early age as a result of a number of genetic and environmental factors that have an impact on the nervous system of the individual. This leads to a lack of intelligence and its effects appear in the weakness of the individual in a number of fields that are related to maturity, education, and compatibility within the limits of two negative standard deviations (Zahrn, 2005).

The researcher believes that the prevalence of disability varies from one society to another and that this prevalence varies from one society to another according to a number of factors, the most important of these factors are the objective of the study conducted, sample, and its type (male or female). The prevalence of disability varies from one society to another as a result of the difference in the degree of disability, age, and the standard used in defining disability.

Handicapped children suffer from different motor skill problems compared to normal children, and they suffer from a clear deficiency in their gross or fine motor skills. In addition, there is a direct relationship between mental disability and the suffering in the motor skills of the mentally handicapped. So that we find that mentally handicapped

children are characterized by a large number of motor characteristics, the most important are difficulty in using fine muscles, slow,

The curriculum for people with intellectual disabilities must include a number of dimensions and skills, represented in the educational material. Among the most important of these skills are independence, motor, academic, language, professional, social, security and safety, and economic skills (Salama and Samir, 2007).

Previous studies

Attia (2017) conducted a study that aimed to identify the effectiveness of a training program based on mental arithmetic using the abacus to develop basic arithmetic skills for children with minimal disabilities. It also aimed to develop basic arithmetic skills using a training program based on mental arithmetic using the abacus for children with mental minimal disabilities.

Wilson (2013) emphasized through his study that aimed to identify the effectiveness of the functional curriculum in science in making students with intellectual disabilities who are able to learn, self-reliant, and integrated into society. The study relied on the experimental method, and the study sample consisted of (10) students with intellectual disabilities who could be taught in England. Then Curriculum and functionalism have been used in science, which includes scientific topics related to the lives of students with intellectual disabilities who are able to learn. The results of the study indicated the effectiveness of the functional curriculum in science in making students with intellectual disabilities depend on themselves.

Ali (2014) conducted a study aimed at measuring the effectiveness of a program

plodding, and irregular steps while walking (Abdulaziz, 2008).

based on electronic game strategies in developing some cognitive aspects of life skills for learnable children with mental disabilities. In addition to developing some performance aspects of life skills for learnable children with mental disabilities. The study sample consisted of (12) boys and girls as one experimental group, and the pre and post-tests were conducted on the group. The results of the study indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the scores of the experimental group children on the life skills observation card in the pre and post-applications. The results were in favor of the post test.

Hijazi (2017) conducted a study aimed at training mentally handicapped children to implement the program based on awareness of the body provided to them to develop some life skills among mentally handicapped children able to learn. The study sample consisted of (10) children between the ages of (5-7) years and they were part of one experimental group who were subjected to a pre-and post-test, and the life skills scale that had been prepared was used. The results indicated that there is a difference between the scores of the children in the experimental group before and after applying for the program on the life skills scores in the direction of the dimensional measurement. This means that the scores of the children in the experimental group decreased and thus improved after exposure to the program sessions.

Al-Moaqel (2008) conducted a study aimed at introducing the necessary life skills in the intermediate and secondary stages and

their importance and how the educational curricula include these skills, and the study was limited to the descriptive analytical approach. The study indicated that adopting the idea of finding and developing a curriculum that provides the necessary life skills that adolescents with intellectual disabilities need is necessary and urgent. In order to develop the services provided, and to address those dilemmas facing this category when they go out to public life.

Commenting on previous studies

By reviewing previous Arab and foreign studies by the researcher, he noticed that there are similarities and differences between the previous studies and the current study. These similarities and differences in terms of the topic chosen by the researcher for the study, objectives, method used, study tools, the sample of the study, and its community. Then shed light on the most important findings of the previous studies and highlight what distinguishes the current study compared to previous studies. Through the previous presentation of both Arab and foreign studies, we note that they are compared with the current study. So, we find that, in terms of the subject and objectives, they are similar in their handling of the subject of the curriculum that is taught to the mentally handicapped with minimal disability. It also dealt with the development of life skills, and most of them aimed to identify the effectiveness and impact of the programs that were provided to individuals with mild mental disabilities, Also, some studies aimed at developing the academic side of the handicapped category, specifically arithmetic skills, such as the study ([Attia, 2017](#)).

Methodology and Procedures

The current study relied on the quasi-experimental approach, due to its relevance to the objectives of the present study by measuring the impact of a proposed curriculum for people with simple disabilities in the light of global standards and trends in improving their life skills in Jordan, and through the application of the study tool for the two measurements: pre and post on the study sample.

Study Members

The member of the study with simple mental disabilities and their numbers (37) were selected from among children with simple mental disabilities at Al-Manar Center for Intellectual Development in Amman / Jordan. The number of males was (19) students, and the number of females was (18) students. After verification from the level of their life skills, (10) members with simple mental disabilities were selected by the intended method, who have the lowest level in life skills, by conducting a pre-test on them.

Study tools

To achieve the objectives of the study, two tools were used, the first: the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, and the second: the proposed approach for people with mild disabilities in light of global standards and trends. The following is an explanation of the procedures for preparing and verifying the two study tools.

Procedures to record Scores

How to write the scores

The individual's responses to the various items of the scale skills can be written in the following ways: If the individual is performing the task, the score is assigned to

(2), and if he sometimes performs the task, he is given a score of (1), but in the event of his inability to perform the task, the score is given (zero). In the event that there is no opportunity to observe the behavior, then the symbol (m) can be put, but if the item includes a skill or behavior that the person most familiar with the subject does not know whether he is performing it or not, then the symbol (n) is put. The score 2 is monitored in the following cases:

1. If the individual is able to perform the skill successfully and consistently.
2. If the individual is able to successfully perform the skill when needed or when the situation requires.
3. If the individual is able to perform the skill but in a different way due to the disability.

To verify the validity of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, the following indicators were adopted:

Validate study tool

To verify the validity of the tool (Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale), a number of arbitrators from faculty members in Jordanian and Arab universities were presented, and their number (10) arbitrators in the disciplines of educational and psychological counseling, special education, psychology, measurement and evaluation, curricula and teaching, Appendix (C). Persons with experience and competence to determine their ability to achieve the desired objective, to ensure clarity and integrity of the wording of the paragraphs and their suitability to measure what they were designed to measure, and to make any modification, including deletion, addition, or reformulation of the

paragraphs and their relevance to the topic. And based on the arbitrators' amendments to the paragraphs of the study tool, with an approval rate of (80%) of the arbitrators. It was considered an indication of the sincerity of the paragraphs, the arbitrators' comments were taken and the required and appropriate amendments were made.(Appendix A)

Second: The proposed approach for people with mild disabilities in light of global standards and trends:

The researcher has built a proposed curriculum for people with disabilities by referring to previous literature, and global standards for the curriculum for people with disabilities. (Appendix B)؛

Study procedures

1. Vineland adaptive behavior scale was used and developed by referring to the theoretical literature and previous studies confirming its validity indications, by presenting it to a group of specialized arbitrators and taking their guidance and suggestions.
2. A proposed approach has been used and developed for people with simple mental disabilities by referring to the theoretical literature and previous studies and confirming the indications of their validity, by presenting them to a group of specialized arbitrators and taking their guidance and suggestions.
3. The scale was applied to an exploratory sample of (10) with mild disabilities within and outside the study community, on 9-30-2021, and it was re-applied with a two-week difference on 10-14-2021 to obtain

validity and reliability coefficients by appropriate scientific methods.

4. The stability of the study scale was verified using appropriate scientific methods (repetition invariance and Cronbach's alpha invariance).
5. The proposed curriculum for the study was built with reference to literature and previous studies in the initial form.
6. The study sample of 10 with mild mental disabilities was identified from those with the lowest scores on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale to apply the proposed approach to them.
7. The place for applying the proposed curriculum has been prepared and prepared at the Al-Manar Center for Intellectual Development.

Statistical Procedures

The following statistical treatments were used:

Table (1): Arithmetic average and standard deviation of the scores of the members on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills) (pre and post-test) (n = 10).

Skills	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation
Communication skills	69.30	3.77	104.70	11.52
Life skills	81.00	4.76	107.00	7.89
Total	105.3		211.7	

It is clear from Table (1) that there are differences between the two applications (pre and post-tests) and to test the validity of this, the (Wilcoxon) test was used to identify the

To process the obtained data, a set of statistical methods were used, based on the SPSS statistical program, which is:

- ✓ Wilcoxon test to answer the study question.
- ✓ Cronbach's alpha equation.

Results and Discussion

Results related to the question: Are there statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in improving adaptive behavior skills (communication skills, and life skills) between the pre and post-tests of the experimental group due to the proposed curriculum?

To answer the question, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the scores of the study members on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills) were calculated in the two applications (pre and post-tests) of the experimental group, and table (1) shows that:

significance of the differences between the mean scores of the study members in the two measurements (pre and post-tests) on the adaptive behavior scale (communication

skills, and life skills). Table (2) shows these results.

Table (2): Wilcoxon test to determine the differences between the mean scores of the study members in the two measurements (pre and post) on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills).

Variable	Difference direction	N	Mean scores	Total scores	Z-value	Significance	Impact size
Communication skills	Negative	0	0.00	0.00	-2.805*	0.005	0.63
	Positive	10	5.50	55.00			
	Equal	0					
Life skills	Negative	0	0.00	0	-2.807*	0.005	0.63
	Positive	10	5.50	55.00			
	Equal	0					
Total	Negative	0	0	0	-2.803*	0.005	0.63
	Positive	10	5.50	55.00			
	Equal	0					

Table (2) shows that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the study members in the pre and post-tests on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills). By comparing the arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the pre and post-tests, it was found that the arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the post-test at the total level is (211.7), and the arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the pre-test (105.3) The arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the post-test at the level of communication skills (104.70), and the arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the pre-test is (69.30), and the arithmetic mean of the scores

of the study members in the post-test at the level of life skills is (107.00), and the arithmetic mean of the scores of the study members in the pre-test is (81.00).

Thus, this difference becomes in favor of the post-test of the study members, which indicates the high scores of the study subjects in the post-test on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills), after applying the proposed curriculum.

The size of the impact of the proposed approach for people with mild mental disabilities is found by using the following equation:

$$\text{Effect size} = \frac{\text{standard score Z}}{\sqrt{\text{No. Of views}}}$$

It is necessary to point out here that the number of views does not refer to the

number of individuals, but rather refers to the number of individuals who were selected. If

we have (10) examined, but we test them twice, this means that we have (20) observations (Field, 2007, 541) and the effect is large or small based on the following values:

- 0.10 -0.29 small trace
- 0.30-0.49 medium trace
- 0.50 or greater significant effect

It is evident from the results that the impact size of the proposed curriculum for people with simple mental disabilities was large, reaching (0.63).

From the above, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the study members in the pre and post-tests on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills) in favor of the post-test, which indicates the effectiveness of the proposed approach for people with disabilities in improving their communicative, life skills in Jordan.

Discussion of the results

Discussing the results related to the question: Are there statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in improving adaptive behavior skills (communication skills, and life skills) between the pre and post-tests of the experimental group due to the proposed curriculum?

The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the study members in the pre and post-tests on the adaptive behavior scale (communication skills, and life skills) in favor of the post-test, which indicates the effectiveness of the proposed approach for

people with disabilities in improving their communication and life skills in Jordan.

This result can be attributed to the comprehensiveness, diversity, and logical arrangement of the proposed curriculum for the person with simple mental disabilities, and the educational activities included in the curriculum contributed to arouse the student's motives for learning and was appropriate to his abilities in terms of quantity and quality. The educational curriculum was also in line with the scientific development in special education.

This curriculum for students with simple mental disabilities differs from the curricula of disability groups in terms of the quantity, quality, and final objective of the study material.

In this curriculum, the focus was mainly on the independent skills that lead to self-serving of the individual and teaching him the principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic so that the individual with a simple mental disability can learn a profession suitable for his mental abilities, especially the simple and medium disability, and so that he can support himself in the future.

Recommendations

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

1. Adopting the curriculum proposed by the centers for children with simple mental disabilities because of its effectiveness in improving communication, and life skills.
2. Holding training workshops for various private centers, parents, and teachers, on the nature of

communication skills and life skills, and on the importance of using the proposed curriculum in improving the communication, and life skills of this group of children.

3. Conducting more future studies in the field of adaptive skills for children with mild mental disabilities on a larger sample allows for more generalization of the results for a longer period.

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