



Skills and Behavioral Problems in Students with Special Learning Disabilities: The Role of Teacher Classroom Management Styles

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of classroom management styles in predicting social skills and behavioral problems of students with learning disabilities. This research was descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of this study was children aged 7 to 10 years with learning disabilities studying in primary schools in district 10 of Tehran. Among them, 50 people with one of the learning disabilities, their mothers and their teacher were selected by purposive sampling. Research tools included the Social Skills Questionnaire ([Gresham & Elliot, 1990](#)), and the Classroom Management Style Questionnaire ([Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980](#)). Pearson correlation test and simultaneous linear regression were used to analyze the data. The results showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between classroom management style and social skills ($p < 0.01$). Classroom teacher management style explains 23% of students' social skills. The results also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between classroom management style and students' behavioral problems ($p < 0.01$). Findings show that classroom teacher management style explains behavioral problems in 17% of students. Given the classroom management styles in predicting social skills and behavioral problems in students, it is necessary for teachers to conduct workshops based on these concepts.

Keywords: Classroom Management Styles, Behavioral Problems, Social Skills, Learning Disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Learning disabilities include a heterogeneous group of children who have problems in various areas, these problems create permanent effects on the individual, which seem to be much more than reading, writing and counting. It deeply affects areas such as health, mental health, interpersonal relationships, continuing education, job opportunities, and the like ([Maag & Reid, 2006](#)). Special failure in learning can play a central role in the academic decline and academic failure of students, these disorders can become chronic if not paid attention to and can be

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transferred to the periods after childhood ([Walda, van Weerdenburg, Wijnants, & Bosman, 2014](#)). Special failure in children's learning will face serious problems and consequences, which can be related to special failure in learning with children's behavioral problems ([Mariño et al., 2018](#)), academic failure, dropping out of education, problems related to social skills and communication problems with peers and teachers ([Lipka, Forkosh Baruch, & Meer, 2019](#)). Special failure in learning has a high prevalence. According to the researches, learning disability is associated with a prevalence of 13 to 17 percent in boys and 10 to 12 percent in girls ([Görker et al., 2017](#)).

One of the variables related to learning disorders is social skills ([Mafra, 2015](#)). Social skill in children is a talent that helps to shape interpersonal relationships, improve the quality of social interactions and even mental health of people ([Teodoro, Käßler, de Lima Rodrigues, de Freitas, & Haase, 2005](#)). Some students with special learning disabilities suffer from verbal problems that make it difficult for them to communicate with other people. This causes them to experience loneliness, isolation, and then behavioral problems such as aggression, lack of social skills, anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems ([Aro, Eklund, Eloranta, Ahonen, & Rescorla, 2022](#); [Bodaghi, Pirani, & Taghvaei, 2021](#)).

Children with special learning disabilities have many behavioral problems, which is related to the inability to understand proper education or specific psychological problems of the child ([Russell, Ryder, Norwich, & Ford, 2015](#)). These children suffer from emotional and behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression, and irreconcilability ([Hen & Goroshit, 2014](#)). Some researchers consider behavioral problems as a direct consequence of learning disorders, which is the primary aspect for children who suffer from it, but there is also a possibility that for these children, dyslexia are a failure that affects their emotional states and leads to Behavioral problems or interpersonal communication are not measured ([Lashgari & Alamdarloo, 2016](#); [Mafra, 2015](#)).

One of the factors that are mentioned in the research literature as a factor in the field of pathology, severity and cause of co-occurring disorders in special learning disability is the class management style. In some classes, the teacher gives instructions to the students and wants the students to implement them accurately and objectively, in some other management styles, the teacher acts as a guide and facilitator ([Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011](#)). In some other classes, there is collective cooperation and sharing between students and teachers. In the first type of classes, which was mentioned, the class is teacher-oriented and the student has access to the topics in the books, in the second type of class, which focuses on mutual relations and collective respect, students have to build Knowledge is acquired in the mind ([Evertson & Randolph, 1995](#)). Wolfgang and Glickman (1980), presented three classroom management styles, which include: interventionist approach, interactionist approach and non-interventionist approach ([Martin & Baldwin, 1996](#)). In this continuum, by passing from the spectrum of interventionism to non-interventionism, the amount of class and student control is less; Participation and communication skills increase in the classroom ([Sadik, 2016](#)). Each of the classroom approaches somehow affects the students' behavior and tendencies. Classrooms that are guided under the title of non-interventionist approach, due to the limited control of the classroom space, the students present in this type of classes are able to easily express their needs and desires. In classes with an interventionist management style, a person's growth and prosperity depends on the external environment, not under the influence of the person himself; In fact, the teacher is in complete control. These two approaches are quite extreme. The third approach is called interactive. In this approach, there is an interaction between the person and the environment, and the teacher and the student are in control ([Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2012](#)). Research in the field of classroom management is important because one of the important issues in the education system is considered to be a fundamental factor in the growth and progress of students in various fields ([Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011](#); [Yilmaz & Çavaş, 2008](#)). Evrim, Gökçe, and Enisa (2009), stated that

the classroom management style by teachers and trainers plays an important role in students' engagement and motivating them, and the teacher's behavior and management style have a positive relationship with students' interest (Kunter, Baumert, & Köller, 2007). The type of classroom management style depends on the teacher's teaching style and goal, and each teacher's management style is considered one of the success factors of that teacher. By using a suitable management method, teachers can develop social skills (Burden, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Nazari, Amini-manesh, Parsa, & Sheikhi, 2015), students' creativity and ability (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020; Dickey, 2012), help and in this way face less behavioral problems such as irresponsibility and discipline in class (comma) (Vitaro, Tremblay, & Gagnon, 1995; Walker, 2009). Due to the fact that students with learning problems are somehow involved in certain behavioral and interpersonal problems and require a special teaching method from the teacher, therefore, the new teachers of the teaching process, instead of just transferring information and control, are calculated. The behavior of the learners should act as a guide, helper and facilitator. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the question that, does classroom management styles play a role in predicting social skills and behavioral problems of students with learning disabilities?

METHODOLOGY

The research method is descriptive and correlational in terms of practical purpose and data collection method. The statistical population of the research was students aged 7 to 10 years studying in primary schools of Tehran, district 10, with one of the special learning disorders or disabilities and their teachers. Among them, 50 students and mothers as well as teachers of the selected students were selected by purposeful sampling. The criteria for entering the research were: suffering from one of the learning disorders, mother's education at least reading and writing, willingness to participate in the research. The criterion for leaving the research was the unwillingness to continue cooperation in the research process. After assuring the participants in the research about the confidentiality of their information, the classroom management styles questionnaire was given to the teachers and the social skills questionnaire was given to the students' mothers. The data collection tools in this research were:

Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire (CMSQ): The questionnaire of classroom management styles was designed by Wolfgang (1996) and translated into Farsi by Ali and Amin Yazdi (2017). The above questionnaire has 25 questions (in three scales of behavior management, people and education). This questionnaire has three subscales, which are education management, people management and behavior management. Also, grades 3-4-9-12-13-15-16-17-18-19-22-24 are graded in reverse. The scoring of the questionnaire is in the form of a 4-point Likert scale (never = 1, somewhat = 2, usually = 3, always = 4) and the scores range from 25 to 100. According to Wolfgang's model, a high score in this spectrum indicates an interventionist management style and a low score indicates a non-interventionist style. The interactive style is also in the middle of this spectrum between the other two styles, so that scores from 25 to 40 are related to non-interventionist, 41 to 75 are related to interactionist, and 76 to 100 are related to interventionist style. Also, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, 0.68. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70.

Social Skills Questionnaire - Parent Form (SSRS): This questionnaire has 52 questions designed by Gresham and Elliott (1990) and has two sub-components of social skills (questions 1 to 40) and behavioral problems (questions 41 to 52). The scoring of the questionnaire is in the form of a 3-option Likert scale (never = 0, sometimes = 1, often = 2). The 12 questions of behavioral problems are scored in reverse. The reliability of this questionnaire was reported by Gresham and Elliott

(1990) as 0.94 using Cronbach's alpha method. In Shahim's research (1378), the reliability of the questionnaire was reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 for the sub-component of social skills and 0.70 for the sub-component of behavioral problems and 0.75 for the entire questionnaire.

RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation of the research variables are presented in Table No. 1.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation
behavioral problems	20.78	2.17
Social skills	13.60	6.24
Classroom management styles	96.11	13.25

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis for predictor variables (range from interventionist to non-interventionist) and criterion variable (social skills and behavioral problems).

Table 2. Pearson's correlation test for the variables of classroom management style, behavioral problems and social skills in the studied sample

Predictor Variables	Pearson coefficient	Sig.
Behavioral Problems	0.962	0.001
Social Skills	-0.818	0.001

According to the results of Table 2, there is a significant relationship between classroom management styles (ranging from interventionist to non-interventionist) and social skills at $\alpha=0.01$ level. As can be seen, the intensity of this relationship is equal to -0.818, which indicates that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of teacher intervention in the classroom management style and the amount of social skills of students. The higher the teacher's intervention, the lower the students' social skills and vice versa. There is a significant relationship between classroom management styles (ranging from interventionist to non-interventionist) with behavioral problems at $\alpha=0.01$ level. As can be seen, the intensity of this relationship is equal to 0.962, which indicates that there is a direct relationship between the amount of teacher intervention in the classroom management style and the amount of students' behavioral problems. The more the teacher's intervention, the more behavioral problems in students.

Before performing the regression, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to measure the normality in order to perform parametric statistics. The significance level obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for research variables is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the distribution of the data related to these variables is normal and parametric test can be used for the inferential analysis of the data.

Also, in this research, the variance inflation factor of all classroom management styles is 8.61 less than 10 and the tolerance index in the independent variables of social skills is 0.13 and behavioral problems is 0.15 more than zero and close to one. Variance inflation and tolerance index are in favorable ranges. The value of Durbin-Watson's statistic is 1.75, which is between 1.5 and 2.5, so the assumption of independence between errors or lack of correlation between errors is accepted.

Table 3. Results of linear regression test to predict social skills based on classroom management style

R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig.
0.48	0.235	0.231	68.19	0.001

As can be seen in the table 3 above, the value of the significance level (0.000) is less than 0.05, so this value indicates that the regression model is significant for the two mentioned variables, i.e. style Classroom management has a significant effect on students' social skills.

R2 index (explanation coefficient), in this research, this value is equal to 0.235. This value indicates that the classroom management style has the ability to predict social skills in students by 23%.

Table 4. Standard, non-standard coefficients and variable t-statistics entered in the regression equation

Predictor Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	23.112	-	85.17	0.001
Classroom Management Style	-0.571	-0.569	-10.35	0.001

As the results of Table 4 show, classroom management style has a significant and negative effect on students' social skills with a t-value (-10.35) and significance level (0.000). Classroom management style reduces the amount of social skills in students by increasing the amount of teacher intervention with a coefficient (-0.571).

Table 5. Results of linear regression test to predict behavior problems based on classroom management style

R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig.
0.414	0.172	0.171	25.64	0.001

As can be seen in Table 5, the value of the significance level (0.000) is less than 0.05, so this value indicates that the regression model is significant for the two mentioned variables, i.e. management style. The classroom has a significant effect on behavioral problems in students. R2 index (explanation coefficient) is equal to 0.172. This value indicates that the classroom management style can predict 17% of students' behavioral problems.

Table 6. Standard, non-standard coefficients and variable t-statistics entered in the regression equation

predictor variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	70.46	-	86.17	0.001
Classroom management style	0.415	0.415	8.01	0.001

As can be seen in Table 6, the classroom management style has a significant and positive effect on the amount of students' behavioral problems with the t value (8.01) and significance level (0.000). Classroom management style increases the amount of behavioral problems in students by increasing the amount of teacher intervention with a factor of (0.415).

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the role of classroom management styles in predicting social skills and behavioral problems of students with learning disabilities. The results of the present study showed that the classroom management style in a range from interventionist to non-interventionist has a negative and significant relationship with social skills and a positive and meaningful relationship with behavioral problems. The regression results showed that classroom management styles can significantly predict social skills and behavioral problems. The results of this research in the field of the role of classroom management styles with social skills are consistent with the theoretical researches of Nazari et al. (2015), Burden (2020). Also, the role of classroom management styles with behavioral problems is consistent with the researches of Vitaro et al. (1995), Walker (2009).

Behavioral problems refer to those extreme behaviors that are slightly different from the norms and are often not considered a disorder. But at the same time, they are chronic and do not resolve quickly. In addition, these behaviors are not accepted by society due to inconsistency with socio-cultural expectations (Arnold et al., 2006). Therefore, it can be said that students who have

learning disabilities have less self-esteem, and these people try to compensate for their weakness and express themselves by aggressive behavior towards others due to their disabilities. Meanwhile, teachers who manage their classrooms in an interactive style play an effective role in increasing students' behavioral adaptation. In the interactive style of management, the relationship between the teacher and the student and the students with each other is two-way, and this relationship is established in a sincere and friendly way between the teacher and the student, and there is a managerial relationship in this style, and supervision and control. It is also self-controlled by the members. The interactive approach provides conditions where people are identified and examined according to their needs and problems. This important point indicates that interactive teachers pay special attention to the individual differences of their students in classroom processes, which is effective in increasing their behavioral compatibility. Three key elements in interactive style classroom management are clearly visible; Appropriate use of space and sufficient time, implementation of strategies that encourage students to make a choice, setting conditions that teach students to control their behavior. These three key elements play a very important role in creating a situation that guides students in classroom processes towards continuous efforts based on their inner desire. On the other hand, the non-interventionist style, with the belief that students have internal capabilities, believes that students should exert significant influence in the classroom and teachers should play less role in regulating students' behavior (Evrin et al., 2009). Accordingly, a teacher who chooses a non-interventionist style in managing his classroom leaves the students fully responsible for determining the learning activities, monitoring the students, determining the rules and implementing them. In fact, the non-interventionist approach is a student-centered approach to classroom discipline in which the teacher plays a facilitating role and exercises minimal control in the classroom. Non-verbal interventions and individual conferences in this classroom management style led to the transfer of authority from the teacher to the student, and this can increase the teacher's attention to the individual differences of the students and individual and team freedoms in the classroom processes. Students should be considered in the classroom. In the non-interventionist management style based on the belief of humanists, the main hypothesis is that the child has an internal motivation to know his real world and does not need external stimulation; Because growth is created under the influence of instinct.

Correct classroom management becomes one of the effective ways to create social skills in students, which plays an important role in raising this important feature in them (Nazari et al., 2015). If the management in the classroom is applied well and with an interactive approach, the social skills of the students will be strengthened and the sense of cooperation between the teacher and the student and the students for learning and education will increase. Classroom management, which aims to increase the level of social responsibility and interpersonal relationships of students, requires different methods. Each teacher uses three main methods, interactive, interventionist and non-interventionist, depending on the conditions of the class and students and their mood. In the interactive method, the teacher seeks to communicate effectively with the students. It is obvious that the type of relationships can increase or decrease the ability of students to establish social relationships. In the interactive style of classroom management, the teacher is looking for a positive, supportive and reliable relationship with the students. Such a teacher can increase social skills in people by learning cooperation and developing interpersonal skills during education. Students with learning disabilities of social skills are disturbed due to low self-esteem and the teacher allows the student to cooperate in the matter. Learning or class increases their self-esteem and also increases their social skills. It is in this case that students avoid aggression and try to establish relationships with others. Cooperation in the education process helps students to increase their responsibility, it means a state or condition in which he

accepts the consequences and results of an action or action, as well as the responsibility of his social roles. undertakes and strives to fulfill their duties. Being responsible makes the student as a citizen in the society, in his behavior and action, a reliable and trustworthy person for the social structure. As the interactive style provides the necessary space and opportunity for the formation of responsibility and effective interpersonal communication in students, by using group teaching-learning strategies instead of individual strategies. Unlike the non-interventionist style, which places all class responsibilities on the student himself, in the interactive style, emphasizing teamwork and group work with the compassionate guidance and leadership of the teacher during class processes, students' sense of responsibility increases, and this is in a state where The non-interventionist style has a positive effect in raising the sense of social responsibility and creating a relationship with each other by handing over the authority and responsibilities of the teacher to the student, for reasons already mentioned. But the teachers who use interventionist style of classroom management by depriving the students of the opportunity to participate, cause the teacher to have all the responsibilities, hence the cooperation or interpersonal relationship between Teacher and student or students are not created. In this style of managing the educational environment, it is inflexible and information exchange is not learned. Just as in the class management style, the teacher leaves the classroom in a careless manner without controlling and managing the classroom and disorder of behavior is created in the classroom, so in this style of management, the students will not be able to Learn the correct social rules and principles in their relationships or in the social environment(Yavuz, 2009).

The present study has some limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting and generalizing to other groups. Due to the limited nature of the research sample, its generalization to other societies should be done with caution. In the present study, data were collected using a self-report questionnaire, and it was not possible to control other factors such as education, family income, and the history of risky behaviors in other family members. In general, according to the findings obtained and the review of past researches, it is necessary to carry out more extensive studies in this field in order to significantly reduce future injuries.

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