

A Study of Social Maturity and Adjustment in Intellectually Disabled Children.

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Abstract:

The level of social maturity and adjustment in intellectually challenged individuals has wide implications for the level of support needed in their literacy or vocational training as well as their integration in the society. The present study evaluated social development and adjustment levels of 40 mentally retarded children (20 at mild MR level and 20 at moderate MR level) between the age range of 8-12 years who were administered Vineland Social Maturity Scale and Child Adjustment Scale. Results indicate that there is a significant difference between the social development as well as adjustment levels of mild and moderately mentally challenged children. Further, significant correlations exist between social maturity and different areas of adjustment implying that low social development is predictive of poor adjustment.

Key words: Intellectually challenged children, Social Maturity, Adjustment

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Sub average intellectual level is manifested in abnormal development, learning difficulties and problems in social adjustment in the school system.

The social development of impaired children lags behind the normal children of their age. This is because the perception of social situation is a matter of understanding which is where these children lack. Another reason is that the child's impairments have been apparent in the family and neighborhood long before he enters the school. These children often face negative remarks and unfavorable comparison and as a result develop undesirable social traits. Thus, lack of social development contributes considerably to quality of life.

Social maturity is related to how well people understand the nature of the social world they live within. It has been variously defined and described at different age levels for children. In every culture there is a process of socialization in which the individual moves from an uncultured and unskilled stage to a condition of interpersonal affiliation and harmony as a member of his society. Therefore, the degree of a child's social maturity can be defined as the level of significant social behavior attained at a given age. Social maturity may be assessed according to the way it is manifested in the child behavior. Persons with intellectual impairments experience varying degrees of deficits in social skills, which can lead to isolation, stigmatization, lack of coping skills, increased maladaptive behaviors, and increased rates of psychopathology (Matson & Hammer 1996).

Since it has been observed that the level of intellectual functioning seems to have a direct bearing on the social development of individuals, the present study was designed to fulfill the following objectives.

Objectives

1. To measure social maturity at mild and moderate level of mental retardation.
2. To measure adjustment level at mild and moderate level of mental retardation.
3. To study the relationship between social maturity and adjustment in mentally challenged students.

Hypotheses

1. There would be a significant difference in the social maturity level of mild and moderately mentally challenged.
2. There would be a significant difference in the adjustment level of mild and moderately mentally challenged.
3. Level of social maturity has significant relationship with adjustment level in mentally challenged children.

Method

Sample

A purposive sample of 40 mentally challenged children of both genders ranging in age from 8 to 12 years studying in various special schools of New Delhi were selected on the basis of availability. Out of these 40 children, 20 were at mild level (I.Q. from 50-69) of intellectual disability whereas the other 20 were at moderate level (I.Q. from 35-49) of intellectual disability.

Tools

1. Vineland Social Maturity Scale: The scale was originally developed by E.A. Doll in 1935, which was then adapted by Dr. A.J. Malin in the year 1965. It measures differential social capacity of an individual. It provides an estimate of social age and social quotient and shows high correlation (0.80) with intelligence; it is designed to measure social maturation in 8 social areas. The scale consists 89 items grouped into year's levels (13 age groups). It can be used for the age group of "Below 15 years", it means from birth to 15 years.

2. Child Adjustment Scale was developed by Smt. R. Dubey (1997). This scale measure the adjustment of the child specially "School, Home and Peer group" areas of the Adjustment. It involves 45 statements. The Reliability of this scale is .95 and Validity of this scale is .91.

Procedure

The selected students were approached in their respective schools. "Vineland Social Maturity Scale" and "Child Adjustment Scale" were administered to each subject individually. Their answers were recorded and scoring was done as per the instructions in the manuals. The results were subjected to t-test to find out the significance of difference between social maturity levels and adjustment levels of mild and moderately mentally challenged children. Pearson's r was computed to study the relationship between social maturity and adjustment levels in both the groups.

Results and Discussions

The results reveal significant difference in the social maturity levels and adjustment levels of the mild and moderately challenged children.

Table: 1 showing Mean, SD and t-value of social maturity and adjustment levels.

		Mean & SD		t-value
		Mild (N=20)	Moderate (N=20)	Total (N=40)
Social Maturity in Social Quotient		58.05 (6.30)	41.15 (4.27)	9.93**
Adjustment	School	3.75 (1.77)	2.40 (0.82)	3.09**
	Home	4.10 (1.86)	2.40 (1.14)	3.5**
	Peer group	2.50 (1.23)	2.50 (1.23)	2.41*
	Total Adjustment	11.65 (5.39)	7.30 (2.73)	3.22**

** Significant at 0.01 level, * Significant at 0.05 level

Results reveal significant difference in social maturity of children with mild and moderate intellectual disability ($t=9.93$, $p<0.01$). The mild and moderate category of challenged children

are found to be significantly different at school and home adjustment ($t=3.09, 3.5, p<0.01$) and peer group adjustment ($t=2.41, p<0.05$).

Table: 2 showing correlation coefficient obtained for the variable social maturity and adjustment.

		Social Maturity in Social Quotient		
		Mild (N=20)	Moderate (N=20)	Total (N=40)
Adjustment	School	.79**	.66**	.73**
	Home	.71**	.49**	.71**
	Peer group	.54**	.63**	.59**
	Total Adjustment	.71**	.95**	.72**

** Significant at 0.01 level

The relationship between social maturity and adjustment has been observed very highly positive in moderate category whereas high positive correlation has been found in mild category of mentally challenged children. The obtained results thus validate all the three proposed hypotheses.

The present study has proved that level of social maturity reflects the adjustment of the challenged children. The study of Kumar, Singh and Akhtar (2009) support the present findings stating the relationship of social development and intelligence. They found that with increasing severity of retardation, social development also decreases. Matson, Barmburg and Mayville (1999) compared mentally disabled children with other associated problems, in which they found social and developmental skills high in only disabled children in comparison to the disabled children with other associated problems such as seizures disorders etc. The obtained significant difference in the social maturity of mild and moderate category of disability here suggests that the level of social development decreases with the degree of relationship (Pati & Parimanik 1996). Similarly the positive relationship obtained in social maturity and adjustment predict that social and intellectual development go side by side in the similar manner reflecting the adjustment level of such children as well as the corresponding declining social development. The study has served to underline the fact the greater the degree of Mental Retardation, greater would be the lack of social skills and thus adjustment. This finding goes contrary to the popular thinking that as the child grows he will also become socially developed but this is not so. The finding underline the importance of special training and counseling for mentally retarded children, Mild Mentally retarded would require less training whereas moderate Mental Retardation would need intense training and special education.

The present research work was undertaken with the conclusion drawn by Kumar, Singh and Akhtar (2009) from their study stating that intelligence can determine the adjustment capacity of intellectually challenged children.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that social quotient increases or decreases with the level of intellectual disability. Further it can also be suggested that social maturity and potential for

adjustment are positively related to each other. This finding has direct implication for the level of support needed for such individual's integration into society.

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