Attitudes of typically developing primary school children to their peers with Intellectual Disabilities.

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Contents

- Definitions and terminology

- Background research and research question

- Methodology

- Results

- Conclusions

- Limitations and future research

- Questions

Definitions and terminology

- Intellectual Disability (ID)-

  - Limitations in intellectual functioning IQ<70

  - Limitations in adaptive behaviour

  - Emerges in developmental period (<18 years)

  Defined by American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities "significant limitations both in **intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual,** social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18." (AAIDD, 2002, p.1)

Definitions and terminology

- Definitions changed over time.

- Preferred terminology takes the 'person first' .

- Typically Developing (TD)–

  - IQ >70

  - No limitations in adaptive functioning.

Background research

- 1 in 3 children report being bullied in the UK (Analitis et al., 2009).

- Government policies encourage inclusion of children Special Educational Needs.

- The green paper (Dfee,1997) suggests a child requires Special Educational Needs if he or she learns at a below average level in comparison to peers of the same age (thus including children with an Intellectual Disability).

Background research

- Reports of bullying from teenagers with autism attending mainstream schools (Humphrey and Lewis, 2008).

- Negative Interactions (eg. teasing) are often responded with:

  - rejection

  - behavioural response

  - general distress

  - difficulties in interpretation

(Ochs, Kremer-Sadlick, Solomon, & Sirota, 2001)

- These responses decrease the chance of acceptance with peers (Analitis et al., 2009).

Background research

- A lack of knowledge has been shown as a reason for not including peers with an intellectual disability (Ochs et al., 2001).

- In 1991 Kyle and Davies found confusion of causes and problems of children diagnosed as mentally retarded.

- In 2002 Magiati, Dockrell and Logotheti found children had more understanding of physical disabilities than intellectual disabilities.

Background research

- When showing children pictures of physically handicapped peers a decline in acceptance was found with age (Morgan and Wisely, 1996).

- Attitudes of children with an intellectual disability were measured. An overall positive attitude was seen, which increased when the children were younger (Townsend, Wilton and Valkirad, 1993).

- Based on limited research it is difficult to conclude a child's attitude level towards a peer with an intellectual disability.

Research questions

- To investigate typically developing children in primary schools current attitudes towards their peers with an intellectual disability.

- Will younger children have a more accepting attitude in comparison to the older children?

- Will children who have current contact or previous contact have a higher acceptance towards peers with an intellectual disability?

- Will there be a gender difference?

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Methodology

- 33 Primary school children were recruited from North Wales Primary Schools.

- The children were aged 5 *(n=16),*7(*n=11)* and 9 *(n=6),* 13 female,20 male.

- Letter to head teacher

- Letter to parent

- Questionnaire to parents (measuring current contact with any individuals with an intellectual disability)

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Methodology

- 12 images of children were shown taken from 'creative commons' website.

- Description of children included:
- 'This child learns new things easily. He/She knows how to do the things that someone your age can do, such as...'
- 'This child finds learning new things difficult. They cannot do some of the things that someone your age can do, such as...'

Methodology

- Moe, Nacoste and Insko (1981) adapted by Piercy, Wilton and Townsend (2002) Questionnaire was used:

  1) Would you feel like helping this child if they were hurt at school?

  2) Would you feel like sharing a secret with this child?

  3) Would you like to play with this child?

  4) Would you say 'hello' to this child?

  5) Would you want to work with this child in class?

Methodology

- 'Do you like Pizza?'

- Answers were noted by second researcher.

- The children were observed carefully and given the opportunity to leave the room if they needed a break.

- Positive feedback was given after every answer.
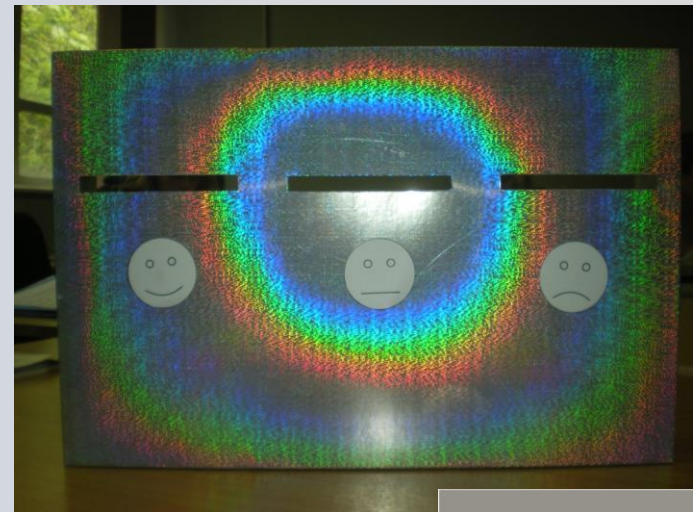
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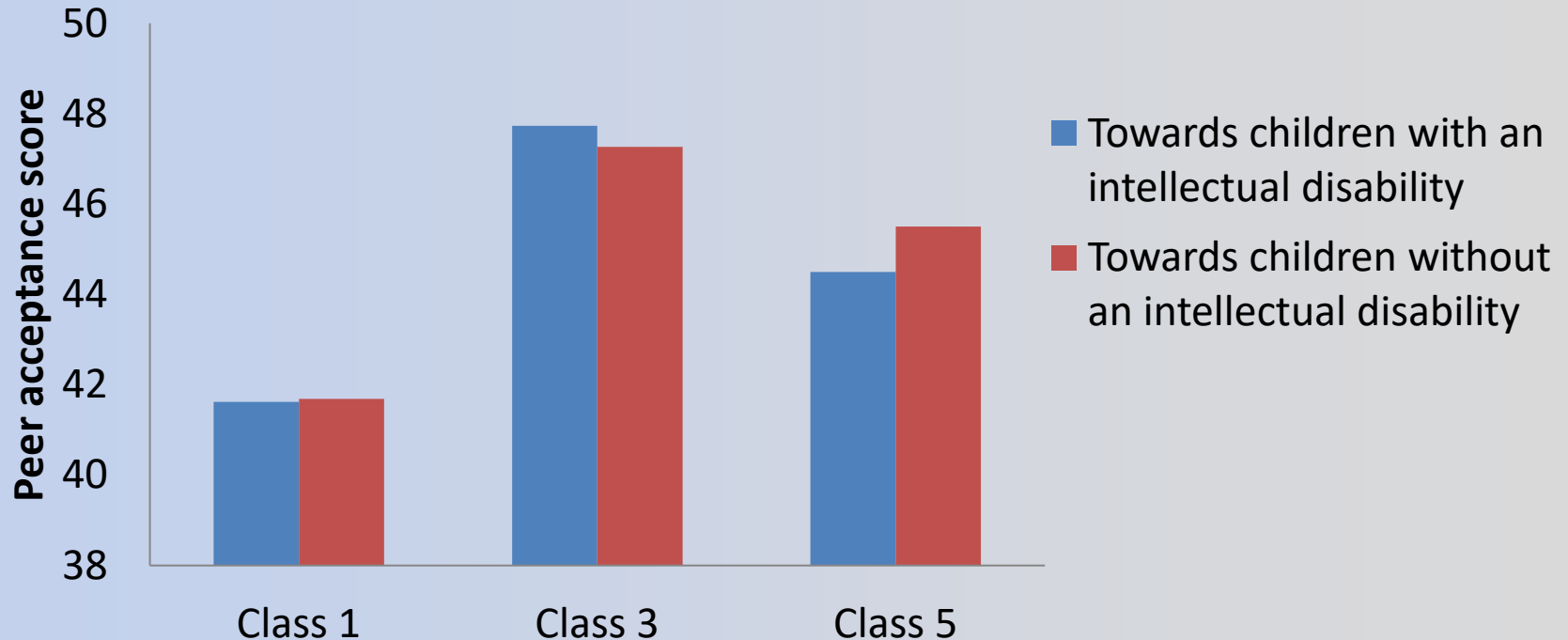
Figure 1. The mean scores of children *(n=33)* in three classes are shown; the scores are their peer acceptance ratings of pictures seen of children with or without an intellectual disability. Standard errors are represented in the figure by the error bars attached to each column which are the average for the image category.

Results

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Gender of Participant	-									
2.Age of Participant	.379**	-								
3.Class	.404*	.976**	-							
4.Immediate Family with an Intellectual Disability	.102	-.043	-.019	-						
5.Diagnosis of Immediate Family	.095	-.112	-.077	.926**	-					
6.Friends in School with an Intellectual Disability	.268	-.020	-.054	.283	.167	-				
7.Friends out of school with an Intellectual disability	.102	.472**	.396*	.185	.077	.100	-			
8.Present contact with ID	.275	.108	.072	.402*	.324	.868**	.146	-		
9.IDtotal	.296	.209	.164	.392*	.442*	.330	.188	.447**	-	
10.TDtotal	.358*	.215	.187	.405*	.405*	.355*	.224	.453**	.923**	-

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics (N=33)

- **.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*
- ***.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)*

Conclusions

- *Will younger children have a more accepting attitude in comparison to the older children?*

- *Will there be a gender difference?*

- *Will children who have current contact or previous contact have a higher acceptance towards peers with an intellectual disability?*

- Therefore it seems children who have experience and knowledge of individuals with an intellectual disability are more accepting and willing to help others.

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Limitations

- Children being influenced in their answering to please the researchers. Is age related to honesty?

- Are the children more influenced by their physical appearance or the child's ability?

- Developing the questionnaire used, additional questions on different situations would give a better understanding.

Future research

- Interventions focusing on teaching children and interactions.

- Hopefully children will become more accepting in schools and mainstream schooling for children with an intellectual disability continues.

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Questions?

Thank you for listening.

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