

Research on the Present Situation of Classroom Adaptive Behavior Problems and the Causes among the Mentally Retarded Students in Junior Grades

Qingqing Wang ^{1,#}, Bei Chen ^{2,#}, Aijun Rao ^{1,*}

¹ Xi'an Lingtong Special School, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710600, China

² Xi'an Eurasia University, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, 710065, China

Co-first authors

* Corresponding author: Aijun Rao

Abstract: The classroom adaptive behavior problems of mentally retarded students in junior grades are obvious and complex. The professional research tools were used to conduct the functional evaluation on 7 research objects in this paper. According to the results of the functional evaluation, the paper focused on four subtypes of intellectual disabilities (complete intellectual disabilities, intellectual disabilities with speech disorders, intellectual disabilities with hyperactivity and autism with low intelligence), and then explored the classroom adaptive behavior problems among different types of mentally retarded students in junior grades and the causes of the problems.

Keywords: intellectual disabilities; classroom adaptation; behavior problems; junior grades

1. Introduction

In recent years, China has made continuous progress in its plan to improve special education. It is required that those counties (cities or districts) with a population of 300,000 or more must set up a special education school independently [1]. Xi'an earnestly implements the national and provincial special education policy and sets up special schools in some districts and counties actively. In addition, Xi'an administration also guides some special schools in districts and counties to transform so that these special schools recruit students with intellectual disabilities and autism (hereinafter referred to as mentally retarded students). The deaf-mute students are arranged to study in common schools or the municipal school for deaf-mutes.

Currently, mentally retarded students have become the majority in special schools in districts and counties of Xi'an. Compared with ordinary students of the same age,

mentally retarded students are significantly limited in both intellectual functions and adaptive behavior [2], so the frequency and degree of the classroom behavior problems increase a lot [3]. In the class for mental retardation, mentally retarded students often talk to themselves, run around, cry, disobey instructions and even attack others, which seriously affects the classroom learning effect and is also not conducive in helping mentally retarded students form the good learning behavior. Among them, the classroom adaptive behavior problems happen most frequently in the mentally retarded students in junior grades. Obviously, their classroom adaptive behavior problems are more obvious and complex, so it is urgent to find the reasons and formulate targeted solutions.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Selection of Research Objects

7 students were selected as the research objects from the junior training classes in two special schools in Xi'an city. There are three main reasons for the selection: Firstly, the head teacher and the teacher unanimously recommended them to the researcher, indicating that they do have classroom adaptive behavior problems. Secondly, the researchers served as the teachers of the research objects respectively. After nearly a month of classroom observation, it was found that the research objects recommended by the head teacher and other teachers had serious classroom adaptive behaviors, so they were selected. Thirdly, the researchers have already obtained the consent of the research objects' guardians before carrying out the study. Therefore, the study won't be questioned morally and ethically, which facilitates the further implementation of the research. Table 1 shows the basic information of the 7 research objects.

Table 1. Basic information of the 7 research objects

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Age (years old)	Grade	Type of disabilities
Xiao Feng	male	10	2	autism with intellectual disabilities
Lele	male	11	3	intellectual disabilities with speech disorders

Chenchen	female	8	1	intellectual disabilities with speech disorders
Yeye	male	7	1	intellectual disabilities
Zeze	female	11	3	intellectual disabilities
Tongtong	female	10	3	intellectual disabilities
Ruirui	male	10	2	intellectual disabilities with hyperactivity

2.2. Selection of Research Tools

Four types of research tools were used in this study, namely, *Interview Log Chart* (for parents), *Behavioral Motive Table*, *Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions*, *A-B-C Behavioral Data Form* (Lai Mingci). The four scales have been used many times by researchers to evaluate the behavior problems of students with special needs and they are of good reliability and validity. This study used these four research tools to conduct the functional behavioral assessment of the research objects' behavioral problems. To determine the cause of the behavior, information about prerequisite events, behavior and behavior results were collected [4].

Interview Log Chart (for parents) is the log chart of the structural interview, including 10 items. Researchers have interviews with the parents of the research objects to record key information. Since the last question involves the following: "the size of the activity area and physical environment for the research objects, the existence of security risks, the setting of the emotional processing area, etc.", so the place of the daily activity and the physical environment for the research object should be investigated on the spot.

Behavioral Motive Table includes 16 items, and seven assessment levels are used ranging from 0 to 6. After the evaluation, the score of each item was first filled in the corresponding box. Next, the scores of the 4 items in each row were added and then divided by 4. Finally, the scores of the four rows were compared and the results showed that: the higher the score is, the higher the possibility of motivation will be. If the scores are the same or the difference is within 0.5, it requires attention.

Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions includes 18 items, and the options of each item are true or false.

After the interview, the score was calculated. The total number of items with the option "true" were calculated respectively in the corresponding five items of each row. The score equals the total number of items. Finally, the scores of the four rows were compared and the results showed that: the higher the score is, the higher the probability of the maladaptive behavior will be.

A-B-C Behavioral Data Form (Lai Mingci) involves 9 items including date, time, antecedent, behavior, consequence, the response of the case, behavioral function hypothesis, duration, recorder. The researchers were required to record what they observed in detail and to master the primary information related to the classroom adaptive behavior problems of the research objects.

3. Analysis of the Classroom Adaptive Behavior Problems and the Causes among the Mentally Retarded Students in Junior Grades

Four research tools were used to conduct the functional evaluation on 7 research objects in this study. Based on the evaluation results, four subtypes of mental retardations were focused on, including complete intellectual disabilities, intellectual disabilities with speech disorder, intellectual disabilities with hyperactivity and autism with low intelligence. Then this paper explored the classroom adaptive behavior problems of different types of mentally retarded students and the causes and motives of the problems.

3.1. Complete Intellectual Disabilities

There were 3 research objects with complete intellectual disabilities, and the evaluation results were shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Analytical statement of functional evaluation for complete intellectual disabilities

Four types of scales	Yeye	Zeze	Tongtong
<i>Interview Log Chart</i> (for parents)	He likes to play with classmates and can communicate in language but with poor logic. He can understand questions and instructions. He keeps talking to draw others' attention when meeting familiar people. He is often in a daze and lets off feelings through crying, but without great emotional fluctuations most of the time. Caregivers are mainly preachy and occasionally spank.	When the researcher accompanied Zeze studying at school, Zeze was found shouting, pushing the table and repeating the words he was interested in loudly, which affected the class order. He also loves to ask questions, is curious about knowledge, and likes to interact with peers but with poor practical ability. He dislikes sports, and is usually taken to the park or the supermarket to stay for half an hour. His mother and grandmother look after him. Now they have a second child, so they pay less attention to him. As he likes being praised, the praise often brings out his good performance.	He left the seat once or twice, shouted at the teacher 4-6 times every lesson. He pushed others when lining up. Behavioral problems often happen in a crowd of people. His abilities develop well, and he likes to play with other children and to be chased by other kids, but he is hyperactive. Three adults live with him. Mother is strict with him, so he behaves well when he stays with mother. He can deal with his emotions in the bedroom. Recently he is taking the nerve depressant medicine.

<i>A-B-C Behavioral Data Form</i>	When the teacher gives classroom tasks or asks students, he often talks to himself, sometimes rushes to answer questions or shouts impatiently "I can't work it out" or say irrelevant words. Such behavior lasts for 2-10 minutes, and the teacher mostly asks him to stop and occasional comforts him, but he continued to murmur after a short silence. The behavioral function hypothesis is attention-seeking, self-stimulation and boredom.	Zeze is not interested in challenging lessons such as Chinese and Mathematics, so he would push and beat the table near the end of the school and throw the books onto the floor. Such behavior lasted for 3 to 6 minutes. The teacher first stopped his behavior and then comforted him. After that, Zeze's behavior problems slightly improved. The behavioral functions are assumed to be escape, self-stimulation and boredom.	When the teacher organized and arranged for students to carry out the class tasks, Tongtong shouted at the teacher, run around, searched other students' schoolbags, and knocked others by the arms. Such behavior lasted for 1 to 2 minutes. When the teacher gave instructions, he sometimes didn't respond or continued his maladaptive behavior or repeated the teacher's words. The behavioral functions are assumed to be self-stimulation, boredom and attention-seeking.
<i>Behavioral Motive Table</i>	self-stimulation, boredom: 4 points escape behavior: 3.75 points attention-seeking: 3.5 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 5.5 points	self-stimulation, boredom: 3.75 points escape behavior: 4 points attention-seeking: 1.75 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 2.75 points	self-stimulation, boredom: 4 points escape behavior: 2 points attention-seeking: 5.8 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 2.8 points
<i>Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions</i>	attention-seeking: 4 points escape: 1 point feeling: 2 points pain reduction: 0 point	attention-seeking: 3 points escape: 4 point feeling: 2 points pain reduction: 0 point	attention-seeking: 2 points escape: 0 point feeling: 3 points pain reduction: 0 point

As can be seen from Table 2, the common classroom adaptive behavior problems of the three completely mentally disabled subjects are the interference with the classroom order, but the specific manifestations are different. Yeye likes talking to himself, Zeze pushed and beat the table as well as shouted. However, Tongtong not only shouted but also left the seat more often and behaved aggressively from time to time. Through the comprehensive analysis of the three research objects with complete intellectual disabilities, the common reasons why they interfered with the classroom order are self-stimulation and boredom.

First of all, Yeye often talks to himself mainly because he wants to attract the attention of teachers. In "A-B-C behavioral data form", the record that "Yeye sometimes rushed to answer questions" has verified this conclusion. Secondly, he feels bored, so he talks to himself for self-stimulation. When *Behavioral Motive Table* was used to evaluate Yeye's behavioral problems, the score of the item "unsatisfied or wanting things" is the highest. However, the score of the corresponding pain reduction item is 0 point after being compared with that in *Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions*. Therefore, the reason

"unsatisfied or wanting things" is excluded. Zeze pushed and beat the table or shouted in order to escape from the difficult classroom learning tasks which they show no interest in. Moreover, he pushed and beat the table near the end of the school because he may know the school will be over soon but the waiting is boring. Meanwhile, the maladaptive behavior of Tongtong in class is mainly to catch the attention of peers. *Interview Log Chart* (for parents), this conclusion is verified by the item that "she likes to play with children and to be chased by others". Next, a series of behavioral problems were found while the teacher organized her classmates to carry out the classroom tasks. One possible explanation is that she may feel bored, so she turned to self-stimulation.

3.2. Intellectual Disabilities with Speech Disorder

Two research objects are with intellectual disabilities with speech disorder, and they are Lele and Chenchen. Regarding their classroom adaptive behavioral problems, Lele often left the seat, while Chenchen behaved aggressively and hurt himself. The evaluation results are shown in Table 3

Table 3. Analytical statement of functional evaluation for intellectual disabilities with speech disorder

Four types of scales	Lele	Chenchen
<i>Interview Log Chart</i> (for parents)	She can get along well with classmates, but she finds it difficult to play together with the village children because she is not as good as those children in some aspects. When her mother was doing housework at home, Lele often opened the door and walked around the community to touch the cars. His family lived on the first floor, so she only needed to climb down six steps.	In the process of accompanying the study, Chenchen often beat others with hands or knocked others with legs when she found other students making mistakes or the teacher was going to criticize them. When she made mistakes in her homework or did something wrong, she beat her own hands or arms. She communicated with others by hugging, shaking hands, kissing or shouting. She is good at communication, but weak in language competence. She can only pronounce only a few simple syllables.

<i>A-B-C Behavioral Data Form</i>	When her classmates were doing tasks, Le Le chewed her fingers or shook her chair. After that, she left her seat and walked to other students to observe what they were doing, especially Mao. The behavior lasted for less than 10 minutes. The teacher guided her to the seat as she reminded orally. Behavioral functions are hypothesized to be self-stimulation, boredom, and attention-seeking.	When other classmates didn't obey class rules or did something wrong, Chenchen pointed at them, knocked them or even beat them. The behavior lasted until the wrong behavior ended. After the teacher punished Chenchen, she no longer beat others, but slapped herself instead. When she failed to meet the requirements of the teacher, she beat her own arm. Such behavior lasted for a very short time. When the teacher showed examples to her, she stopped her improper behavior. The behavioral functions are assumed to be self-stimulation, boredom and escape.
<i>Behavioral Motive Table</i>	self-stimulation, boredom: 5.75 points escape behavior: 2.75 points attention-seeking: 3.75 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 2.75 points	self-stimulation, boredom: 2.5 points escape behavior: 2.8 points attention-seeking: 1.5 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 2.2 points
<i>Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions</i>	attention-seeking: 2 points escape: 1 point feeling: 4 points pain reduction: 2 points	attention-seeking: 3 points escape: 3 points feeling: 3 points pain reduction: 1 point

Table 3 shows that: Lele often left the seat primarily because of self-stimulation and boredom. Whether classmates were doing tasks or her mother was doing the housework, the research object failed to finish the same task as her classmates or helped her parents with the housework. Therefore, she chose to leave and move around. In *A-B-C Behavioral Data Form*, attention should be paid to the item that “Lele often walked to other classmates, especially Mao.” This suggested that she wanted to do tasks or play together with Mao and get Mao’s attention. The second reason why Lele left the seat is that she wanted to catch the attention.

Whether Chenchen attacked others or hurt herself, she often beat or knocked. It is inferred that beating or knocking may stimulate her feelings, so self-stimulation and boredom are one of the reasons for her attack or self-

injury behavior. Meanwhile, it is also speculated that the teacher punished other classmates or Chenchen when they made mistakes or she failed to meet the requirements of the task. To avoid the future punishment, Chenchen chose to attack others or hurt herself. It can be seen that avoidance is another possible factor of the improper behavior.

3.3. Intellectual Disabilities with Hyperactivity

Ruirui is a research object who has intellectual disabilities with hyperactivity. The interference with the classroom order is his adaptive behavioral problem in class. Specifically, he tore up textbooks or grabbed things from others. The evaluation results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Analytical statement of functional evaluation for intellectual disabilities with hyperactivity

Four types of scales	Interview Log Chart (for parents)	A-B-C Behavioral Data Form	Behavioral Motive Table	Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions
Ruirui	When he is alone, he tears things up and thinks that snacks, toys and textbooks all belong to him. He must take back whatever he likes. He is weak in linguistic expression and can only utter individual words. He has average social skills, and likes to play with the elder children instead of the younger kids. He loves to use hands and run, and is usually taken care of by grandparents. He gets angry easily. After being beaten by his parents, he gradually calmed won when his grandfather gave him his favourite thing.	Ruirui tore up textbooks or grabbed things from other classmates while the teacher was giving lessons. Such behavior happens intermittently. He can correct his behavior after being patently guided by the teacher. However, it still happens when he is alone. The behavioral functions are assumed to be self-stimulation and boredom.	self-stimulation, boredom: 4.25 points escape behavior: 3 points attention-seeking: 2.5 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 2.75 points	attention-seeking: 4 points escape: 2 points feeling: 4 points pain reduction: 1 point

Ruirui is an obviously hyperactive student with intellectual disabilities. He can't control his tearing behavior, and the tearing sound can stimulate his feeling. In *Interview Log Chart* (for parents), the item that "I must take back whatever I like" proves that he has a strong desire for possession. Because of hyperactivity, he grabbed things from others. The pulling, dragging or knocking in the grabbing means an enjoying stimulation to him. It can be seen that the main reasons for the interference with the classroom order are self-stimulation and boredom. The hypothesis is verified by the item that such behavior

happens in class intermittently in *A-B-C Behavioral Data Form*.

3.4. Autism with Low Intelligence

Little Feng is a research object that has autism and a low intelligence. His maladaptive behavior is manifested as follows: he often hangs out inside the classroom after leaving the seat or he rushes out of the classroom to the playground. The evaluation results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Analytical statement of functional evaluation for autism with low intelligence

Four types of scales	<i>Interview Log Chart</i> (for parents)	<i>A-B-C Behavioral Data Form</i>	<i>Behavioral Motive Table</i>	<i>Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions</i>
Little Feng	When he is out, he often runs about at will. The care givers are afraid that he may go missing. He has a relatively good cognition and memory, but is weak in language organization and social skills. He never communicates actively and expresses needs to familiar people. He builds block with his mother or does roller skating for exercise at home.	In class, Little Feng suddenly rose and hung out in the classroom or he rushed out to the playground. Such behavior lasted for a relatively long time. The teacher explained to himself first. If it failed, the teacher took himself to the seat and sat face to face with him, or the teacher asked his desk mate to watch him. In this way, he stopped his improper behavior temporarily. The behavioral functions are assumed to be self-stimulation, boredom and attention-seeking.	self-stimulation, boredom: 4.25 points escape behavior: 2 points attention-seeking: 3.75 points unsatisfied or wanting something: 3.75 points	attention-seeking: 3 points escape: 1 point feeling: 3points pain reduction: 1 point

Table 5 shows that: In Behavioral Motive Table, the score of the item "self-stimulation and boredom" is the highest, followed by the item "attention-seeking". However, the items "attention-seeking" and "feelings" are the highest in Analytical Statement of Behavioral Functions. Therefore, it is inferred that little Feng left the seat in class because he felt bored and he wanted to draw the attention. Because of lacking the language competence and autism, teachers and classmates would pay attention to him and then taught or watch him if he left the seat. They would communicate with little Feng, which meets the needs of the interpersonal communication.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, the classroom adaptive behavior problems of the 7 research objects can be summarized into three categories, namely, interfering with classroom order, leaving seats and behaving aggressively. According to their disorder types, the research objects were first divided into four types for a functional evaluation analysis. The results showed that: self-stimulation, boredom and seeking attention were the primary reasons for interfering with class order, leaving seats or behaving aggressively. It is also possible that the maladaptive behaviors of individual research objects are caused by the escape from difficulties or the lack of interest in tasks.

According to the special education concept, special education teachers are required to understand the handicap characteristics, mental needs, interests and hobbies of each

student before formulating the individualized education plan [5]. Therefore, the study also needs to focus on students, and the accurate judgement of the maladaptive behavior can only be achieved based on students' physical and mental development characteristics and the functional evaluation results while analyzing the reasons for the adaptive behavior problems among the same type of mentally retarded students. In the future teaching, more attention will be paid to the individualized education of mentally retarded students, and the individual learning task or activity will be specifically designed to help them keep focused in class and get rid of boredom. This can also stop the mentally retarded students from interfering with the classroom teaching order and reducing the classroom teaching efficiency as well as enables other students to develop good study habits. Accordingly, researchers should offer more attention and care to mentally retarded students with serious classroom adaptive behavioral problems, highlight their advantages, help them build the learning confidence as well as provide them with peer interaction skills and strategies.

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