

An Innovative Program to Enhance Reading Skills and Develop Confidence in Children with Reading disabilities

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Abstract: The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a training program designed to enhance reading skills and confidence among elementary school students with Reading disabilities. The sample consisted of 30 students with Reading disabilities aged between 10 and 13 years. They were divided into two groups (experimental and control). They were all given a reading skills scale, a confidence scale, an intelligence test, Abdul Rahman Bedewi's socioeconomic status scale (2013), Ahmed Awad's diagnosis of Reading disabilities test, and Awad and Awad's (1995) behavioral rating scale for students with learning difficulties, in addition to the training program. The results showed significant differences between the pre- and post-test means of the experimental group on the reading skills scale and the confidence scale in favor of the post-test. There were also significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups on the post-test of the reading skills scale and the confidence scale in favor of the experimental group. However, there were no significant differences between the pre- and post-test means of the control group on the reading skills scale and the confidence scale.

Introduction : The last decade of the 20th century witnessed a growing interest among special education researchers in students with learning difficulties and the programs designed for them. This group constitutes approximately 10% of the student population. Some researchers have found it challenging to reconcile the high intelligence scores of these students with their average academic achievement. Consequently, this group of learners has remained outside the scope of appropriate educational services provided by special education institutions. Moreover, the difficulties faced by these learners have overshadowed many aspects of their academic strengths (Bedewi, 2013).

Students with Reading disabilities constitute one of the most significant groups among those with learning disabilities. Their symptoms include weakness in recognizing, perceiving, and recalling letters, words, and numbers, confusion between similar-sounding or looking letters and numbers, skipping letters and words during reading and writing. Given the importance of reading and the necessity of learning it as a fundamental requirement for students, and due to the large number of underperforming students who cannot read (Batayneh & Shalakhti, 2010), this has negatively impacted their self-confidence and decision-making abilities.

Therefore, it became imperative to develop training methods to overcome shyness, embarrassment, lack of pride and self-confidence, low self-esteem, and the inability to cope with negative emotions. A study by Al-Qamash et al. (2013) indicated that the behaviors of some students with learning difficulties are inconsistent with their self-awareness, while Abu Daqa's study (2012) pointed out that students with Reading disabilities commonly suffer from low self-esteem and self-respect, which can negatively affect their academic achievement. Al-Kafouri's study (2007) emphasized the importance of using training programs to develop reading skills and boost confidence among students with learning difficulties.

Given the significance of the aforementioned points, the motivation and importance of this study become evident. Based on this significance, the current study aims to achieve a level of self-awareness and self-confidence among elementary school students with Reading disabilities through its training program designed to develop reading skills.

Problem Statement:

The world is witnessing a rapid pace of progress and development in various fields of science, especially in the field of special education, accompanied by explosive and accelerating knowledge that requires learners to adapt to this progress and development. There is a pressing need for individuals, especially those with learning difficulties, to participate positively in life, understand themselves, their emotions, aspirations, dreams, and thoughts. Learners, particularly those with learning disabilities, have an increased need to develop certain aspects necessary for understanding some of their behaviors and to leverage all their potential to reach their full potential.

Individuals continuously strive to understand and define themselves. One's self-concept is unique but can be modified under the pressures of environmental and social circumstances, as well as influenced by others' perceptions. Individuals may perceive themselves positively at times and negatively at others, yet they maintain a relatively stable self-concept (Awad et al., 2012, 7).

Self-awareness is a dimension of emotional intelligence that involves an individual's understanding of their emotions and feelings, as well as the recognition of their impact. It encompasses self-assessment, which includes knowing one's strengths, weaknesses, and limitations, as well as self-confidence, or the belief in one's self-worth and abilities (Bazzazo, 2010, 29).

Daniel Goleman (1997, 74) suggested that self-awareness refers to an individual's reflection on their emotions, meaning paying attention to one's internal states. Through this reflective awareness, the mind observes and examines experiences, including emotions. Such self-awareness requires the activation of language-specific parts of the brain that identify and label aroused emotions.

Abu Afash (2011, 14) stated that self-aware individuals are conscious of their psychological state while experiencing it. They have a rich emotional life, and their awareness of their emotions forms the basis of their personality traits. They are also independent, confident in their abilities, enjoy good mental health, and have a positive outlook on life. They can quickly recover from negative moods, and their rationality helps them manage their emotions and feelings.

Al-Khaldi (2014, 8) indicated that self-aware individuals have strong convictions and high self-confidence. They believe that all problems can be overcome and their effects mitigated, and they engage in conscious analysis and challenge of situations. They continuously monitor themselves, paying attention to all behaviors, recording observations, and responding to others.

Bar-on's model of emotional intelligence includes personal intelligence, which consists of five abilities: emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. Self-awareness represents the ability to know and understand one's own emotions, while assertiveness refers to the ability to express one's feelings, beliefs, and thoughts (Al-Aluwan, 2011, 127; Al-Qamash et al., 2013, 709).

Assertiveness is a concept closely related to how an individual behaves in their environment and in their relationships with others. It is the ability to appropriately express one's feelings, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes towards people and events, both verbally and behaviorally, while asserting one's rights without being unjust or aggressive (Al-Husseini, 2006, 20).

Self-awareness skills enable individuals to express their thoughts, opinions, and emotions, both positive and negative. They contribute to the ability to express feelings of love, admiration, or appreciation, as well as feelings of rejection, anger, or hatred in a clear and direct verbal manner. Adopting this approach leads to facing situations with less anxiety and asserting one's rights without infringing upon or denying the rights of others (Abdul Hamid, 2003: 4).

Furthermore, self-awareness plays a significant role in boosting individuals' self-confidence and empowering them to defend their rights and interests through legitimate means. It also enables them to express themselves among friends and in groups they interact with (Zaqout, 2011: 42). A study prepared by Akbari et al. (2012) indicated that training students in reading skills and developing their confidence, including both verbal and nonverbal behavior, makes communication more enjoyable.

It helps students express their needs more easily and learn the appropriate ways to express both positive and negative emotions through the use of suitable verbal and practical expressions. This, in turn, helps them better address their problems and develop constructive criticism skills, strengthening their relationships with others.

The primary stage is a foundational phase during which the learner's personality is shaped and skills are developed. Jeřábek.J and Tupý.J (2007: 9) stated that this stage provides learners with new knowledge and contributes to the development of their individual abilities, tailored to their nature and needs. It also motivates them to learn and develops their problem-solving skills. During this stage, students acquire knowledge, skills, habits, and values that enable them to apply them in specific situations and make responsible decisions.

The Arabic language, with its various skills (reading, writing, expression, etc.), is one of the most important subjects, especially at the primary level. It is a fundamental building block for the learner's intellectual, psychological, and social development. The Arabic language curriculum is the key to other sciences, as other subjects rely on it. It enables learners to learn, think, express emotions, and communicate with others (Al-Harbi, 2012: 2).

Arabic language, with its diverse skills (reading, writing, expression, etc.), is one of the most important subjects, especially at the primary level. It serves as a fundamental cornerstone for the learner's intellectual, psychological, and social development. The Arabic language curriculum is the key to other sciences, as other subjects rely on it. It enables learners to acquire knowledge, think, express emotions, and communicate with others (Al-Harbi, 2012: 2).

Reading is a subject that nurtures the learner's thinking and equips them with skills in identifying key points, keywords, and integrating and synthesizing information. This enables them to enrich their experiences, develop their personalities, and prepare them for life in their community (Al-Malki, 1428 AH: 3).

Learning disability programs are one of the modern educational services. Interest in individuals with learning disabilities in Saudi Arabia began with the issuance of ministerial decree number 251/27 on 22/4/1416 AH, which mandated the provision of educational and learning services for this group (Al-Qarni, 2008: 18).

Given that emotional intelligence (Al-Kafouri, 2007: 38) has distinctive social and emotional characteristics, including self-awareness, social skills, and emotional control, it is essential for students with learning difficulties to maintain personal competencies, social relationships, and lasting friendships.

The results of a study by Al-Qamash et al. (2013) showed significant differences between the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-motivation and self-awareness of emotions) and different types of learning disabilities, in favor of individuals with written language disabilities.

A study by Abdul Rahman Bedewi (2013) revealed a significant and positive impact of an enrichment program on developing certain personal competence skills, including reading skills, self-confidence, and self-concept among gifted students with learning disabilities in middle school.

Based on the foregoing, students with learning difficulties, as indicated by the psychological literature and previous studies, suffer from feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. Therefore, supporting this aspect may help them feel more confident. Consequently, the research problem in this study is defined by the following question:

To what extent is a proposed training program effective in developing reading skills and self-confidence among elementary school students with Reading disabilities?

Importance of the Study:

The importance of this study lies in its attempt to answer the main research question: To what extent is a proposed training program effective in developing reading skills and self-confidence among elementary school students with Reading disabilities? Furthermore, this study aims to achieve both theoretical and practical significance:

Theoretical Importance:

The researcher hopes that this study will contribute new knowledge and enrich the scientific field, filling a gap in the Arabic literature concerning studies that focus on developing reading skills and self-confidence in students with Reading disabilities.

Practical importance:

- This research provides a proposed program for developing reading skills and self-confidence in elementary school students with Reading disabilities. If proven effective in influencing reading skills and self-confidence, this program can be used as a valuable reference for teachers and specialists working with students with learning difficulties, particularly those with Reading disabilities.

- This program can benefit students with Reading disabilities who experience emotional problems such as feelings of inferiority and low self-confidence.

Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to test the effectiveness of a training program in developing self-awareness among a sample of students with Reading disabilities. As well as test the effectiveness of the program in supporting self-confidence among the study sample (experimental group).

Limitations of the Study: The research is limited to the following limits:

Subject Limitations: The research was limited to the application of a program to develop reading skills and self-confidence among students with Reading disabilities.

Geographical Limitations: The research was conducted in some schools under the General Directorate of Education in East Dammam Education Office, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia.

Sample: The research was limited to male students with Reading disabilities in the primary stage in East Dammam Education Office, Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia.

Time Limitations: The research was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 1436-1437 AH.

Study Terms:

Self-awareness: Goleman (2000) defined it as: recognizing one's emotions by observing oneself, being able to name them, understanding the relationship between emotions and thoughts, making personal decisions, monitoring one's actions and recognizing their consequences, and determining what governs a decision: thought or emotion (Al-Khaldi, 2014, p. 6).

Operationally, it is defined as the score obtained by the study sample when responding to the self-awareness scale used in the study.

Reading disabilities: a partial inability to read or understand what the student reads silently or aloud (Al-Qamish et al., 2013, p. 715)..

Operationally, it is defined as the score obtained by the study sample when responding to the Reading disabilities scale used in the study, and the researcher will diagnose those using standardized tools.

Training program: An organized series of lessons and educational activities aimed at developing reading skills and self-confidence in elementary school students with Reading disabilities.

Theoretical Framework:

Self-Concept:

The self- concept is considered one of the fundamental concepts in personality theories. The study of the self has garnered significant attention in psychological and educational research due to its role in the learner's life and its connection to their level of aspiration, adjustment, mental health, and academic progress.

The self- concept is a dynamic psychological organization that undergoes continuous development arising from new experiences across successive developmental stages and social interaction with others.

In the first half of the twentieth century, psychologists concluded that it was impossible to write about psychology without paying attention to the self. In the 1940s, the self found its natural place in psychological studies, and today, the concept of self has taken center stage in counseling, guidance, and training programs (Al-Zaabi, 2003: 82).

The self-concept of a learner with learning difficulties is influenced by the impressions and information they receive from others, which in turn shape their self-image and define their personal identity. The intended or unintended messages conveyed through their interactions with others are directly related to their feelings and the mental image they have of themselves. Moreover, their perception of who they are shapes the way they interact with others. Consequently, the reactions of others and how they interact with them affect the formation of their self-image and self-esteem, which in turn constitute the main components of their self-awareness.

Emotional Intelligence (Concepts and Explanatory Theories)

Concepts of Emotional Intelligence:

Goleman (1995) popularized the concept of emotional intelligence in the late 20th century through his influential theory in this field. He described it as a set of diverse abilities that individuals possess and that are necessary for their success in various aspects of life. These abilities can be learned and improved upon and include emotional awareness, managing emotions, motivation, persistence, self-motivation, understanding the emotions of others, and recognizing social relationships (Goleman, 1995, p. 40).

Beneah defined it as the ability to take a specific direction and persist in it, the ability to adapt, and the ability to be self-critical (Eisawy, 1984: 93).

Bar-On (2005, p. 41) defined it as an organized set of non-cognitive skills and competencies in the personal, emotional, and social domains that influence an individual's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures, and is a significant factor in determining an individual's ability to succeed in life.

Salovey defined it as a person's awareness of their emotions and skillful management of them, serving as a source of motivation within themselves, and possessing the ability to empathize and manage relationships with others effectively (Goleman, 1995, p. 43).

Components of Emotional Intelligence (Focusing on Self-Awareness and Confidence)

Components of Emotional Intelligence:

Based on the scientific perspectives and explanatory models of emotional intelligence skills reviewed earlier, it is evident that emotional intelligence consists of several components, including a set of skills, most notably self-awareness and confidence development, which we will discuss in more detail as key variables in this study, as follows:

Self-Awareness and Confidence Development:

Self-awareness is the cornerstone of the components of emotional intelligence. It involves the ability to pay attention to and accurately perceive one's own emotions and feelings, to distinguish between them, and to be aware of the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and external events (Osman & Razik, 1998: 10).

It refers to the learner's ability to know their emotions, beliefs, and attitudes in the present moment, and to use this knowledge as a guide in decision-making and problem-solving, as well as to monitor their motivations, attitudes, imaginations, and thoughts consciously.

Goleman emphasizes that self-awareness is not attention that is distracted or distorted by different emotional states, as it is a neutral state that remains impartial and contemplative, even in states of excitement, tension, and depression. Even a depressed person can notice their depression, even if they cannot resist or observe it.

Self-Awareness and Confidence Development:

Goleman (1998) identified three sub-skills for the component of self-awareness within emotional intelligence:

- Emotional Awareness: This involves a learner's ability to recognize their emotions and their impact, their feelings, and the relationship between these feelings and their thoughts, perceptions, actions, and words. It also fosters awareness of one's values and goals.
- Accurate Self-Assessment: This refers to a learner's ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their openness to others and their willingness to accept others' critical perspectives and develop themselves based on them.
- Self-Confidence: This involves a learner's ability to present themselves confidently to others, to express their unpopular opinions assertively, and to make decisions despite pressure (Kamour, 2007).

Models of Self-Awareness:

Learners can be categorized into three models based on their use and application of self-awareness and confidence development skills:

- Self-Awareness: These individuals are characterized by their awareness of their moods and emotions. They possess independent personalities, which enables them to make decisions. They are positive in their thinking and behavior and do not give up when faced with frustrating situations (Abu Riash et al., 2006).
- Engulfed: These individuals are unable to escape their fluctuating moods due to a lack of awareness of their emotions and a failure to recognize them. They feel helpless in the face of the consequences of these emotions (Ibrahim, 2010).
- Accepting: These individuals accept their moods as they are and do not seek to change them, despite being aware of them. This group can be divided into two types:
 - Those with a good mood have no motivation to change it.
 - Those with a bad mood are aware of their negative mood but accept it as it is and do not try to change it (Khalda, 2004).

Educational Programs for Students with Reading disabilities:

A teacher can teach students with Reading disabilities using three methods: competitive, cooperative, and individual.

- Competitive Learning: In this method, students with Reading disabilities compete with each other to achieve a specific goal. They can be evaluated based on the time they take to complete assigned tasks.
- Individual Learning: In this type of learning, students with Reading disabilities strive to achieve goals that are specifically set for them, rather than comparing themselves to others. They are evaluated based on their own specific criteria.
- Cooperative Learning: In this type of learning, students with Reading disabilities work together to achieve a common goal, fostering a team spirit. This method is considered more effective than the others as it develops social skills in students with learning difficulties (Al-Aza, 2003: 243).

Considerations for Teaching Students with Reading disabilities:

- Providing ample time and opportunities for direct practice.
- Generalizing learned concepts and skills.
- Learning based on considering students' strengths and weaknesses.
- Building a strong foundation for mathematical concepts and skills.
- Using computer programs to teach students with learning difficulties (Al-Zayat, 1998: 587).

Procedures for Implementing a Remedial Program for Students with Reading disabilities: Implementing any therapeutic method or training program for students with Reading disabilities requires the following considerations:

- Learner Analysis: Assessing the levels and methods of performance of the child's psychological functions.
- Task Analysis: Identifying the basic requirements that are taken into account to activate psychological processes.

Integration of Learner and Task Analysis: Comparing the function of the psychological process in light of the requirements needed to benefit from the required process to perform the required task (Al-Sayed, 2000: 310-311).

These procedures require the teacher to provide an attractive and suitable learning environment, provide students with the necessary instructions to carry out assignments and training activities, classify the types of unacceptable behavior exhibited by the student, and try to control and direct it, and strive in all ways to raise the student's morale and self-esteem.

Teaching Methods and Strategies for Students with Reading Disabilities:

Among the most common methods and strategies used with students who have Reading disabilities to help them adapt to these difficulties, through the efforts of resource room teachers, are the following:

1. **Multisensory or VAKT Method:** This method relies on the four senses: hearing, touch, sight, and kinesthetic. Using multiple senses enhances and reinforces learning for students with Reading disabilities. It addresses the shortcomings that result from relying on some senses more than others.
2. **Fernald Method:** This method also employs a multisensory approach to reading. It differs from the VAKT method in two key points:
 - It relies on the learner's linguistic experience in choosing words and texts.
 - The learner chooses the words, making them more positive, active, and engaged in the reading process.
3. **Orton-Gillingham Method:** This method focuses on multisensory input, organization, classification, language structures related to reading, encoding, decoding, and teaching spelling. It is based on:
 - Linking the written visual symbol of a letter with the letter's name.
 - Linking the written visual symbol of a letter with its sound or pronunciation.
 - Connecting the learner's speech organs with the names and sounds of letters when listening to themselves or others.
4. **Remedial Reading Program:** This program is used with first-grade students who are at the lowest level compared to their peers in the same class and provides them with direct individual instruction. One of the most important features of the program is early intervention during the first grade through a set of steps such as:
 - **Familiar Reading:** Students with Reading disabilities need familiar reading materials to develop their fluency.
 - **Running Records:** Students with Reading disabilities are observed during their reading, and these observations are recorded based on one or more instructional objectives that are determined or selected based on these observations.
 - **Writing:** Students with Reading disabilities are given multiple opportunities to write, and they are asked to hear the sounds of words, generalize new words, and develop relationships through known words and practice phonological awareness of sounds.

- **Introducing New Books for First Reading:** Students with Reading disabilities choose new books to challenge themselves, and both the teacher and the student read aloud from the new book.
5. **Remedial Reading Comprehension Program:** This program aims to improve reading comprehension for students with learning difficulties starting from the fourth grade and beyond, through the following steps:
 - **Using a dictionary:** Students are encouraged to use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words or phrases that they find difficult to understand.
 - **Acquiring concepts and characteristics:** Children are taught various concepts and their associated characteristics, as well as how to use these concepts in verbal or linguistic expressions.
 - **Stimulating critical thinking:** Students are encouraged to generate ideas, research them, and then write summaries of their findings (Al-Zayat, 1998).

Developing Reading Skills and Self-Confidence in Students with Reading disabilities

Teaching reading skills and fostering self-confidence as a component of emotional intelligence in students with Reading disabilities helps them develop their self-efficacy, leading to academic success and life skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

By developing reading skills and self-confidence, a student with Reading disabilities can establish a connection between their emotions and thoughts, on the one hand, and the thoughts and emotions of others they interact with, on the other. They can then adapt this relationship to serve as a bridge that leads them to success in various areas of life. Consequently, this, in turn, strengthens their reading skills and self-confidence, which are essential components of emotional intelligence, with self-awareness being the most crucial (Al-Makhzumi, 2005).

Given the current trend in modern curricula to focus on the psychological and social development of learners in general, and students with Reading disabilities in particular, and to protect them from anything that threatens personal and societal well-being, through topics, lessons, and training activities that contribute to developing reading skills and self-confidence in learners.

Studies have shown that learning that moves the emotions of students in general, and students with learning difficulties in particular, and arouses their emotions towards learning, is the most powerful type of learning. This is because emotions occupy a prominent place in the brain, stimulate and develop thinking, and facilitate effective learning. Additionally, evaluating students using mechanisms that store and program emotions in the brain provides an opportunity to assess emotional intelligence and its skills. It must be emphasized that the emotional climate in the classroom for a student with Reading disabilities is of utmost importance for successful learning. Therefore, many educators and psychologists advocate for integrating the teaching of emotional and social skills into the educational process. Numerous studies have shown that using emotional intelligence skills in education is a significant predictor of higher academic and professional achievement levels, exceeding general intelligence (Engelberg, 2004).

Previous Studies**Firstly: Studies that addressed learning difficulties and some psychological variables:**

A study by Feurer and Andrews (2009) aimed to identify school-related stress and depression in a sample of 87 students (38 with learning difficulties and 49 typical students) in Indian secondary schools. Using questionnaires on depression symptoms and school stress, the results showed that students with learning difficulties reported higher levels of academic self-concept stress, while there were no significant differences between the two groups on the depression variable.

Additionally, a study by Bedewi (2013) aimed to investigate the impact of an enrichment program on developing certain personal competence skills and self-concept in a sample of intellectually gifted students with learning difficulties. The sample consisted of 60 students (12-13.5 years old). The results showed a significant positive impact of the enrichment program on developing certain personal competence skills and self-concept in the gifted students with learning difficulties in the experimental group.

Secondly: Studies that addressed self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and learning difficulties:

A study by Heiba et al. (2013) aimed to determine the effectiveness of a counseling program to develop emotional intelligence in a sample of elementary school students with learning difficulties. The study sample consisted of 20 students (10 in the experimental group and 10 in the control group). The results showed significant differences between the mean ranks of the two groups (control and experimental) on the emotional intelligence scale in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group.

Furthermore, a study by Al-Sharki (2014) aimed to identify the effectiveness of a program to develop emotional intelligence and its impact on reducing alexithymia in a sample of children with Reading disabilities. The study sample consisted of 35 students with Reading disabilities aged 10-12 years. The results showed significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean ranks of the experimental group in the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, emotion management, empathy, motivation, social skills) and alexithymia (difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, externally oriented thinking) in favor of the post-test.

Research Methodology and Procedures

1. Research Methodology: The current study adopted an experimental design using a pre-test post-test control group design.

2. Research Population: The research population consisted of all students with learning difficulties in the East Dammam Educational District. This included 420 students across various grades in 113 schools. The specific study sample was drawn from male students with Reading disabilities in grades 4-6 in the East Dammam Educational District, Saudi Arabia. The total number of students in this specific population was 197, as determined by diagnostic tools used during the first semester of the 1436-1437 academic years.

3. Research Sample: The research sample was selected through the following steps:

Initial Sample: An initial sample of 45 male students in grades 4-6 from two neighboring schools in the same district, equipped with special education teachers and resource rooms, was selected. Their ages ranged from 10 to 13 years.

-Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Criterion: Students with an IQ score below 90 were excluded, as determined by a standardized intelligence test. Nine students were excluded based on this criterion.

-Exclusion Criterion: Students with sensory or motor impairments, or any organic diseases such as diabetes, were excluded. This was confirmed by reviewing the school's medical records and consulting with the school counselor. Six students were excluded based on this criterion.

-Discrepancy Criterion: Students with learning difficulties typically exhibit a significant discrepancy between their general intellectual ability and academic achievement. This discrepancy was verified by comparing each student's scores on reading tests and intelligence tests. All students in the final sample (both experimental and control groups) showed a clear discrepancy between their expected performance and actual intellectual performance.

The final sample consisted of 30 male students with Reading disabilities aged 10-13 years. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group of 15 students from Ahmed bin Hanbal Elementary School and a control group of 15 students from Nafi Al-Madani Elementary School.

Furthermore, the researchers calculated the homogeneity between the experimental and control groups by applying the following scales: self-awareness test, behavioral characteristics rating scale for students with learning difficulties, Reading disabilities diagnosis test, standardized intelligence test, and socioeconomic status scale. Table 1 presents the homogeneity calculations between the experimental and control groups.

Table 1 shows the results of the homogeneity test through the differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups on the study variables using the Mann-Whitney U test.

Dimension	Group	Sample size	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Z
self-awareness	Experimental	15	17.80	267.00	1.455
	Control	15	13.20	198.00	
Binet intelligence test	Experimental	15	16.10	241.50	0.390
	Control	15	14.90	223.50	
Behavioral Rating Scale	Experimental	15	12.77	191.50	1.705
	Control	15	18.23	273.50	
Reading Disorder Diagnosis Test	Experimental	15	17.57	263.50	1.287
	Control	15	13.43	201.50	
Chronological age	Experimental	15	15.37	230.50	0.088

	Control	15	15.6 3	234.5 0	
Economic and social level	Experimental	15	16.6 7	350.0 0	0.72 9
	Control	15	14.3 3	215.0 0	

(*) Significant at 0.05

(**) Significant at 0.01

The results of the preceding table indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups on reading skills, self-confidence, and the covariates that could potentially influence the study outcomes (standardized intelligence test, behavioral rating scale, reading disorder diagnosis test, chronological age, and socioeconomic status). This suggests that the two groups were homogeneous and equivalent.

Fourth: Research Instruments:

A. Reading Skills and Self-Confidence Scale: Developed by Abdulrahman Bedewi (2009) for a Saudi Arabian context, this scale is part of an emotional intelligence battery designed to measure social skills and emotional competencies. The scale consists of 15 items, answered using a four-point Likert scale (always, often, rarely, never). The total score ranges from 15 to 60, with higher scores indicating greater self-awareness.

The scale demonstrated excellent test-retest reliability ($r = 0.976$, $p < 0.01$) and concurrent validity when compared to Matsun's scale ($r = 0.488$, $p < 0.01$). When administered to a sample of 25 elementary students with learning difficulties, the scale showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89). Further, it demonstrated concurrent validity with Yusuf's emotional intelligence scale ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$).

B. Reading disabilities Diagnosis Test:

Developed by Ahmed Awad in 1995, this test is designed to identify Reading disabilities in elementary school students. The test assesses three dimensions: difficulty pronouncing words with more than three syllables, difficulty differentiating between words with similar letters, and difficulty pronouncing long vowels.

The test consists of 18 items, each containing ten words. Students are asked to read these words aloud and are scored based on their accuracy. A student scoring below 60% on the total test or any of its sub dimensions is considered to have a reading difficulty.

The test demonstrated excellent reliability as measured by Spearman-Brown formula ($r = 0.966$) and Cronbach's alpha (0.977). Additionally, item analysis revealed significant differences between high and low-performing students, indicating good item discrimination.

Further validation was conducted on a sample of 25 students with learning difficulties. The test exhibited high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.82 to 0.84). Concurrent validity was established by correlating the test scores with a standardized reading achievement test ($r = 0.53$, 0.58, and 0.59, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the test effectively measures Reading disabilities.

C- Scale for assessing the behavioral characteristics of people with learning difficulties (prepared by/Awad Allah, Mahmoud, and Awad, Ahmed, 1995):

The scale consists of (50) phrases those measure five dimensions, which are (attention deficit, hyperactivity, impulsivity, emotional fluctuations, and poor social adjustment). These dimensions are considered an indicator of a learner with learning difficulties. Each of these dimensions consists of ten phrases describing the learner's behavior in this dimension.

Each phrase has three optional alternatives through which the (teacher) who spent a full academic year with the (student) chooses a characteristic that applies to him/her. This is a diagnostic scale that was used to diagnose people with learning difficulties from among the candidates as being gifted through their teachers and this scale is corrected according to the type of choices chosen by the examinee from among the available alternatives for each phrase of the scale. If the chosen alternative is (A), the examinee is given (3 points), if it is (B) (2 points), and if it is (C) (one point). The more the examinee's scores on the scale increase It made him normal while low scores indicate that he has learning difficulties, and the scale's developers calculated its validity and reliability in more than one way. (Awad, Ahmed, 1995).

The stability of the scale was calculated in the current study through the reapplication method with a time difference of (15) days on the same previous stability sample, and the stability coefficients were acceptable between the two applications (0.853). As for the validity of the scale, it was calculated through the validity of the criterion for the scale used in the current study with the behavioral characteristics assessment scale of Fathi Al-Zayat (1999), and the correlation coefficient was (0.67) with a significance level of (0.01).

D - Economic, cultural and social level scale: Prepared by (Bedewi, 2013):

It consists of (20) items to estimate the economic, cultural and social level, and was used in the current study to select the study sample. (Bedewi, 2013) calculated the validity in two ways: the validity of the arbitrators, and the validity of the criterion by applying the scale to the same previous stability sample with the scale of the cultural, economic and social level of Al-Buhairi (2002), and the correlation coefficient reached (0.68) at a significance level of (0.01). The researcher also calculated the stability coefficient by applying the scale to the same previous stability sample using the split-half method, and its value reached (0.78).

E. Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition:

Adapted by Abu El-Neil, Taha, and Abd El-Samee (2011), the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition, is an individually administered test designed to assess intelligence and cognitive abilities in individuals aged 2 to 85 years and above. The overall scale comprises 10 subtests that can be combined to form various composite scores:

1. **Short Battery IQ:** Consisting of the Object Series/Matrices and Vocabulary subtests, this battery is often used in conjunction with other tests for assessments such as neuropsychological evaluations.
2. **Nonverbal IQ:** This subtest is composed of the five nonverbal subtests that correspond to the five cognitive factors measured by the Fifth Edition. It is particularly useful for assessing individuals with hearing

impairments, communication disorders, autism spectrum disorder, specific learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, limited language proficiency, or language-related disorders such as aphasia or stroke.

3. **Verbal IQ:** Complementing the Nonverbal IQ, this subtest comprises the five verbal subtests aligned with the five cognitive factors. It can be administered to individuals with normal vision but may also be suitable for those with visual impairments, spinal deformities, or other conditions that prevent them from completing the nonverbal portion of the scale.
4. **Full-Scale IQ:** This is derived from the combined scores of the verbal and nonverbal domains or the five factor indices.

The administration time for the scale ranges from 15 to 75 minutes, depending on the specific subtests administered. The complete scale typically takes 45 to 75 minutes, while the short battery takes 15 to 20 minutes, and the nonverbal and verbal domains each take approximately 30 minutes.

Reliability was established using test-retest, split-half, and Cronbach's alpha methods. Test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from 0.835 to 0.988, split-half reliability coefficients ranged from 0.954 to 0.992, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.870 to 0.991.

Regarding validity, the scale demonstrated high correlations with other classical intelligence tests, such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fourth Edition, Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children and Adults, and Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement. Correlation coefficients ranged from 0.66 to 0.90.

Fifth: Training Program: A set of procedures governed by specific principles and criteria that facilitate evaluation. It involves a series of interconnected and integrated activities, experiences, and situations suitable for the nature and characteristics of the sample. These activities are carried out through a set of specific scientific techniques and methods with the aim of developing and enhancing reading skills and self-confidence in students.

Program Description: Overall Goal of the Training Program: The primary objective of the training program is to develop reading skills and self-confidence in the experimental group of students (aged 10-12) with Reading disabilities. The program aims to improve reading skills and boost self-confidence, positively impacting students' self-perception and self-esteem.

Program Validation:

The developed program was presented to a panel of 11 validators, comprising faculty members from Saudi universities and educators from the Ministry of Education (Appendix 5). The validators commended the program's scientific and educational rigor. Some suggested minor revisions, which the researcher diligently implemented.

Training Program Objectives:

The training program aims to achieve the following:

Primary Objectives: Self-Awareness:

- Define the concept of self-awareness.

- Differentiate between various forms and aspects of self-awareness.
- Explain the relationship between self-awareness and learners' mental health.

Personal Qualities and the Distinction between Positives and Negatives:

- Identify personal qualities.
- Distinguish between positive and negative aspects of learners' personalities.
- Learn how to develop a positive self-concept.

Emotions and Accompanying Feelings:

- Describe the feelings associated with emotions.
- Express emotions.
- Evaluate one's own emotional state.

Secondary Program Objectives:

Upon completion of the program's sessions, learners will, God willing, be able to:

- **Have a strong sense of self.**
- **Possess high self-confidence most of the time.**
- **Have a realistic self-appraisal.**
- **Seek self-improvement through continuous learning.**
- **Respond confidently to criticism.**
- **Clearly articulate their abilities and potential.**
- **Identify their strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Acknowledge their personal flaws.**
- **Confront their shortcomings.**
- **Recognize changes in their mood.**
- **Describe their mood.**
- **Communicate the reasons for their anger to others.**
- **Express their opinions, even if they differ from others.**
- **Recognize their emotions, even in challenging situations.**
- **Distinguish between different emotions clearly.**

Theoretical Framework of the Program:

The program's theoretical foundation is rooted in:

1. **Psychological Educational Philosophy:** This is based on the principle of assisting individuals in developing their cognitive and emotional capacities to foster personal fulfillment and a deeper understanding of the world, thereby enriching their lives (Osman, 2000).
2. **The Developmental Nature of Self-Awareness:** This concept posits that self-awareness can be developed and enhanced through learning and education (Abd El-Ghaffar, 2003). Additionally, emotional education aims to teach children skills in understanding emotions, human relationships, and communication.

Sources for Program Development:

The program's development relied on the following sources:

1. **Previous studies and psychological and applied procedural literature** related to self-awareness and its development (Bedewi, 2009; Bahery, 2007; Proba, 2003; Shapiro, 2001; Goleman, 2000; Al-Sharqasy, 2014).
2. **Strategies and techniques used in the program:** These include positive reinforcement, role-playing,

modeling, role-taking, dialogue and discussion, encouragement, storytelling, group participation, and interactive exercises and assignments.

In light of the above, the researcher conducted 11 group sessions, one per week over the course of a semester, each session lasting 50 minutes.

Results and Interpretation:

The first hypothesis stated: "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups on the post-test of the reading skills and self-confidence scale."

To verify the first hypothesis, the researcher used the Mann-Whitney U test to determine the differences between the mean ranks of the experimental and control groups on the post-test of the reading skills and self-confidence scale. The following table presents the results of the first hypothesis.

Table 2: Z-value between the mean ranks of the control and experimental groups on the post-test of the reading skills and self-confidence scale (n=15)

Variables	Group	Sample size	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Z
Reading skills and confidence	control	15	9.07	136.00	4.079**
	Experimental	15	21.93	329.00	

(*) Significant at 0.05 (**) Significant at 0.01

The analysis of the results in the preceding table indicates that the first hypothesis was supported. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed a significant difference in the mean ranks between the experimental and control groups in the post-test of reading skills and confidence development at the 0.01 level. Considering the mean scores of both groups, it is evident that the differences favor the experimental group. The following table presents the mean scores and standard deviations for both groups.

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the control and experimental groups in the post-test of reading skills and confidence (n=15).

Variables	Group	Sample size	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
reading skills and confidence	control	15	36.53	1.30
	Experimental	15	39.33	1.63

The preceding table reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group in the post-test of knowledge awareness skills. This finding suggests that the training program was effective in developing reading skills and self-confidence among individuals with Reading disabilities in the experimental group. This result aligns with previous studies that have concluded the effectiveness of training and enrichment programs in developing reading skills and self-confidence as a key personal competence, considered one of the fundamental emotional intelligence competencies (Bahri, 2007; Abdeen, 2007; Al-Kafouri, 2007; Bedewi, 2011; Al-Obaidi & Suhail, 2012; Haiba et al., 2013; Bedewi, 2013; Al-Sharki, 2014).

The researcher believes that the current findings can be attributed to the fact that structured training programs designed to achieve a set of goals within a framework of training sessions that include various activities to develop specific skills in individuals with or without learning difficulties often result in improvements in these skills.

This is what occurred in the current study, which focused on developing reading skills and self-confidence through training sessions composed of emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence skills. This resulted in an improvement in these skills, as indicated by the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test of self-awareness skills.

Undoubtedly, developing these skills in individuals with learning difficulties can contribute to their recognition of both the positive and negative aspects of themselves. Bedewi (2013) indicated that developing reading skills and self-confidence helps individuals with learning difficulties to recognize their emotions, their effects, and the feelings they experience. It also helps them recognize the connection between their feelings, thoughts, and words, as well as their awareness of their values and goals, and how their emotions affect their performance. Furthermore, their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses makes them more conscious of the possibility of enhancing their strengths and reducing their weaknesses, enabling them to present themselves confidently and proudly to others, express their opinions, and defend them.

The second hypothesis states: "There is a significant difference between the mean ranks of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale, in favor of the post-test."

To verify the second hypothesis, the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to identify the differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale. The following table presents the results of the second hypothesis.

Table 4 shows the differences between the mean ranks of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group on the reading skills and confidence development scale (n=15).

Variables	measuring	rank	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Z
reading skills and confidence	Pre- Post	Negative Ranks	7,25	14.5	2.194*
		Positive Ranks	6.94	76.5	

(*) Significant at 0.05 (**) Significant at 0.01

The analysis of the preceding table indicates that the second hypothesis was supported. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a significant difference between the mean ranks of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale at the 0.05 level of significance. Considering the mean scores of the experimental group in both the pre-test and post-test, it is evident that the differences favor the post-test. The following table presents the

mean scores and standard deviations for both the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group on the reading skills and confidence development scale.

Table 5 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale (n=15).

Variables	measuring	Sample size	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
reading skills and confidence	pre	15	38.20	1.30
	post	15	39.33	1.63

As evident from the preceding table, the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test is higher than that of the same group in the pre-test on the reading skills and confidence development scale. This finding indicates the effectiveness of the training program in enhancing reading skills and self-confidence among individuals with Reading disabilities in the experimental group. This result is consistent with previous studies that have concluded the effectiveness of training programs in developing reading skills and self-confidence among individuals with learning difficulties (Al-Kafouri, 2007; Bedewi, 2011; Al-Sharki, 2014).

This indicates that individuals with learning difficulties in the experimental group achieved significant improvements in self-awareness. From the researcher's perspective, this is attributed to the impact of the training program. Through the program's sessions and activities, students acquired a set of sub-skills that enhance their reading skills and self-confidence. Among these skills is emotional awareness, which helped them, recognize their emotions, their effects, and the feelings they experience. It also enabled them to understand the connection between their feelings, thoughts, and words, and increased their awareness of their values and goals.

The program's sessions and activities also helped individuals in the experimental group acquire the skill of accurate self-assessment. This skill enabled them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, making them more aware of them, more able to benefit from their life experiences, more receptive to others' criticism and guidance, and more conscious of what benefits them and has a positive impact on them. Additionally, it helped them acquire self-confidence, enabling them to feel good about themselves and be proud of themselves, appreciate themselves, and recognize their abilities. As a result, they became capable of presenting themselves confidently and proudly to others, expressing their opinions and conveying them to others, defending them, and making

The third hypothesis states: "There is no significant difference between the mean ranks of the control group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale."

To verify the third hypothesis, the researcher used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to identify the differences between the mean ranks of the control group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale. The following table presents the results of the third hypothesis.

Table 6 shows the differences between the mean ranks of the pre-test and post-test of the control group on the reading skills and confidence development scale (n=15).decisions in difficult situations.

Variables	measuring	rank	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Z
reading skills and confidence	Pre- Post	Negative Ranks	7,35	59.00	1.597*
		Positive Ranks	4.75	19.00	

(*) Significant at 0.05

(**) Significant at 0.01

The analysis of the preceding table supports the third hypothesis. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed no significant difference between the mean ranks of the control group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale. Moreover, considering the mean scores of the control group in both the pre-test and post-test, it is evident that there is no significant difference between the means. The following table presents the mean scores and standard deviations for both the pre-test and post-test of the control group on the reading skills and confidence development scale.

Table 7 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the control group in the pre-test and post-test of the reading skills and confidence development scale (n=15).

Variables	measuring	Sample size	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
reading skills and confidence	pre	15	37.33	1.35
	post	15	36.53	1.30

The previous table indicates that the mean score of the control group in the post-test is approximately equal to that of the same group in the pre-test on the reading skills and confidence development scale. Additionally, the results of the difference between the mean ranks of the two tests indicate no significant difference between the mean ranks of the pre-test and post-test of the control group on the self-awareness scale. This result suggests that the reading skills and confidence of individuals with Reading disabilities in the control group did not change significantly between the pre-test and post-test due to the lack of

exposure to the program. This finding further confirms the effectiveness of the training program in enhancing the reading skills and self-confidence of the experimental group.

Recommendations:

- Train specialized teachers to identify students with Reading disabilities early.
- Encourage teachers to use teaching strategies specifically designed for students with Reading disabilities.
- Encourage teachers to motivate students with learning difficulties to express themselves, their feelings, and their emotions.
- Conduct guidance programs to raise awareness among parents and teachers about how to deal with students with Reading disabilities.
- Involve students with learning difficulties in social, sports, and recreational activities that support their self-confidence and allow them to express their feelings.
- Include activities in the curricula for students with learning difficulties aimed at developing reading skills and self-confidence.
- Encourage media outlets to provide specialized programs that focus on students with Reading disabilities, providing educational and guidance information on how to care for and interact with this group.

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