

Teacher's Perceptions Toward the Implementation of the Three-Semester Academic Calendar on Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

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Teacher's Perceptions Toward the Implementation of the Three-Semester Academic Calendar on Students with Specific Learning Disabilities

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Abstract:

Recently, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia implemented a new academic calendar that involves three semesters instead of two semesters in one academic year. This change is considered a new trend since the establishment of the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The aim of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions toward the impact of implementing the three-semester on students with learning disabilities as a new practice. Descriptive analysis was used to identify teachers' responses of students with special needs during the new period of the academic calendar. Results showed that there were statistically significant differences in many aspects of students, including academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the experience variable. The differences were in favor of experience of less than 5 years. The study showed that there were statistically significant differences in many aspects of students, including academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the gender variable. The differences were in favor of females. The results were similar regarding readiness and classroom happiness for students with learning disabilities, meaning that participants rated their choices as having a moderate effect on the three-class system. The study included limitations and recommendations for the future.

Keywords: Specific learning disabilities, academic outcomes, social skills, three-semester calendar.

تصورات المعلمين نحو تطبيق التقويم الدراسي المكون من ثلاثة فصول دراسية على الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم

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المستخلص:

قامت وزارة التعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية مؤخراً بتطبيق تقويماً أكاديمياً جديداً يضيف فصلاً دراسياً إضافياً ليصبح ثلاثة فصول بدلاً من فصلين دراسيين. يعتبر هذا التغيير توجه جديداً بنظام التعليم العام في المملكة العربية السعودية. هدفت هذه الدراسة لقياس تصورات المعلمين تجاه نظام الفصول الدراسية الجديد والذي يشتمل على فصل إضافي جديد بمدة أطول. أصبح معلمي الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم الآن يقومون بتدريس طلابهم بنظام دراسي جديد مكون من ثلاثة فصول دراسية بالسنة. تم استخدام التحليل الوصفي للتعرف على استجابات معلمي الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم خلال الفترة الجديدة من التقويم الأكاديمي. أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في الكثير من الجوانب لدى الطلاب منها المخرجات الأكاديمية والمهارات الاجتماعية والاستعداد الأكاديمي تبعاً لمتغير الخبرة؛ وجاءت الفروق لصالح الخبرة أقل من 5 سنوات. وأظهرت الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في الكثير من الجوانب لدى الطلاب منها المخرجات الأكاديمية والمهارات الاجتماعية والاستعداد الأكاديمي تبعاً لمتغير الجنس؛ وجاءت الفروق لصالح الإناث. تشابهت نتائج هذه الدراسة فيما يتعلق بالاستعداد والسعادة الصفية للطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم، مما يعني أن المشاركين صنفوا خياراتهم على أنها ذات تأثير معتدل لنظام الفصول الثلاثة. وكان للدراسة بعض القيود والتوصيات المستقبلية التي تم تضمينها بالدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: صعوبات التعلم المحددة، النتائج الأكاديمية، المهارات الاجتماعية، تقويم الثلاثة فصول الدراسية.

Introduction

Students with learning disabilities are a category of the different groups in the special education field. They have fundamental characteristics that impact their abilities to read, write, and do math. McGregor et al., (2016) stated that students with learning disabilities may not only struggle with educational outcomes, but they may also struggle with doing some simple things and tasks in their own lives. Their learning challenges can include lack of attention, reading challenges, motor skills, oral and written language issues, and information processing challenges (Cavioni, 2017). The learning challenges and difficulties for students with learning disabilities usually last with them from the beginning of their school year to the end of their school and sometimes these challenges last longer to include college phases (McGregor, 2016). Students with learning disabilities usually encounter several challenges. They went through a variety of circumstances, such as the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) (Alqahtani et al., 2022; Averett, 2022; Caton & Hatton 2022; Dobransky & Hargittai 2020; Goegan, Le, & Daniels, 2022; Kim & Fienup 2022; McDermott et al., 2022; Scherrer et al., 2022). Like the COVID-19 circumstances, teachers of students with disabilities and students with disabilities are now on new experiences for the first time.

Students with learning disabilities always need accommodations and modifications that enable them to overcome many educational challenges. These challenges may include literacy outcomes and social skills (Bulgren et al., 2013). This also means that teachers should consider different practices of strategies that ensure better improvements in outcomes for those students. Designing lessons, plans, and evidence-based strategies that meet the exceptional needs of those will require intense efforts (Wilson & Hunt, 2022). This may also include thinking about the length of the academic semester that may impact the academic outcomes and social skills of those students due to their learning barriers. There is a lack of research that investigates the impact of longer school years in different regions, including Saudi Arabia.

Some schools all over the world have implemented practices like Saudi Arabia. For example, the United States is one of the countries that applied what is called a "year-round" calendar. The year-round calendar is described as a certain calendar that enables students with disabilities to attend most of the academic year with shorter vacations (Chaika, 1999). The procedure is similar to the new Saudi calendar which may give interesting circumstances to the decision makers and future researchers about the impact of implementing a three-term calendar. Heaberlin (2000) stated that the round-year semester may have a positive impact on academic outcomes, discipline requirements, and attendance rate of students with disabilities. A case study investigated the possible consequences of

implementing the round-year system on students with learning disabilities in a high school. Different variables were investigated, including the attendance rate, discipline, and earned credits. With a mixed method design, Pfeiffer (2011) found an increase in all variables, including discipline rates, earned credits, and attendance rates. The results of this study may support the round-year calendar on its impact on students' significant outcomes. This may help decision-makers in Saudi have a better understanding of the impact of the three-term semester on students with learning disabilities.

Problem Statement

Students with learning disabilities are among the students who encounter different issues, such as learning restrictions and poor outcomes. Under the new academic calendar, teachers of students with LD will teach their students with new regulations, such as short breaks and long weekends. Until this moment, no single research was found (according to the researcher's knowledge) that investigated the impact of the three-semester calendar on students with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, including those with learning disabilities. One study investigated the impact of the extended school year on students with disabilities. Sears' (2002) study aim was to investigate how an extended school year could impact the scores of students with disabilities, such as those with autism, Asperger's syndrome, and dyslexia. The findings of the study revealed interesting differences where students who attended summer sessions showed better outcomes that included improvements in their reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. Studies that investigate the impact of extended years on students with disabilities are limited and further research is needed, especially in Saudi Arabia to help decision-makers retrieve data they may need on the new academic year procedure.

The new regulation in Saudi will include an extension of the length of the academic semesters to approximately two more months compared to the two-semester academic system. This means students with disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities will have to study for more periods of time. This new semester procedure will require researchers to assist decision-makers in gaining a better understanding of its impact.

Study objectives

This study was designed to achieve different objectives to help decision-makers and other practitioners. These various goals were established to be the main rationale for conducting this study. These goals include:

1. To fulfill the research gap that includes a lack of understanding of the perception of teachers of students with learning disabilities toward the new academic semester in Saudi Arabia.
2. To measure the impact of the new academic calendar on the academic outcomes of students with learning disabilities.

3. To measure the impact of a new academic calendar and investigate the possible impact of this new system on the social outcomes of students with learning disabilities and discover if there is a possible impact on those students.
4. To measure the impact of a new academic calendar and investigate the possible impact of this new system on the class satisfaction of the same students which includes the happiness and skills (e.g., self-efficacy) of those students.
5. To help decision-makers, teachers, practitioners, and families of students with disabilities get a better understanding of the results of this study and get an idea of the possible impact of the new semester on those students with learning difficulties.

Research Questions

The current study included research questions as follows:

- 1- What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar of the academic outcomes of students with learning disabilities?
- 2- What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar of the social outcomes of students with learning disabilities?
- 3- What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar of class satisfaction of students with learning disabilities?
- 4- Are there significant differences in the level of the teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar for students with learning disabilities and educational problems based on their variables (experience, school stages, degree, & gender?).

Research Significance

This research will help question the possible impact of three-academic semester implementation of three semesters in students with disabilities and their teachers was not studied by researchers. This study was designed as one of the rare studies that investigates the experiences, expressions, and opinions of teachers of students with disabilities as they face this experience for the first time in their lives. The researcher also aimed to gain more details about the experiences of those teachers and sought more detailed information about their feelings, expressions, and concerns through open-ended questions. The findings of this study were intended to help practitioners and teachers understand what the impact on their students with learning difficulties is and therefore help future researchers investigate deeper variables and try to find different solutions.

Research Terms

1- Learning disability

Learning disability term is described as "characterized by difficulty learning key academic skills. These skill acquisition difficulties are the results of an interaction between environmental, genetic, and epigenetic factors that negatively impact the brain's ability to process or perceive information" (Cavendish, 2013).

2- Class (school) satisfaction

Class satisfaction can be described as the feelings and expressions of students and their families toward students' schools and educational environments that help them be more productive and successful (Coelho & Dell'Agilo, 2019).

3- Academic outcomes

The Academic outcomes (achievement)s term is described as "the level of academic performance of children that indicates their accomplishments and goals that determine their academic success in different educational environments, such as schools and universities" (Ricarda et al., 2014).

4- Social skills

Social skills are defined as the communications and interactions between individuals as they help them function properly with others if those individuals are assigned social skills tasks (Little et al., 2017).

Literature Review

Academic Outcomes

The academic outcomes of students with learning challenges are the main factors that primarily get impacted when those students are placed in educational settings. As reading requires students to do more complex processing, students with learning issues usually experience more struggle than their peers without disabilities which can be estimated to be most of their population (Delaney et al., 2015). Reading issues for students with learning disabilities may also include problems with phonological awareness, breaking words into components, and other reading-relevant challenges (Khasawneh, 2021). Kirk et al. (2022) mentioned that students with learning challenges also exhibit symptoms of slow auditory perception, a deficit in distinguishing between word sounds, and a lack of understanding of words.

Math

Students with learning challenges and disabilities also struggle with doing math calculations and other math-related issues. Geary (2013) indicated that students with math challenges mostly need more intense assistance with their math problems due to the lack of knowledge and skills they have with math. Thus, students with math problems usually struggle with math calculations and reasoning which leads them to encounter issues with their mathematical thinking (Hunt & Marshall, 2012). Wheeler et al. (2014) mentioned that students with math difficulties usually encounter different errors while performing writing tasks

which eventually lead them to malfunction with various math questions and assignments. They also added that most of the math issues those students struggle with can include dealing with subtractions, addition, number facts, and incorrect algorithms. Students with learning challenges most likely struggle with math-related calculations and facts and mostly need extra help from teachers to overcome these types of issues.

Writing

Writing is one of the complex tasks that requires different skills from students such as concentration and hand gripping. It is one of the major factors that negatively impact the outcomes of students with learning disabilities. Graham et al. (2020) stated that students with learning disabilities mostly experience deficits in their written language skills. Written language is a wide term that is used to define different components including composition, spelling, and handwriting (Hallahan et al., 2020). Hallahan et al. also added that written language plays a fundamental role on students as they grow due to the assignment requirements by their schools which may add to more pressure and overwhelm, issues with fluency development, difficulty in spelling, and recognition of the mechanics of writing. Graham and Harris (2016) mentioned that students with writing challenges require different strategies and techniques that help them improve their writing skills and some of these techniques include self-recognition, self-assessment, and organization of their ideas. Due to the various writing issues, students with learning disabilities always need support and care to help them improve the necessary skills they need to develop their writing skills.

Reading

For students with learning disabilities, reading is another big challenge for many of them. Dyslexia is described as a reading disorder that impacts an individual's ability to do significant reading skills, such as difficulties in reading decoding and a lack of phonological processing and awareness (Snowling, Hilme, & Nation, 2020). Reading difficulties affect students on their recognition and comprehension of written words and certain letter sounds that make up the words which leads them eventually to be reliant on more support from parents and teachers than themselves (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2018). The American Academy of Special Education Professionals' Educator's Diagnostic Manual of Disabilities and Disorders (2007) has categorized dyslexia into various types, such as direct dyslexia, spelling dyslexia, and phonological dyslexia. Early interventions (first two grades) for students with reading difficulties should be made to help them avoid being behind their peers without reading difficulties. Like other learning difficulties, early intervention helps students with learning disabilities, including those with reading difficulties overcome many reading barriers, such as word-recognition skills, sounds, and sight words (Johnson, 2017). Math, writing, and reading are all fundamental challenges for students with learning disabilities that must require early intervention, care, and intense support for those students to overcome the symptoms those students usually face.

Academic Outcomes and Knowledge Retention

Even though the academic outcomes of students with learning disabilities are notable by teachers and parents, research still lacks enough details about the cognitive outcomes of those students (Compton et al., 2012). Academic achievements are as important to students with learning disabilities as their peers without learning challenges. Like other students, schools must be responsible for providing the appropriate and special education services for individuals with learning challenges as well as tracking their learning progress and outcomes (Darling Hammond et al., 2016). Students with disabilities, including those with learning challenges usually encounter barriers that prevent them from being able to score close or like their peers without disabilities. Hurwits, Perry, Cohin, and Skiba (2020) stated that students with disabilities usually score below average compared to their peers without disabilities which means that schools and parents need to carefully watch the progress of those students who struggle with their learning achievements. Reports showed some evidence that represented the importance of academic achievements of students with disabilities which indicated that students with disabilities are behind their peers on reading, writing, and math assessments which led researchers to call for more intense interventions and acre from schools to increase the academic and behavioral outcomes of those students (Gilmour, Fuchs, & Wehby, 2018).

Three Academic Semester System in Saudi Arabia

The Saudi K-12 educational system was designed to be two major semesters in the year. In the academic year of 2021-2022, a new switch was applied for the first time in the Saudi educational system history and that change included adding a new semester. According to the Saudi Developed Studying Plans Handbook (2021), numerous changes were made to major factors. The field of special education (elementary, middle, & and secondary) degrees were included in the change of semesters as well. The handbook mentioned that students with learning disabilities were included in the new semester which meant that every semester would take 13 weeks to finish. This new revision of the Saudi education system would leave researchers to investigate the possible consequences that would emerge for the students and their families and teachers.

Method

Research Design

This study was designed using a quantitative survey method to examine the experiences of teachers with this new academic semester system (Creswell, 2018). Participants of this study were recruited using a common communication method through the WhatsApp application and Twitter (X). Due to the lack of email usage in Saudi Arabia, the survey link was created and assured to be valid and then sent to all WhatsApp and X users and highly encouraged to share the link with all teachers of children with LD. The introduction page of the link contains a detailed description of the study purpose, audience type, and other related details. The first

question included an inquiry about whether the teachers were dealing with students with LD or not. If not, the participant will be immediately excluded. A follow-up with every WhatsApp and X user was done to ensure that they resend the link to as many users as possible. The researcher also made multiple visits to centers and schools that provide services and inclusive education to children with LD. Different lists of contact numbers of children with LD were obtained and saved in the researcher's cell phone. The researcher then sent the link to every participant's name on the lists to ensure the maximum spread of the link and an increase in the study participants. Demographic data were included in the participant's details.

Participants Recruitments

The questionnaire was created using (Google Forms) and it was distributed via email and social networking sites such as Twitter and WhatsApp. 150 participants agreed to be involved in this study. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section consists of 4 questions that highlight the Demographic information of the participants. The second section consists of 22 questions inquiring about the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems.

Research Procedure

The research questionnaire was constructed and revised multiple times. First, the researcher followed a pilot study to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items. To address the possible issues of these teachers, the researcher conducted a pilot study with five teachers of children with categories of disabilities. The researcher received multiple pieces of feedback that included, revisions, editing, changing some questions, and reformulating some sentences. The main purpose of that pilot study was to ensure a full exploration of all the views and issues of participants and validate whether the items of the questionnaire were valid and reliable or not. Final analysis and more actions were done based on the pilot study results. After this phase, all items of the questionnaire were revised and edited to be valid and reliable. The questionnaire was constructed and launched. It was sent to the participants. The survey was left open for participants for four months. Both pilot and regular studies were under consent where every participant was assured that he/she understood every detail and ensured that they comprehended the conditions of the participants in this study.

The whole items of this survey ensured to be relevant to the opinions of the participants toward the three-term experience with their children with LD. Subscales were designed to question participants to rate on the Five-Likert scale. The Likert scale included strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree.

Survey Domains

Student's Outcomes

Academic outcomes of students serve as one domain of this teacher's survey. Teachers' perceptions of the overall achievement of students included reading, math, and writing outcomes as they may be affected by the semester length. The overall outcomes cover how the outcomes of those students with disabilities positively or negatively get impacted and whether the extra months impact them or not. To measure teacher's perceptions, multiple survey items questioned teachers about the overall academic achievements of their children with disabilities and whether those children struggled with the input during these long academic year semesters. Math, reading, and writing were included in the items of the questionnaire.

Social Skills

Social skills were another domain that was measured in the quantitative survey. Teachers were questioned about their perceptions of examples of social skills that students with LD struggle with the most. This survey part focused on teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar year on children with LD compared to the previous two semesters. Questionnaire items on social skills included effective communication with others, clear expression of needs, emotional disturbance, and display of good manners.

Class (School) Satisfaction

Class satisfaction is another domain that was included in teacher's perceptions of this study. Different items were included to investigate teachers' perceptions toward class satisfaction of students with LD during the three-semester academic year. The class satisfaction included an investigation of teachers, and whether their students were satisfied with their interactions during these three semesters. Another aspect was self-skills, such as self-efficiency and self-awareness. Academic engagement and self-awareness were also examples of the items designed in the survey. Aspects of learning and class satisfaction were connected to the questionnaire to ensure the investigation of the possible effects that may impact students with disabilities in this long academic year.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used in this research to demonstrate and describe the data of participant's responses. Data were analyzed using SPSS (v. 26). Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the questionnaire questions.

Demographic Information

The demographic section of the questionnaire was composed of four questions; (i) Experience teaching; (ii) School stage, (iii) Gender; (iv) Degree. These questions were analyzed through SPSS to study their statistics and frequencies. The table below shows the Frequencies and percentage of the Demographic sample characteristics.

Table 1
Showing the study sample and its characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent %
Experience teaching	Five years or less	52	34.7
	Years 6 – 10	19	12.7
	Years 15 - 11	32	21.3
	More than 15 years	47	31.3
School stage	elementary school	78	52.0
	secondary school	23	15.3
	kindergarten	49	32.7
Gender	Male	64	42.7
	female	86	57.3
Degree	bachelor's	126	84.0
	Master's degree	11	7.3
	PhD	13	8.7
	Total	150	100.0

Validity:

The constructed validity: To examine the constructed validity of the scale, the researcher calculated a coefficient of Pearson's correlation between the grades of each item with the overall grade of the scale. table shows the results of this procedure.

Table 2
shows the coefficients of Pearson's associations of the items with each other in the overall scale grade

N	Correlation	N	Correlation	N	Correlation
1	1	9	.711**	17	.228
2	.785**	10	.582**	18	.437**
3	.690**	11	.655**	19	.580**
4	.673**	12	.621**	20	.525**
5	.653**	13	.690**	21	.389**
6	.612**	14	.622**	22	.334*
7	.538**	15	.631**		
8	.656**	16	.509**		

**Correlation is significant at (0.01) level.

*Correlation is significant at (0.05) level.

It is clear from Table (2): which shows the correlation of the scale items with each other, and the overall scale of the scale is excellent, as the correlation coefficients of all items are strong, and with a statistical significance (0.01) level.

Results

Reliability Results

Table 3
Shows that the result of reliability statistics

axis	Correlation Between Forms	split-half reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
<i>academic outcomes</i>	.937**	0.825	0.883	0.935	7
<i>social skills</i>	.957**	0.916	0.938	0.947	7
<i>Class satisfaction</i>	.956**	0.912	0.897	0.917	8
<i>overall</i>	.922**	.931	.968	.975	22

From the above table (3), it is noted that *academic outcomes* Cronbach's alpha coefficient was (0.935), and *social skills* Cronbach's alpha coefficient was (0.947). and *class satisfaction* Cronbach's alpha coefficient was (0.917). and overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was (.975).

Split-half reliability technique was used to examine the internal consistency. The coloration between the two halves was (.968), which reflects (.931) with correlation between forms of (.922).

Means and standard deviations were assessed for each construct and related items, Items were then ranked in descending order according to the following scale:

Low	0 -2.33
Moderate	2.34 – 3.67
High	3.68 – 5

What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of the three-semester calendar on the academic outcomes of students with learning disabilities?

Table 4

Means and standard deviations for academic outcomes

NO	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Importance level
1	I feel that my students with disabilities have increased their enthusiasm for the lesson throughout the three-semester system	2.20	1.37	6	Low
2	I feel that my students' self-confidence has increased during the three-semester system	2.33	1.28	5	Low
3	I felt that my students became more involved in class activities during the three-semester system	2.37	1.32	4	moderate
4	I found that my students enjoyed the class throughout their attendance in all three classes	2.18	1.27	7	Low
5	I felt that reading gains improved while my students studied in the three-semester system	2.71	1.30	1	moderate
6	I felt that writing gains improved while my students studied in the three-semester system	2.67	1.28	2	moderate
7	I felt that mathematics gains improved while my students studied in the three-semester system	2.65	1.25	3	moderate
	OVERALL	2.44	1.10	-	moderate

Based on table (4) which presents the values of means and standard deviations for Academic outcomes items, it can be noticed that statement number (5) "reading" recorded a moderate level mean value among the statements being rated by the study sample, thus was ranked first with a mean of (2.71), while statement number (4) "I found that my students enjoyed the class throughout their

attendance in all three classes" was ranked last with a mean of (2.18). The overall assessment of this variable was rated by a mean of (2.44), suggesting a moderate level of agreement in the study sample.

What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of the three-semester calendar on the social skills of students with learning disabilities?

Table 5

Means and standard deviations for social skills.

NO	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Importance level
1	I feel that my students have improved in their emotional management skills (such as anger regulation, behavior regulation, and reaction control)	2.68	1.35	7	moderate
2	I feel that my students have improved in their emotional management skills (such as anger regulation, behavior regulation, and reaction control)	2.71	1.32	5	moderate
3	Social competence skills increased among my students during their interaction with their peers (for example: peer acceptance)	2.73	1.24	4	moderate
4	I found that my students' social outcomes improved during the three-year period (such as awareness of body language, appropriate responses, gestures, and speech)	2.70	1.21	5	moderate
5	I feel like my students have improved in basic social skills	2.86	1.28	1	moderate
6	I feel that my students have improved in emotional skills (such as: understanding oneself, understanding others, and feeling the feelings of others)	2.79	1.27	3	moderate
7	He felt that my students improved in complex social skills such as Appropriateness, self-monitoring, understanding societal norms, and determining appropriate behavior for different social situations	2.81	1.20	2	moderate
	OVERALL	2.75	1.11	-	moderate

Based on Table (5) which presents the values of means and standard deviations for social skills items, it can be noticed that statement number (5) "I feel like my students have improved in basic social skills" recorded the moderate level mean value among the statements being rated by the study sample, thus was ranked first with a mean of (2.86), while statement number (1) "I feel that my students have improved in their emotional management skills (such as anger regulation, behavior regulation, and reaction control)" was ranked last with a mean of (2.68). The overall assessment of this variable was rated by a mean of (2.75), suggesting a moderate level of agreement in the study sample.

What is the level of the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of the three-semester calendar on the classroom satisfaction of students with learning disabilities?

Table 6

Means and standard deviations for classroom satisfaction.

NO	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank	Importance level
1	I felt that my students were happy most of the days in the three-term system	2.37	1.26	8	moderate
2	I observed little to no bullying behavior from or toward my students during most of the three-semester days	2.47	1.21	7	moderate
3	I felt that my students often asked for help when they needed it from me and other teachers	3.21	1.30	1	moderate
4	I felt that my students did not hesitate to ask questions most of the time during the three semester days	3.11	1.28	2	moderate
5	I found my students sharing their stories outside and inside the school for most of the school year in the three-quarter system	2.91	1.28	3	moderate
6	I felt that my students were making significant progress in adapting to the school and classroom environment	2.84	1.23	4	moderate
7	I felt that the students adapted as they moved to and from home for most of the three-term days	2.65	1.25	5	moderate
8	I noticed little or no aggressive behavior towards my students on most days of the school year in the three semesters	2.59	1.33	6	moderate
	OVERALL	2.77	1.01	-	moderate

Based on table (6) which presents the values of means and standard deviations for *classroom readiness* items, it can be noticed that statement number (3) "I felt that my students often asked for help when they needed it from me and other teachers" recorded the moderate level mean value among the statements being rated by the study sample, thus was ranked first with a mean of (3.21), while statement number (8) "I noticed little or no aggressive behavior towards my students on most days of the school year in the three semesters" was ranked last with a mean of (2.37). The overall assessment of this variable was rated by a mean of (2.77), suggesting a moderate level of agreement among the study participants.

Are there significant differences in the level of the teachers' perceptions of the three-semester calendar for students with learning disabilities and educational problems based on their variables (experience, school stages, degree, and gender?).

To start with the experience, school stages, and degree, the means, and standard deviations of the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to the variables (experience, school stages, and degree). Table (7) that shows the following:

Table 7

means and standard deviations of the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to the variables (experience, school stages, and degree)

variables	category	means	standard deviations
experience	Five years or less	3.40	0.75
	Years 6 – 10	2.48	0.75
	Years 1 - 11	2.44	1.05
	More than 15 years	2.07	0.85
degree	bachelor's	2.67	1.01
	Master's degree	2.99	1.03
	PhD	2.32	1.03
school stages	elementary school	2.72	1.02
	secondary school	2.30	1.14
	kindergarten	2.64	0.95

Table (6) shows an apparent variance in the means and standard deviations for the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to the variables (experience, school stages, and degree), and to show the significance of the statistical differences between the arithmetic averages, a One Way-ANOVA analysis of variance was used, a table (8) that shows this.

Table 8

ANOVA-test result to know statistical differences based on experience, school stages, and degree

teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
experience	Between Groups	47.440	3	15.813	21.731	0.000
	Within Groups	106.240	146	0.728		
	Total	153.680	149			
degree	Between Groups	2.706	2	1.353	1.318	0.271
	Within Groups	150.974	147	1.027		
	Total	153.680	149			
school stages	Between Groups	2.556	2	1.278	1.255	0.288
	Within Groups	144.583	142	1.018		
	Total	147.139	144			

Table (8) shows statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to experience. Table 8 shows Scheffe's post-hoc test which shows which are statistically significantly different according to experience.

Table (8) shows statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to degree.

Table (8) shows statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to school stages.

Table 9

Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons

Preschool type	Mean	Five years or less	Years 6 – 10	Years 15 - 11	More than 15 years
Five years or less	3.40	-	0.001	0.000	0.000
Years 6 – 10	2.48		-	0.999	0.375
Years 15 - 11	2.44			-	0.307
More than 15 years	2.07				-

Table (9) shows differences in the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems there is a significant difference in the mean value between those who (five years or less) and (Years 6 – 10) and in favor to those who (five years or less). There is a significant difference in the mean value between those who (five years or less) and (years 15 - 11) and in favor of those who have (five years or less). there is a significant difference in the mean value between those who (five years or less) and (more than 15 years) and in favor of those who (five years or less).

To verify the impact of gender, the researcher used the independent-samples T-test, showing the results shown in the table below:

Table: 10

result of independent-sample test to find statistical differences in the level of the teachers' perceptions based on study variables (gender)

Group Statistics		N	Mean	.St deviation	t	df	Sig
Gender	Male	64	2.33	0.88	-3.528	148	0.001
	Female	86	2.90	1.05			

Table (10) above shows that there is statistical significance at level (0.00). the teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems based on their gender. The differences were in favor of females.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions toward the impact of implementing the three-semester on students with learning disabilities as a new practice. Descriptive analysis was used to identify teachers' responses of students with special needs during the new period of the academic calendar. Statistical significance differences were found in many aspects of students, including academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the experience variable. The differences were in favor of experience of less than 5 years. Findings also revealed a statistical significance in various aspects of

students, covering academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the gender variable. The differences were found to be in favor of females. A similarity regarding readiness and classroom happiness for students with learning disabilities was found, meaning that participants rated their choices as having a moderate effect on the three-class system.

For the academic outcomes, the values of means and standard deviation were on the moderate level according to the scale rating by teachers. Statement number "1" recorded a mean of (2.71). However, statement number "4" "I found that my students enjoyed the class throughout their attendance in all three classes" was ranked to be the last one last with a mean of (2.18). The findings revealed an overall statement showing an assessment of different variables that reported a mean of (2.44), resulting in a moderate level of agreement among teachers.

Table 11

ANOVA-test result to know statistical differences based on experience, school stages, and degree

teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
experience	Between Groups	47.440	3	15.813	21.731	0.000
	Within Groups	106.240	146	0.728		
	Total	153.680	149			
degree	Between Groups	2.706	2	1.353	1.318	0.271
	Within Groups	150.974	147	1.027		
	Total	153.680	149			
school stages	Between Groups	2.556	2	1.278	1.255	0.288
	Within Groups	144.583	142	1.018		
	Total	147.139	144			

As shown in the table below, a statistical significance difference was found in teachers' perceptions of the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to their experience. Scheffe's post-hoc test showed a statistical significance on the experience of teachers. Finally, it was found that there was a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of teachers toward the potential impact of three classes for students with learning disabilities and educational problems according to degree.

Research Limitation

One limitation of this study included a small sample of participants. This study recorded 150 participants and future studies may expand to cover more than this number and thousands of participants should be involved to have a bigger idea of how three semesters impacted students with disabilities. Another limitation includes measuring the possible impact of the semester system on private-sector schools. Future investigations of private schools can have different results that expand the knowledge of how these semesters may positively impact the learning process of students with learning disabilities. The third limitation

includes replicating this study with different research methods which can be a qualitative design.

The fourth limitation is that it is recommended to target families of students with disabilities. Involving families of students with learning or other disabilities can be an effective design that helps gain more details and help both researchers and schools understand the possible effects of three semesters which would also include the possible hopes and concerns that they want to express.

Conclusion

This study was designed to examine the perceptions of teachers of the three academic semester system on students with LD. Surveying over a hundred teachers showed that there were statistically significant differences in many aspects of students, including academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the experience variable. The differences were in favor of experience of less than 5 years. The study showed that there were statistically significant differences in many aspects of students, including academic outcomes, social skills, and academic readiness, according to the gender variable.

The differences were in favor of females. The results were similar regarding readiness and classroom happiness for students with learning disabilities, meaning that participants rated their choices as having a moderate effect on the three-class system. The findings of this study may attract and motivate future research and decision-makers to examine the possible positive effect of extended year semesters. The study had some limitations and future recommendations, such as sample size and instigation of private sector schools.

Future Recommendations

After the findings of this study, it is recommended for future research to interview and observe teachers and students to help future researchers have more details and a deep understanding of this new system. The results of this study will encourage future researchers to grant a chance to hear from different teachers which may provide better details for decision-makers and help teachers understand the improvements and feelings of their students, especially their academic and social outcomes.

It is also recommended for future research to involve some families of students with learning or other disabilities. This procedure can be an effective design that helps future researchers gain more details and help both researchers and schools understand the possible effects of three semesters which would also include listening to their voices as other studies supported the extension of the school year and showed positive findings that included improvements on student's outcomes and attendance rates.

Another recommendation includes that future research may target different categories of disability. The special education field includes various categories of disabilities. Investigating another category may help researchers gain a better understanding of the academic or social impact on students with exceptional

needs. This also may emerge different aspects of how the three-semester calendar affects students with disabilities, especially in their learning outcomes. Investigating other disabilities may support the current findings of other studies that showed positive outcomes of similar students with similar disabilities who encountered learning disabilities.

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