

The Role of the School Counselor in Diagnosing the Aggressive Behavior and Learning Disabilities: A Case Study in Algeria

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Abstract

The observation is among the primary methods and tools used for data collection as it provides the researchers with the opportunity of doing so when the data are generated in the real world, and of being part of the process as participant observers. In this line, the researcher records what he notices. Therefore, the observation is most of the time related to the qualitative research and data. Nevertheless, at the simple level, the quantitative indices are a form of the observation. It is better to link the observation with the quantitative research design as well. This study aims at contributing to the understanding of the observation in the scientific research due to the low use of this technique in the educational and psychological scientific research. Thus, the researcher carried out a theoretical reading to this tool and used the clinical method through presenting a practical model of the observation as a technique in diagnosing the psychological and educational issues in the school milieu. In this context, we studied a case that shows aggressive behaviors and relied on other tools that help diagnosis such as Harris Good-Enough test of man drawing, and the scale of measuring learning disabilities made by Maamria Bashir in 2005. Findings show the efficiency of the observation in diagnosing the problem of the aggressive behavior in the school milieu. Based on the results, we provided a set of recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: Observation; Diagnosis; Behaviorism; Learning Disabilities; Aggressive Behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

The scientific methodology is a set of rules and measures used in the scientific research. The scientists look for new styles and methods to watch, reason, generalize, and analyze. In this context, the method is a set of organized steps used by the researcher in treating the studied topics until reaching a specific result. The observation is one of the important techniques for data collection. It had been used in the past and is still being used now in research. In this regard, the civilized peoples resorted to it to collect data about things and the surrounding situations to understand the life phenomena and issues.

Because the human behavior is the result of feelings and diverse factors inside and outside the human, it is difficult to find one comprehensive method in studying the human behavior. Consequently, there are many tools such as the direct questions, the referenda the interview, etc. these techniques have different measuring abilities because the tool that may measure a specific point may not measure another. Besides, these tools focus on the apparent human behavior. On the other hand, measuring the internal behavior is difficult due to many obstacles. Besides, each tool has its pros and cons that are directly related to the design. The results of Trabelsi (2017) that aimed at tracing the trends of the researchers in using the observation showed that 62% of the informants avoid using the observation due their negative perceptions to this technique and lack of knowledge on how to use it. Besides, 10% avoid it because it does not suit their social and human fields. Finally, only 07% use this technique in their researches.

Most of the children suffer behavioral issues such as the aggressive behavior in their childhood. This behavior is widespread now and is noticed mainly in the middle and late childhood in primary schools. This behavior manifests in actions and speech. In this line, the aggressive conflicts start appearing in the early childhood and develop gradually later. This behavior is a negative reaction or response against the self or the others in order to hurt them. In addition, it may be against the properties and the things. Furthermore, it takes the form of an individual aggression against the individuals, communities, and things or collective aggression where the group aims at hurting other groups or individuals. The aggression may be physical against the self or the others through beating, pushing, biting and breaking, or verbal through insults to hurt or intimidate others. (Al Adidan, 2009)

The aggressive behavior is the outcome of the physical factors, functional deficit in one of the senses, or nervous weakness when controlling the self. Therefore, the behavior can be considered as a retaliation from the surroundings. In the same line, the aggressive behavior may manifest in the road from home to school and during puberty, it can be the consequence of the spoiling familial atmosphere that teaches the child to achieve his desires through anger and screaming. Besides, the feeling of rejection by the family makes the child adopt aggressive attitudes to draw attention. Another cause is the depression that results from being attacked by another and the will of showing off his force mainly after watching aggressive TV shows. To conclude with the causes, the behavior may be the offshoot of the being marginalized by the teachers; thus, the student works to attract the attention of his mates and teacher and be a hero in front of them. (Kahlour, 2014)

Based on what has been said, this study aims at showing the scientific and methodological sides of the observation and its applications in the educational and scientific research through studying a case and presenting a practical model for the observation grid that aims at shedding light on the aggressive behavior of a 1st year student at the middle school.

A scientific method focuses on the aspects of the personality in happy, sad collective or individual life situations to study the patterns of the social interaction in different

occasions. It rids the informants from the stress that accompanies the tests since the remarks are meant for a conscious knowledge of factors to record the changes. In addition, the observation answers the questions and examines the validity of the hypotheses. (Chaker, 2006)

In addition, the observation is a scientific tool that collects information to help the researcher answer the research questions and test its hypotheses. It means the conscious attention towards an individual or collective behavior to monitor it and record its changes so that the researcher manages to describe analyze, and evaluate it. (Al- Assaf, 1990)

The observation is an important method used for data collection in sociology. It helps collect the indices of the real behaviors and some real life situations, trends, and feelings. Besides, it helps in the situations where the informants refuse answering the questions mainly when attempting to collect data about children behaviors, feelings, and inclinations; or in case the informants refuse cooperation with the researcher through not giving information. (Fahmy, 2001)

Direct and indirect for example, when the researcher observes a number of students who dropped out of school or those with aggressive behavior, we call this a direct observation. On the other hand, if he studies their files and the reports made by the teachers he makes an indirect observation. (Abbas et al., 2007)

Limited and unlimited observation, when the researcher has a pre-perception about the type of information or behavior he observes, the observation is limited. On the other hand, if he makes a survey to know the status-quo to collect data, this is an unlimited observation. (Abbas et al., 2007)

Observation with participation and observation without participation, an observation without participation is when the researcher observes through watching and monitoring. However, the observation with participation is when the researcher observes individuals he teaches when applying the activities they make. Thus, he lives the event as a member within the group he observes. (Abbas et al., 2007)

The voluntary observation and the involuntary observation, the voluntary observation is when the researcher makes a purposeful communication with a specific situation or individuals to record specific situations, while the involuntary observation is when the researcher observes a specific behavior at random. (Abbas et al., 2007)

While applying observation, some researchers may find some of difficulties in applying the observation tool, including: It is difficult to observe some phenomena and problems such as the sexual behavior. Therefore, it is better to use other tools such as the interview or the questionnaire. The wrong perception of the people's behavior may lead to bias. The researcher needs a long time to collect data. (Abdul Momen, 2008). The unexpected reaction happens because the informants know they are being observed. The complexity of the observation depends on the number and place of the informants. The informants show a will to change and be more committed to the general standards when the event is being recorded. The expectations of observations and feedback: the informants' expectation of behavioral change increases due to reinforcement. The feedback may affect the informants. Therefore, it is necessary not to tell them about the results expected from the treatment. (Saleh, 2013)

The data drawn from the application of the observation may take many forms such as the regularized and the irregularized ones. The analysis styles depend on the nature and shape of the collected data and may encompass qualitative and quantitative trends. In this context, the researcher may be busy treating previously calculated data; for example: how many times does the event take place? At the same time, the researcher may be busy

treating descriptive data in a bigger image. These data require interpretation as part of the analysis. Thus, the observer must write down his remarks from the views including the personal impression regarding the things he observes and the feelings he gets whenever possible. (Mathews & Ross, 2016), Observation is distinguished from other research tools by the following points: It increases the trust in the findings because the informants may not give correct data in the interviews or questionnaires. It studies some behaviors that cannot be studied with the questionnaire or the interview. It is a direct tool to study many aspects of the behavior. It depends on watching the behaviors and recording its aspects when it happens. It allows collecting data from the optimal behavioral situations and helps recognize the data that cannot be obtained by other tools. (Suleiman, 2010). It allows studying the action behavior in natural situations. This is better than measuring the verbal behavior through tests because it may differ a lot than the action behavior. (Zahran, 1982)

Learning disabilities are identified based on the discrepancies between a composite measure of IQ and academic achievement, such as mathematics achievement. That is, if students show at least a two standard deviation difference between their intelligence, indexed by an IQ test, and academic ability, indexed by an academic achievement test, the students are identified as having a learning disability. Thus, a student who exhibits unexpected learning difficulties as indicated by academic achievement far below what would be expected by the IQ score (e.g., average IQ score of 100 and below-average reading achievement score of 70) would be identified as having a learning disability, on the other hand, a student with a below-average IQ score of 85 and a below-average mathematics achievement score of 80 would not be identified as having a learning disability. (Jessica & Peng Peng, 2018)

The aggressive behavior, it refers to hurting others. A social behavior aims at achieving the will of the aggressive person regarding the domination and harming the self or the other to make up for the deprivation. It is a natural response to the depression and is acquired from the social learning. In this line, the males are more aggressive than the females as the previous studies show that the cause of the aggressive behavior is the encouragement of the old people of aggression. (Al-Hariri & Ben Rajab, 2008)

The aggressive behavior may be measure with many methods, mainly the direct observation that takes place in the house, class, or schoolyard. Besides, we can use the behavioral interview that allows additional data collection that help know the features and factors of the behavior. The interview identifies the circumstances of the behavior and the accompanying emotional aspects. Besides, we can rely on the estimations of the peers through interrogating them, such as asking: "who is the student who does not abide by the teacher's instructions inside the class? Who is the student who recurrently fights with his mate?" (Al Kamch & Al Maayta, 2009)

In this line, we define the aggressive behavior as that behavior made by the child to harm himself or the others verbally or physically, or through making noise in the class disturbing the teacher, destroying the school furniture, and disrespecting the teacher's instructions.

There are many psychological theories that explain aggressive behavior in children, but in our current research, the researcher relied to the theory of "depression", the original formulation of the frustration-aggression by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, Sears stated that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression", "What is especially in this definition is that, unlike the use of the word in

everyday language, frustration here is not understood as an emotional experience but as an "interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response". (Dollard et al., 1939)

This theory focuses on the content of the relation between the depression and the aggression. It provides that when the depression emerges, the aggression take place. In this regard, the aggressive behavior always preceded by depression. Hence, this behavior takes many forms based on the type of depression. The person may hurt himself if he considers it is the source of depression. (Dahlan, 2003)

Moreover, the theory focuses on the social aspects of the human behavior. The first shape of this theory supposed the existence of a relation between the depression and aggression as the first is the stimulus while the latter is the response. In addition, the theory provides that the depression increases the potentials of the aggressive reaction and that any aggressive reaction presupposes the existence of a depression. In this context aggression is the most prominent response to the depression. If the aggression does not find a way out, it may be against the self. (Dahlan, 2003)

METHOD

Design

This article used the clinical method because it suits the study that aims at diagnosing the case of a student who suffers symptoms of aggressive behaviors inside and outside the class in a recurrent way.

Participan

Since we are a school counsellor, we relied on the teachers' nominations because they are in direct contact with the student inside the class for a long period that starts from the morning until the afternoon. This choice was after the teachers complained of this student named (Sh- A) and because of the recurrent reports about his behavior, the noise he makes in the class, and the low academic performance; mainly that he does not master reading and writing.

Instruments

From the findings of the individual interviews with the teachers and the educational supervisors, and from the 06 counseling semi-structured interviews with the case, we noticed some indices of learning difficulties and, thus, decided to use the questionnaire designed by Pr. Maamria Bachir in 2005 that aims at figuring out the indexes of the academic learning difficulties. As a result, findings show that the student suffers high difficulties in the basic skills, namely reading, writing and arithmetics. (Maamaria, 2005)

The researcher applied "Goodenough-Harris" test, this test aims at measuring the mental ability of the child. A cognitive test evaluates various purposes. In this regard, we summoned the student, provided him with a white paper, pencil, and a rubber, and asked him to draw a person based on instructions. After a while, he submitted the paper and was thanked for commitment to the interviews and the pedagogic contract. Then, we collected and chaptered data to extract the student' IQ. As a result, findings showed a low level of IQ that indicates a simple mental delay.

Figure 1. Shows the student's man drawing



Data Analysis

The researcher must design a model that records the behavior unit when it occurs during the observation. The best method is writing the unit of the behavior and its frequency during the observation in a parallel column. After the application of the previous steps and relying on the file of the students, the record of the counseling interviews, the counselling and monitoring record and meeting the student and his parent individually, we studied the student case separately through the application of the direct observation inside the classroom with the presence of the teacher. Thus, we relied on the observation grid to monitor the aggressive behaviors of the student during the sessions of physics, mathematics, Arabic, and physical education in the first term of 2022-2023.

Table 01 shows the general information of the student and the observation grid model

General information of the student under study	
Gender	Male
Age	14
Siblings	05
Rank among siblings	3 rd
Educational level	1 st year at the middle school
Educational level of the parents	Primary education
Father job	Farmer, 50 years old
Mother job	Housewife, 46 years old
Familial atmosphere	Bad (conflicts and lack of material and moral interest in the student)
Economic situation	Low
Residence	Biskra, Algeria
School situation	Failed 03 times (twice at the primary school and one at the middle)
Seat in the classroom	In the back

Mental abilities	Simple mental delay
Academic abilities	Academic learning difficulties (reading, writing, arithmetics)

The table above shows the information related to the case study. They have been obtained from a set of measures, tests, documents, records, reports, and semi-structured interviews in the school.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. A designed model for the input grid of the observation of a case with an aggressive behavior

Dimensions of the aggressive behaviour	Indices and views		
	Behavior degree		
	0	01	02
	Behavior does not exist	Low behavior	Strong behavior
Aggressive behavior against the self	- strongly bites his nails (02) - strongly tightens his teeth (01) - continuously taps his thighs (02) - tightly and continuously wiggles his fingers (01)		
Aggressive behavior against the others	- pokes his mates with school stationery (02) - hinders his mates when they walk in the class (02) - directly spits in the face of his mates (01)		
Aggressive behavior against the things	- attempts to break the chairs (02) - digs the tables with stationery (01) - voluntarily drops the tables, chairs, and bags (01)		
Total	(15)		

The table above helps us monitor the behaviors starting from procedural indices that are among the dimensions of the aggressive behavior in the class. Then, we tick the suitable grade based on the degree of the behavior noticed. After input, we see that the frequencies are (15) and, thus, the case has aggressive behaviors. In this line, the dimension of the aggressive behavior against the things is in the 1st rank, followed by the aggressive behavior against the self, and then against the others.

The school delay of the case study manifests in his inability to keep up in pace with his mates in the school performance of the tasks inside and outside the classroom. This problem was in the student during the primary school, but with no real and practical diagnosis because the symptoms of the school delay manifest prominently during the primary education. In this context, the case suffers a slight mental delay that causes academic learning disabilities.

Besides, we attribute this result to the nature of the psychological makeup of the case. The study of Amour (2013) found out that children with academic delay make rowdy groups in the class and affect the good conduct of the educational process. This is due to the feelings of inferiority and inability to keep up in pace with their peers. Hence, they express these feelings through aggressive behaviors. This indicates the existence of a correlation between the aggressive behavior and the school delay.

From the analysis of the counselling interviews with the parent of the case, we

found hidden familial causes that caused the aggressive behavior. The factors revolve around the negative reinforcement by the parents. In this regard, the dimension of hurting the self and the others is the result of the depression felt in the familial life. According to the theory of depression, the aggressive behavior increases when the feeling of depression increases. Moreover, the deprivation of love and emotional satisfaction and the miscommunication within the family are other causes. Findings show the existence of statistically significant differences between the verbal insults by the parents and the aggressive behavior, and between the neglect and the aggressive behavior. In addition, there are statistically significant differences in the aggressive behavior for the schoolchildren on behalf of the males. Findings of Chihab (2013) show that the aggressive behavior is the most widespread in adaptive problem for the students with learning difficulties. The author justified that with the nature of the familial factors and the relationship with the parents, mainly with the mother.

CONCLUSION

In the end, we conclude that the observation is a tool that allows the researcher to record the aggressive behavior when it happens without change or falsification; as is the case in human and social sciences, and the educational psychological phenomena in particular. Besides, the tool makes the observer in contact with the scientific researches and is the most important element of the experimentation. The organized observation is a necessary tool in the pilot studies as it sheds light on the quantitative data and helps interpret them. Moreover, it is the main tool in the descriptive studies as it helps examine the causal relation between the variables as long as we pay attention to the vigilance, exactness, speed in recording the data, and the vision in deducing the causes. In light of the results obtained, the researcher presented some suggestions and recommendations: It is necessary to train the students of psychology and education sciences to use the observation to decrease the difficulties that may face them. It is necessary to pay more psychological and educational attention to the students of the middle school. It is necessary to encourage the family and teachers to show positive desired behaviors. It is necessary to raise the teachers' awareness about the importance of their role in helping the students inside the school solve their behavioral issues, such as the aggressive behavior and learning disabilities. It is necessary to care for the counselling and educational aspects in the schools through training school counsellors on the diagnosis of the educational and psychological problems. It is necessary to hold cultural and sport events to contain the students with aggressive behaviors. It is necessary to promote for the good educational communication within the activities of the listening, counselling, and monitoring committees. It is necessary to promote the extracurricular activities in the school and integrate the students in their organization and supervision. It is necessary to train the school counselors during their career on how to deal with students with behavioral and emotional troubles that may affect their academic performance.

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