

## **Behavioral Issues (Aggression - Introversions) Among Individuals with Visual Disabilities: Field Study at Visually Impaired Children School in M'sila, Algeria**

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### **Abstract:**

This investigation was designed to assess the prevalence and intensity of behavioral issues among individuals with visual impairments. Employing a descriptive methodology, the research applied a specialized behavioral issues scale to a cohort of 30 participants with visual disabilities. The findings suggest that the incidence of behavioral issues within this group in M'sila province is of a moderate level. Additionally, the analysis revealed no significant statistical differences in behavioral issues when considering variables such as gender, the nature of the disability, or its severity.

**Keywords:** Behavioral Issues, Individuals with Visual Disabilities.

### **Introduction:**

Individuals without disabilities inherently possess full rights and responsibilities that uphold their dignity and ensure a secure and stable life, empowering them to positively contribute to their communities and effectively utilize the resources available in their environment. In contrast, individuals with disabilities historically have not been afforded the same degree of focus as their able-bodied counterparts.

Disabilities have often been viewed as a cause of distress for those affected, leading to dramatic changes in their lives upon diagnosis and frequently resulting in societal ostracism. Families may respond by distancing themselves, attempting to mitigate the stigma and burden associated with the disability.

Academic and clinical interest in individuals with disabilities has increased, with significant research conducted in the fields of psychology and sociology that considers both minors and adults across dimensions of education, care, upbringing, and rehabilitation (Al-Hadidi, 2002, p. 11). Among various groups, individuals with visual

impairments have been particularly impacted by their disconnection from the societal environment.

Notably, the focus on visual impairments predates other disability studies, with the establishment of the first school for the blind in France in 1785. This demographic has garnered substantial attention and support from a range of professionals including educators, psychologists, and sociologists, unlike other disability groups (Sisalem, 1997, p. 9).

It is important to note that while some individuals with disabilities perceive their condition as a catalyst for personal development and societal contribution, others adopt a more pessimistic view. This negative outlook often stems from the necessity to navigate and understand an environment that may appear suddenly hostile and insensitive. Such perceptions can lead to feelings of vulnerability related to the disability (Hunt, 1961, p. 33).

Children with disabilities, in particular, may find it challenging to assimilate societal norms, which can lead to adverse interactions with peers and adults, causing frustration, fear, withdrawal, or even aggressive behavior. These issues typically arise at times when families are least prepared to manage or understand such behaviors, resulting in embarrassment and impeding the child's social and familial integration, ultimately cultivating dissatisfaction with their disability and life circumstances (Kef, 2002, p. 75).

Given that an individual's behavior towards themselves and their environment plays a crucial role in their social interactions, any disturbances can lead to significant disruptions. Thus, there has been growing interest among researchers and specialists in what they refer to as behavioral disorders, a relatively new field that currently receives significant attention. Although its roots are ancient, the current mode and manner of studying these disorders reflect modern opinions and trends that align with contemporary times (Al-Kasim et al., 2005, p. 5).

Behavioral disorders significantly affect the adjustment of disabled individuals with themselves and their environment, as observed in reality and supported by most studies in this field. As Shontz noted, disabilities directly impact behavior (Sulvia and Ysseldyke, 2004, p. 93). Visually impaired individuals feel a heightened sense of isolation due to their unique communication characteristics and the limitations imposed by their disability. This, coupled with dissatisfaction with their personal situations or the way they are treated, leads to some of the most significant behavioral issues faced by visually disabled individuals.

### **Research Problem:**

Despite international and local conventions reaffirming the principles of justice and equal opportunities for all members of society, and affirming that individuals with disabilities possess all fundamental rights, much like their non-disabled peers of similar age, regardless of the type or severity of their disability, significant challenges persist.

These rights include the right to education tailored to their individual needs, the right to human dignity and protection from exploitation, mistreatment, or any demeaning actions, and the right to normal development and a decent life. They are also entitled to achieve maximum autonomy, belong to, integrate into society, and live within their family units (Tawfik and Mabrouk, 2009, p. 250).

These principles have been emphasized by international and local agreements related to human rights, women's rights, and children's rights, as well as the resolutions of international conferences on education and the care of the disabled. These recommendations have been affirmed by various conferences, such as the 'Education for All' conference held in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), the Special Education conference in Salamanca, Spain (1994), and the Dakar, Senegal conference (2000).

Moreover, every educational conference held in Egypt since (1992) has reaffirmed the right to education for all and the right of disabled individuals to obtain appropriate care to integrate them into daily life situations and enable their participation in society according to their capabilities and potential (Farea, 2003, p. 2).

However, especially in Arab societies, individuals with disabilities continue to face marginalization and significant daily challenges, leading to various psychological issues, particularly behavioral problems. This is notably true for those with visual impairments, a disability sensitive due to its unique characteristics.

For instance, a study by "Al-Sabah" (1993) aimed at understanding the level of social withdrawal among visually impaired individuals in Jordan compared to other disabilities found that they ranked highest in social withdrawal, followed by individuals with intellectual and then hearing disabilities. Similarly, "Abu Fakhr" (2000) confirmed this notion in a study conducted in Damascus, Syria, finding that visually impaired individuals suffer from behavioral disorders at a rate of 58% (Khudair and Al-Biblawi, 2004, p. 212).

It is crucial not to underestimate this group or consider them a minority. According to the latest statistics from the World Health Organization (2002), there are over 161 million visually impaired individuals worldwide, including 37 million who are completely blind. Moreover, 80% of them reside in third-world countries. Thus, it is imperative to highlight this group and understand their struggles, particularly concerning behavioral issues, as these can completely destruct one's personality or corrupt their relations with others, impairing their ability to work and produce (Bouhafs, 2008, p. 275).

From this standpoint, the current study aims to identify the prominent behavioral problems among visually impaired individuals in M'sila and their relationship with various factors (severity of disability, type of disability, gender). Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following question:

- What is the level of behavioral problems experienced by visually impaired individuals in M'sila?

### **Sub-questions:**

- Are there statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the gender variable (male-female)?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the type of disability (congenital-acquired)?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the severity of the disability (total-partial)?

### **Hypotheses:**

- The level of behavioral problems experienced by visually impaired individuals in M'sila is high.

### **Sub-hypotheses:**

- There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the gender variable (male-female).
- There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the type of disability (congenital-acquired).
- There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the severity of the disability (total-partial).

### **Study Significance:**

- The focus on individuals with visual impairments has solidified into a concrete reality as scholarly attention towards their development and education for a prosperous future has increased. This study is significant as it delves into the behavioral issues that visually impaired individuals face, analyzing these issues in relation to variables such as gender, severity of impairment, and type of impairment.
- This research also holds considerable importance as it centers on a critical yet often overlooked segment of society—visually impaired individuals—who have historically been underrepresented in local educational and psychological studies.

- Additionally, this study is pivotal as it seeks to comprehend the impact of gender, severity of impairment, and type of impairment on behavioral issues among the visually impaired.
- The importance of this study is further amplified by its potential to lay the groundwork for future research aimed at decoding, interpreting, and guiding human behavior. This could enhance focus on the psychological and behavioral dimensions of visually impaired individuals, ensuring they receive the requisite attention and ongoing support.
- Expected to aid professionals working in specialized institutions, this research provides essential insights into the causes, extent of vision loss, and types of impairments, facilitating the provision of appropriate psychological and counseling services to those affected.

### **Operational Definitions:**

- **Visually Impaired Individuals:** Individuals who have experienced a complete or partial loss of sight, whether congenital (present from birth) or acquired later in life. They necessitate specialized educational and pedagogical services, as conventional teaching methods are inadequate for their needs.
- **Behavioral Issues:** Problems measured by the Behavioral Issues Questionnaire, which encompasses two dimensions: introversion and aggression.

### **Previous Studies:**

- **Study by Al-Karyouti (1988):** This research explored the impact of the severity of impairment and gender on the apparent anxiety levels among visually impaired individuals in Jordanian schools. Utilizing the Hardy Apparent Anxiety Scale with a sample of 98 participants, the findings indicated no statistically significant gender or severity-related differences in apparent anxiety among the visually impaired.
- **Study by Lindo and Nordholm (1999):** This study focused on describing coping strategies among the blind and their correlation with general health conditions. The study involved 48 blind participants and utilized the Pearson Adaptation Questionnaire. Results demonstrated a positive correlation between coping strategies and psychological stability among the blind.
- **Study by Hur, Komulainen, and Aro (1999):** Aimed at identifying differences in self-esteem and social support between blind and sighted adolescents. The sample comprised 115 individuals, revealing no significant differences in self-esteem between sighted and blind males, although blind females exhibited lower self-esteem than their sighted counterparts. No significant variations were noted

in social support and self-esteem among the blind based on the severity of impairment.

- **Study by Kleinschmidt (1999):** This investigation assessed the extent of successful adaptation to vision loss among 12 visually impaired individuals using anxiety and depression scales during interviews. Results showed that all participants were well-adapted, with a positive life outlook.
- **Study by Ibrahim (2001):** This research examined the challenges faced by blind students in Jordanian universities, considering variables such as academic specialization, severity of impairment, and gender. With a sample of 68 students, findings revealed that these students encountered moderate challenges, with no significant differences based on impairment severity, gender, or specialization.
- **Study by Robinson and Lieberman (2004):** Focused on the impact of visual impairment on self-determination across age, gender, and impairment level in New York. Involving 54 visually impaired students and utilizing the Self-Determination Scale, it was found that visually impaired individuals generally depend on others for self-determination, with a dependency rate of 43%. No gender differences were noted, though variations in self-determination were observed across different levels of impairment (complete, partial).

### **Main Study:**

In light of the pilot study and its results, the main study was designed with the aim of testing the validity of the proposed hypotheses.

### **Variables of the Main Study:**

The current study included the following variables:

#### **First: Independent Variables:**

- \_ **Gender:** This variable has two levels (male, female).
- \_ **Type of Impairment:** This variable has two levels (congenital, acquired).
- \_ **Severity of Impairment:** This variable has two levels (complete, partial).

#### **Second: Dependent Variables:**

- \_ **Behavioral Issues**

### **Main Study Methodology:**

Given the study's objective, which seeks to uncover the differences in behavioral problems among visually impaired individuals based on variables such as gender, type

of impairment, and severity of impairment, the descriptive method was employed. This method allowed for the description and understanding of the level of behavioral issues among visually impaired individuals, in addition to determining the significance of differences related to the predefined variables.

### Main Study Sample:

The final sample of the main study consisted of 30 visually impaired individuals, selected randomly, all of whom were attending the School for Visually Impaired Children in M'sila, Algeria. The table below outlines the characteristics of the main study sample:

**Table 1: Characteristics of the main study sample by gender, type of impairment, and severity of impairment.**

Individuals in the Main Study Sample	Gender		Type of Impairment		Severity of Impairment	
	Male	Female	Acquired	Congenital	Complete	Partial
30	15	15	20	10	13	17

The sample is balanced in terms of number; however, congenital impairment was more prevalent than acquired impairment. Regarding the severity of impairment, partial impairment was more common than complete impairment.

**Table 2: Percentage distribution of the main study sample by gender, type of impairment, and severity of impairment.**

Individuals in the Main Study Sample	Gender		Type of Impairment		Severity of Impairment	
	Male	Female	Acquired	Congenital	Complete	Partial
30	15	15	20	10	13	17
Percentage	%50	%50	%33	%66	%56	%43
Total	%100		%100		%100	

The table shows that congenital impairment is more common among visually impaired individuals compared to acquired impairment, and partial impairment is more prevalent than complete impairment among the visually impaired in M'sila.

### **Research Boundaries:**

Every field study operates within a defined setting that encapsulates the population of the main sample and the context in which research instruments are deployed. Moreover, an adequate timeframe is essential for the effective application of these instruments. Consequently, the spatial, temporal, and human boundaries of the present study were delineated as follows:

### **Spatial Boundaries:**

The spatial boundary of the study was specifically the School for Visually Impaired Children in M'sila, situated in the 5th of July neighborhood, within the 570 housing units area. Established under Decree 10/148 dated May 27, 2010, the school officially commenced operations in September 2011 and caters to visually impaired students at both primary and middle school levels.

- **Temporal Boundaries:**

The main study and the deployment of the scale occurred in April 2017.

- **Human Boundaries:**

The human boundary pertains to the original population of the study sample, which encompasses all visually impaired individuals in M'sila, aged between 17 and 25 years old.

### **Study Tool and Its Application:**

The Behavioral Problems Scale for visually impaired individuals was employed as the primary study tool and was administered at the School for Visually Impaired Children in M'sila.

### **Scoring the Tool:**

The scale is composed of 23 statements that gauge behavioral problems across two dimensions: introversion and aggression. Each statement is positive, with the scoring method delineated below:

**Table 3: Scoring Method for the Behavioral Problems Scale for Visually Impaired Individuals**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>	<b>Applies</b>
<b>Scoring</b>	0	1

Following data collection, it was digitized and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

### Statistical Methods Used in Data Processing:

Data analysis was conducted employing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), utilizing various statistical methods including:

- Pearson Correlation Coefficient
- Arithmetic Mean
- Standard Deviation
- T-Test for significance of differences
- Cronbach's Alpha for calculating reliability
- Percentage for calculating the characteristics of the study sample

**Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Hypotheses Results:** The general hypothesis of the study posited that: "The level of behavioral problems among visually impaired individuals in M'sila - Algeria is high." Following the statistical analysis, the results were as follows:

**Table 4: Behavioral Problems Level Among Visually Impaired Individuals**

Total Score	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Difference between the Individuals' Mean and the Hypothetical Mean	Hypothetical Mean of the Scale			
					T Value	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance	Decision
Behavioral Problems	30	20.96	9.71	-2.03	-1.14	29	0.26	Not Significant

From the data presented in Table 4, we observe that the arithmetic mean for the study sample on the Behavioral Problems Scale is 20.96, which is notably lower than the hypothetical mean of 23 set by the scale. This suggests that the individuals in the study sample experience behavioral problems to a moderate extent. This inference is corroborated by the T-value for the single sample, recorded at -1.14.

This negative value implies that the differences lean favorably towards the hypothetical mean and are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. As a result, the overarching hypothesis that posits, "The level of behavioral problems among visually impaired individuals is high," was not supported. The confidence in this result stands at 95%, accompanied by a 5% probability of error.

Several factors contribute to this outcome:

- There is significant attention and substantial efforts undertaken by the Ministry of National Solidarity and the social activity directorates across the nation focused on addressing the needs of this group.
- The establishment of centers dedicated to the care and education of this group is pivotal. The availability of adapted pedagogical tools aids in their education and facilitates their integration with non-disabled peers, thus enabling them to attain the highest academic qualifications.
- Moreover, there is an enhanced awareness, especially among parents, who provide considerable psychological support to their visually impaired children. This support is instrumental in enhancing the children's ability to navigate behavioral challenges by boosting their self-confidence and belief in their capabilities. It also fosters a genuine aspiration and capacity to achieve their goals, leading to significant successes in both their academic and professional endeavors. The recent trend of employing visually impaired teachers further exemplifies this progress; for instance, the School for Visually Impaired Children currently employs 10 visually impaired teachers. All of these educators hold bachelor's degrees in various disciplines and have made notable achievements in other areas, including extracurricular activities and music.

Conclusively, it appears that visually impaired individuals are progressively overcoming the behavioral challenges that previously led them to withdraw from or exhibit extreme hostility towards society. This positive shift is supported by the study conducted by Lindo and Nordholm (1999), which identified a positive correlation between coping strategies and psychological stability among the visually impaired.

In a similar vein, the study by Komulainen and Aro (1999) observed no significant difference in self-esteem between blind and sighted males. Additionally, a study by Kleinschmidt (1999) involving 12 visually impaired participants found that all individuals were well-adjusted and maintained a positive outlook on life.

### **Analysis of the First Partial Hypothesis:**

The first partial hypothesis stated, "There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the gender variable (male-female)." The subsequent statistical analysis yielded the following results:

**Table 5: Gender Differences in Behavioral Problems**

Total Score	Gender	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	Significance Level	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom	T Value	Level of Significance	Decision
Total Score	Female	0.256	0.617	15	20.13	10.246	28	-0.463	0.647	Not Significant at 0.05
	Male			15	21.80	9.443				

From Table 5, we note that the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances resulted in an F-value of 0.50, which is not statistically significant at the alpha significance level of 0.05. This outcome validates the appropriateness of employing a T-test to assess statistically significant differences between two independent samples with equal variances.

In comparing the arithmetic means between genders relative to behavioral problems, it was found that the mean score for males stood at 20.13, whereas for females, it was 21.80. This modest difference underscores that there are no significant disparities between the genders regarding behavioral issues.

This assertion is further substantiated by the T-test, which produced a value of -0.46—a figure not reaching statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which asserts that "there are no differences between genders," is accepted, leading to the rejection of the first research hypothesis positing that "there are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the gender variable (male-female)." The confidence in these findings is robust, at 95%, with a 5% margin for error.

This lack of gender-based differences in behavioral problems among visually impaired individuals could be attributed to the uniformity of experiences across genders despite physiological differences. Both male and female visually impaired individuals face comparable challenges and share similar objectives and aspirations.

Therefore, it is indefensible to claim that one gender experiences more or less behavioral problems than the other. Variability in behavioral issues might arise not from gender but from other factors such as socio-economic background, familial support, financial stability, and personal acceptance of disability.

This conclusion aligns with previous research, including Al-Qaryouti (1988), who reported no significant gender differences in anxiety levels among visually impaired individuals. Similarly, Robinson and Lieberman (2004) found no differences in self-determination between genders among the blind. Ibrahim's (2001) study also corroborated the absence of gender-based differences in psychological issues among the visually impaired.

### Analysis of the Second Partial Hypothesis:

The second partial hypothesis explored was: "There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the type of impairment (congenital - acquired)."

After conducting the statistical analysis, the following results were recorded:

**Table 6: Differences in Behavioral Problems Based on Type of Impairment**

Total Score	Gender	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	Significance Level	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom	T Value	Level of Significance	Decision
Total Score	congenital	1.904	0.179	09	23.00	11.357	28	0.744	0.463	Not Significant at 0.05
	acquired			21	20.09	9.093				

From Table 6, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances reported an F-value of 1.90, which does not achieve statistical significance at the alpha significance level of 0.05. This result justifies the use of the T-test to evaluate statistically significant differences between two independent samples assuming equal variances.

When we scrutinize the arithmetic means for behavioral problems according to the type of impairment, it is noted that the mean for individuals with acquired impairments stands at 23.00, compared to 20.09 for those with congenital impairments. This slight variation does not reach statistical significance, as confirmed by a T-test value of 0.74, which remains above the threshold of the 0.05 alpha level.

Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no difference between congenital and acquired impairments concerning behavioral problems, is upheld. This leads to the rejection of the second research hypothesis that states, "there are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the type of impairment (congenital - acquired)." The confidence in these findings is 95%, with a 5% probability of error.

This outcome suggests that the nature of visual impairment—whether congenital or acquired—does not significantly impact the behavioral problems experienced by the individuals. The profound loss of vision, a crucial human sense, results in a universal impact, extinguishing the visual perception of the world irrespective of when the impairment occurs.

For those affected from birth or those who lose their sight later, the outcome in terms of behavioral adaptation appears similar. If the visual impairment occurs early in life, the individual gradually loses all previously stored visual memories, navigating a world rendered in complete darkness. This profound loss profoundly influences their life, relationships, and social integration, presenting consistent behavioral challenges across different onset times of impairment.

### Analysis of the Third Partial Hypothesis:

The third partial hypothesis explored states: "There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the severity of impairment (complete, partial)."

The statistical analysis conducted produced the following insights:

**Table 7: Behavioral Differences Based on Severity of Impairment**

Total Score	Gender	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	Significance Level	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom	T Value	Level of Significance	Decision
Total Score	Complete	1.808	0.190	17	19.05	10.467	28	-1.241	0.225	Not Significant at 0.05
	Partial			13	23.46	8.382				

From the analysis detailed in Table 7, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances yielded an F-value of 1.80, which is below the threshold for statistical significance at the alpha significance level of 0.05. This validates the application of the T-test for evaluating statistically significant differences between two independent samples with presumed equal variances.

Upon reviewing the arithmetic means for behavioral problems segmented by severity of impairment, it was observed that individuals with complete impairment had a mean score of 19.05, while those with partial impairment scored 23.46. The difference between these scores, as evidenced by a T-test value of -1.24, does not meet the standard for statistical significance at the alpha level of 0.05.

Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant difference between the groups, is upheld, resulting in the rejection of the third research hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences in the behavioral problems of visually impaired individuals attributed to the severity of impairment (complete - partial)." The confidence in this conclusion is maintained at 95%, with a 5% probability of error.

These results suggest that the degree of visual impairment—whether complete blindness or partial vision loss—does not play a decisive role in the manifestation of behavioral problems. This conclusion reflects a broader perspective where, despite the severity of their visual limitations, individuals may exhibit varying degrees of social and personal adjustment.

For instance, many individuals who are completely blind achieve significant levels of social integration and academic success, while some with partial vision might face considerable behavioral challenges. This variation underscores that behavioral outcomes

in visually impaired individuals are influenced by a complex interplay of factors beyond the mere extent of visual loss. These factors include, but are not limited to, social environment, familial support, financial stability, and emotional well-being.

This interpretation aligns with previous studies such as the one conducted by Al-Qaryouti (1988), which reported no significant differences in anxiety levels among visually impaired individuals based on the severity of their impairment. Furthermore, the research by Komulainen and Aro (1999) similarly found no statistically significant differences in self-esteem among visually impaired individuals when categorized by the severity of their impairment.

### **Conclusion:**

This study addresses a topic of critical importance in psychological and social research: behavioral problems. These issues are intimately connected with various factors, including general variables such as gender and specific ones pertinent to visually impaired individuals, such as the type and severity of impairment.

The findings reveal that visually impaired individuals experience behavioral problems to a moderate extent, which is both reassuring and optimistic. This improvement is likely attributed to the heightened attention this group has received recently, contributing to a reduction in their behavioral challenges.

Therefore, it is vital for families, educational institutions, and broader societal structures to provide ongoing support to facilitate their integration into the real world, thus preventing an escalation in behavioral issues. Furthermore, the study found no significant differences related to the examined variables, suggesting that the impact of visual impairment on behavior cannot be conclusively linked to one or two specific factors.

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