

## Teacher's Concept and its Relation to Temperament and Coping Strategies among Mentally Retarded Children

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**Abstract:** This study aimed at assess the teachers' concept and its relation to temperament and coping strategies among mentally retarded children. A descriptive correlational design was utilized in this study. convenient sample consisted of 130 mentally retarded children, their parents and 31 teachers was selected; who were presented at the schools of El- *Tarbia- El- Fekria* in Hahia and Zagazig city. Tools for data collection were; Socio-demographic data sheet, the teachers' Temperament Questionnaire (TTQ), the teachers' concept of the mental retardation, and The Coping Ability in Children. The results reveald that Temperament increased with increasing coping abilities, Children coping score had positive significant correlations with children IQ, No statistically significant associations between teachers' concept and coping and temperament. It was concluded that when IQ of those children was high, the coping abilities increased. The study recommended that the teachers should continuously observe and evaluate the children to recognize the temperament and coping abilities in the class. Building positive relationship and deal with children by love, sympathy, empathy and caring.

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**Keywords:** Mental retardation, temperament, coping, teachers concept.

### 1. Introduction

The mental retardation is one of the most frequently encountered and distressing disabilities among children in developing countries and it constitutes a major problem in Egypt because it affects the quality of life of persons and the welfare of their families; found that the prevalence of mental retardation was 3.9% among an Egyptian population (Ghising et al., 2007).

Mental retardation (MR.) is a frequently occurring disorder with an estimated incidence of 1-3% in developed countries (*Rodriguez-Revenga* et al.,2006). Additionally WHO (2011). stated that The overall prevalence of mental retardation is believed to be between 1% and 3%, with the rate for moderate, severe and profound retardation being 0.3%.

Mental retardation is a state of developmental deficit, beginning in childhood, that results in significant limitation of intellect or cognition and poor adaptation to the demands of everyday life, intellectual disability is not a disease in and of itself, but is the developmental consequence of some pathogenic process (Sebastian, 2008).

Temperament is the manner in which a child interacts with the environment. The way a child experience a particular event will be influenced by his or her temperament, and the child's temperament will influence the responses of others, include the

parents, to the child. Early on, infants demonstrate differences in their behavior in response to stimuli this responses are an integral part of the infant's developing personality and individuality. Although a child's temperament is intrinsic, it does change over time. Knowing a child's temperament can help parents understand and accept the characteristic of the child without feeling responsible for having caused them. (Kyle, 2008).

Coping is a complex human behavior that is influenced by a number of different factors such as temperament, environment, situational factors, learned behaviors, and level of perceived control to name a few. There is overlap in many of the two factor models as to what constitutes effective and ineffective coping, which has led to confusion. (Angela Gionet, 2007).

Teachers' concept toward students with disabilities may affect how they relate to these children and their expectations concerning the performance of children with handicaps in regular education setting. Thus, if the students with disabilities are to be successfully integrated into regular education programs, the attitudes of general educators toward them should be a major concern of preservice and inservice education programs (Cheen, 2007).

A student's temperament plays a significant role in the emergence of a teacher's perception of the student's learning style (i.e., the manner, willingness,

and energy with which the student approaches a learning task), educational competence (EC) (i.e., cognitive ability, motivation, and maturity) and teach ability (i.e., the teacher's view of the attributes of an ideal model student). Hence, temperament contributes to students' academic achievement and a teacher's subjective ratings of school grades. (Hintsanen et al., 2011).

Nurse practitioners who provide primary care for children with special health care needs know that well-child care is as important as illness management. Discussing illness is frequently expected and highly prioritized at well-child care visits, particularly for parents of children with special health care needs (Cleave et al., 2007).

### **Aims of the study**

The aim of this study was to assess the teachers' concept and its relation to temperament and coping strategies among mentally retarded children.

Research questions:

- Is there any relationship between the teacher's concept and temperament of children with mental retardation?
- Is there any relationship between the teacher's concept and coping Strategies of children with mental retardation?
- Is there any relationship between coping strategies and temperament among mentally retarded children?

## **2. Subjects and Methods**

### **Research Design:**

A descriptive correlational design was utilized in this study.

### **Setting:**

This study was conducted at schools of El-Tarbia- El- Fekria in Hahia and Zagazig city.

### **Sample:**

A convenient sample consisted of 130 mentally retarded children, their parents and 31 teachers was selected. Subjects were eligible for recruitment in the study sample if they met the following inclusion criteria: For children; Age from 6 to 12 years, Both gender and All children diagnosed by mental retardation. For teachers; Both genders, Dealing and Presenting all time with child.

### **Tools of data collection:**

#### **Socio-demographic data sheet**

This tool developed by the researcher to assess the personal characteristic of the children, their parents and the teachers.

Socio-demographic for child such as Age, gender, school grade, Residence, birth order,

Education level of parents, job of parents, social class, family size and income.

Socio-demographic for teachers it includes Age, gender, Number of years teaching experience, education level, Residence, marital status and social class.

### **The Coping Ability in Children,**

This tool was originally constructed by Zeitlin (1985) , completed by the classroom teacher to assessing adaptive and maladaptive coping habits, skill, and behaviors that a child uses to manage the world, it consists of 48 questions and is divided into two categories: Coping with self and Coping with Environment. Each of these two categories Contain 24 items and assessment is measured on 5-point Likert Scale, The five categories for scoring system are: (1) Not Effective, (2) Minimally Effective, (3)Effective in some situations but not in others, (4) More often than not effective or appropriate, and (5) Effective most of the time.

### **The Teacher Temperament Questionnaire**

This tool was designed by Keogh (1982) and this tool was constructed to assessing teacher's perceptions of children's temperament , It consists of 23 items and assessment is measured on 6-point Likert Scale, The six categories for scoring system are: (1) hardly ever, (2) Once in a while, (3) Sometimes, (4) Often, (5) Very often, and (6) Almost Always.

### **The teacher's concept of the mental retardation**

This questionnaire was designed by the researcher to evaluate the teacher's concept about mental retardation, it consists of 20 items self reported tool scored on a 5- point likert scale with possible responses " strongly agree", " agree", " undecided ", " disagree" and " strongly disagree", it include four subscales which are human being (5 items), understanding (5 items), giving chance (5 items) and future as a citizen (5 items).

### **Pilot study:**

A pilot study was carried out on 13 students from different school stages, completed by the classroom teacher, constituting about 10 percent of the total study sample. It was done to test the feasibility and clarity of the tools, and also helped to know the time needed for filling the tools not needed any modifications and they had been included later in the study.

### **Field work:**

Once permission was granted to proceed with the study, the researcher visited the study sittings and

met with the parents having mentally retarded children and the teachers who dealing with their children who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The purpose of the study was explained to the parents and the teachers, and he/she was invited to participate in the study. Upon agreement to participate, the researcher started the interview with the parent and teachers individually using the data collection tools. The questionnaire was read, explained, and choices were recorded by the teachers.

From the pilot study results, it was found that the average time to fill in all tools, about 30-45minutes. The time in which the data were collected was at the beginning of first semester in the study year 2011/2012.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

The aim of the study was explained to every parent and teacher before participation, which was totally voluntary and nonparticipation or withdrawal rights at any time without giving any reason, the teachers and parents were assured about confidentiality of the information gathered and its use only for their benefits and for the purpose of the study.

### **3. Results:**

Data from Table (1a),(1b):Shows that the children age ranged from 6-12 years old, More than one-third of them were males (68.5%). living in rural areas (75.4%). And the majority of them were Moslem (95.4%). and mostly of third or higher birth rank (37.7%) and recurrent percentage in classes fourth, fifth and sixth (18.5%).

Data from Table(1c) and (1d):Reveals that the number of brothers was mostly one (49.2%), while about one- third of them having one sister (43.8%) and recurrent percentage for children having two or higher sisters, More than half of the children come to school with mothers (73.5%), compared to (23.1%) for fathers. the source of information (73.8%) were taken from mothers while (25.4%) were taken from fathers. and regarding the family income about half (46.2%) was not sufficient, nearly similar percentage (40.8%) was of sufficient but the family income ranged from 300-900 with mean  $600.0 \pm 424.2$ .

Data from Table (2c):Shows that more than half of the family members ranged from 3 to 5 were (62.3%) of the families, but family members ranged from 3-10 with mean  $5.3 \pm 1.4$  and the majority of parents' marital status were married (92.3%) and about two- thirds of social class were low (62.5%).

Figure (1) and (2): Illustrates that most of mentally retarded children (96.2%) were fair

temperament. Only 1.5% was poor temperament. And majority of mentally retarded children (70.8%) were fair coping but only (10.8%) were good coping.

Figure (3): Shows that the majority of mentally retarded children (56%) had their IQ ranged from 50-55%. Only 19% had their IQ over 60%.

Tables (3) and (4): Indicates that the age of the studied teachers ranged from 32-52 years with mean  $42.19 \pm 5.7$ . And more than half of the teachers were females (58.1%). and the majority of them had bachelors (87.1%). and all of them were Moslems (100.0%) and the majority of them were urban (71.0%) also in all of them were married (100.0%). and less than half of teachers income were not Sufficient (41.9%) while about one- third of them (32.3%) were sufficient. And more than half of teacher's social class (58.1%) was low.

Figures (4) and (5): Displays the experience years of the teachers. It reveals that less than half of them (45%) were over 20 years. only 16% had experience years ranged from 5-10 years. and more than half of the teachers' training sessions (54.8%) were from 11-20 sessions but training sessions ranged from 3-30 sessions with mean  $12.5 \pm 6.03$ .

Data from Tables (6) and (7): Shows that positive statistically significant correlation between temperament among mentally retarded children and their coping ( $r=0.418$ ), while no statistically significant associations between teacher's concept and coping and temperament among mentally retarded children.

Data from Table (8): Illustrates that positive statistically significant correlation between children's IQ and coping of them ( $r=0.235$ ). But there is no statistically significant correlation between the other demographic characteristics children and coping abilities, temperament among mentally retarded children.

Data from Table (10): Demonstrates positive statistically significant correlation between teacher's ages and human being ( $r=0.407$ ). While the educational level of teachers had highly negative statistically significant correlations with human being ( $r=-0.563$ ).

Data from Tables (11) and (13): Displays there is only positive statistically significant correlation between chance and understanding ( $r=0.415$ ). while all component of the teacher's concept had positive statistically significant correlation with human being ( $r=0.582$ ), understanding ( $r=0.765$ ), and chance ( $r=0.672$ ). but there are no statistically significant correlation between total teacher's concept and future as a citizen.

**Table 1a. Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of children in the study sample (n=130).**

Age			Sex			Residence		
Items	No	%	Items	No	%	Items	No	%
6-8	32	24.6	Male	89	68.5	Rural	98	75.4
9-10	33	25.4	female	41	31.5	Urban	32	24.6
More than 10	65	50.0						
Range	6-12							
Mean+ SD	9.9+1.9							

**Table 1b. Continue Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of children in the study sample (n=130).**

Birth order			Religion			Classes		
Items	No	%	Items	No	%	Items	No	%
1	44	33.8	Moslem	124	95.4	1	23	17.7
2	37	28.5	Christian	6	4.6	2	19	14.6
3+	49	37.7				3	16	12.3
						4	24	18.5
						5	24	18.5
						6	24	18.5

**Table 1c. Continue Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of children in the study sample (n=130).**

No of Brothers			No of sisters			Who accompany the child		
Items	No	%	Items	No	%	Items	No	%
0	5	3.8	0	16	12.3	father	30	23.1
1	64	49.2	1			Mother	95	73.0
2+	61	46.9	2+	57	43.8	Sister or brother	3	2.3
						Alone	1	0.8
				57	43.8	grandfather	1	0.8

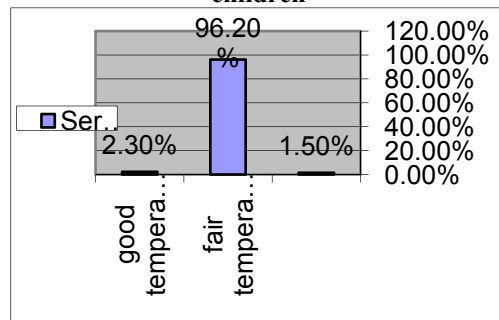
**Table 1d. Continue Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of children in the study sample (n=130).**

Source of information			Income		
Items	No	%	Items	No	%
Father	33	25.4	Sufficient and cost effective	17	13.0
Mother	96	73.8	Sufficient	53	40.8
grandfather	1	0.8	Not sufficient	60	46.2
			Range	300-900	
			Mean+SD	600.0+424.2	

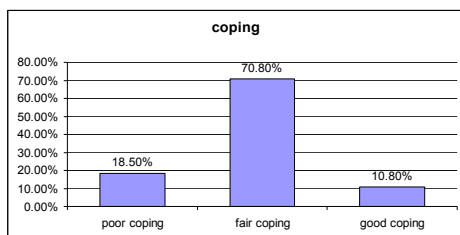
**Table 2c. Continue Personal characteristics of parents in the study.**

Item	No	%
Family members:		
3+	81	62.3
6+	45	34.6
9+	4	3
Range	3-10	
Mean+SD	5.3+1.4	
Marital status:		
Married	120	92.3
Divorced	3	2.3
Widow	7	5.4
Social class:		
High	18	13.8
Middle	32	24.6
Low	80	62.5

**Figure 2: Coping among mentally retarded children**



**Figure 1: Temperament among mentally retarded children.**



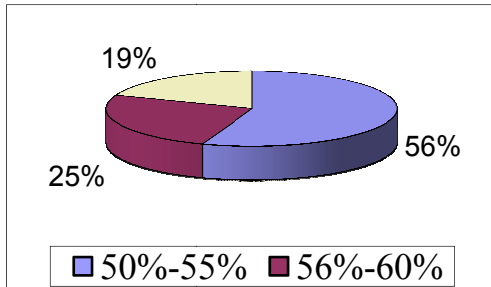


Figure 3: IQ score of mentally retarded children.

Table 3. Socio- demographic and personal characteristics of the teachers in the study sample. (n=31).

Item	No	%
Age (years):		
30-40	13	41.9
41-50	17	54.8
50+	1	3.2
Range	32-52	
Mean±SD	42.19±5.7	
Sex:		
Male	13	41.9
Female	18	58.1
Education levels:		
diploom	3	9.7
Bacalorous	27	87.1
doctorate	1	3.2

Table 4. Personal characteristics of the teachers in the study sample (n=31).

Item	No	%
Religion:		
Moslem	31	100.0
Residence:		
Rural	9	29.0
Urban	22	71.0
Marital status:		
Married	31	100.0
Income:		
Sufficient and saving money	8	25.8
Sufficient	10	32.3
Not Sufficient	13	41.9
Social class:		
High	2	6.5
Middle	11	35.5
Low	18	58.1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 8. Correlation between coping and temperament and socio-demographic characteristics of mentally retarded children

Items	Coping		Temperament	
	r	p	r	p
Age	0.037	0.673	-0.061	0.488
IQ	0.235**	0.007	0.171	0.052
Sex	0.145	0.100	0.076	0.388
Social class	-0.041	0.640	0.021	0.815
Father education	0.122	0.174	-0.051	0.574
Father job	-0.160	0.073	0.068	0.446
Mother education	-0.005	0.958	-0.112	0.204
Mother job	-0.041	0.642	0.019	0.834

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 10. Correlation between subscale of teacher's concept about mentally retarded children and socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers. (n= 31)

Table 6. Correlation between coping and temperament among mentally retarded children.

Variable study	Coping	
	r	p
temperament	0.418**	0.000

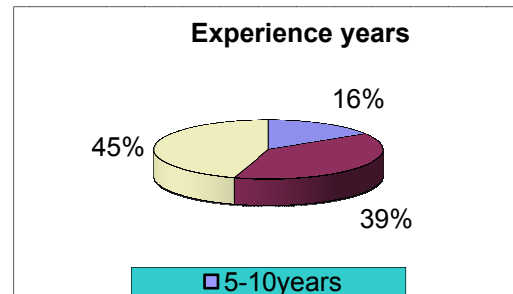


Figure 4. Experience years of the teachers.

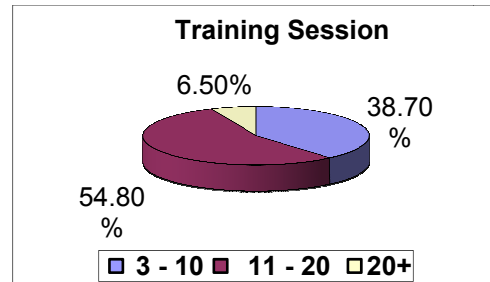


Figure 5. Training Session of the teachers

Table 7. Correlation between teacher's concept and coping and temperament among mentally retarded children

Variable study	Coping		Temperament	
	r	p	r	p
Teacher's concept	0.218	0.238	0.155	0.405

Items	Human being		Understanding		Chance		Future as a citizen	
	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Age	0.407*	0.023	0.238	0.197	0.235	0.203	-0.310	0.090
Education	-0.563**	0.001	-0.066	0.723	-0.314	0.086	0.056	0.764
Experience	0.346	0.056	0.165	0.375	0.180	0.334	-0.212	0.253
Income	0.024	0.899	0.179	0.334	0.254	0.168	-0.203	0.273
Sex	-0.235	0.204	-0.201	0.279	-0.172	0.355	0.223	0.227
Social class	0.265	0.150	0.240	0.194	0.192	0.302	-0.141	0.449

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 11. Correlation between subscale of teacher's concepts about mentally retarded children.**

Items	Human being		Understanding	
	r	p	r	p
Human being	1	—	0.328	0.072
Understanding	0.328	0.072	1	—
Chance	0.242	0.189	0.415*	0.020
Future as a citizen	-0.239	0.196	-0.128	0.493

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 13. Correlation between total teacher's concept and subscale of teacher's concept.**

Item	Total teacher's concept	
	r	p
Human being	<b>0.582**</b>	<b>0.001</b>
Understanding	<b>0.765**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Chance	<b>0.672**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Future as a citizen	<b>0.288</b>	<b>0.116</b>

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4. Discussion:

Results of this study indicated that mentally retarded children were the age ranged from 6-12 years nearly similar finding was reported by Paskiewicz (2009). Who performed his study in the United States. In a study about A Comparison of Adaptive Behavior Skills and IQ in Three Populations: Children with Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and Autism.who found that The range of age in the study sample was 5-14 years. This may be due to the highest incidence of mental retardation is in school-age children.

The present study has also revealed that more than one third of the children in the sample were male This result was congruence with (Flynn, 2000; Gromoll, 2009; Paskiewicz, 2009) which reports that males are several times more likely to be affected by mental retardation than females.This might be due to mental retardation is about 1.5 times more common among men than among women and The male/female ratio is 1.6:1 in mild mental retardation.

As regards their residence most of the children are from the rural area, This result was in congruence with Awadalla et al. (2010). Who performed his study Who performed his study In El Minia, Egypt. Mentioned that, more than half of them were living in urban areas. It may be due to the study was conducted in rural area, but even it means that their is a hidden factor in the rural area other than, the marital tradition and heredity, such as pollution from the usage of phosphate for cultivation, or nutrition.

As regarding source of information, the present study findings revealed that the information taken

from mothers in the majority of the cases. This was agreement with Flynn (2000). Who performed his study In Columbia University? In a study about the teacher- child relationship, temperament, and coping in children with developmental disabilities. Which means that, the mother is loaded of more concerned about the child, the mother is blamed for the child condition than the father and may be due to the mothers are primary caregivers.and most of the fathers in the study sample were worker and majority of mothers were accompanying with the child to the school.

Social status of the child family ranged between low and middle social class this might be correlated with the child's prevalence of accident, child's nutrition, child's culture, civilization, resources and facilities available to promote and develop the child's intelligence which might lead to such retardation other than any other hereditary factors.

In relation to the marital status of the child's parent, nearly the majority are living within stable marital relation, This finding was agreement with (Llewellyn et al., 2003; Hand, 2008 and Awadalla et al., 2010). Who similarly reported that two- third of them were married. Which doesn't mean a happy family relation as it was not assessed, but at least they live with their father and mother, that lead to exclude some of the -ve emotional factor that might play a vital role in the development of social retardation.

Regarding to the IQ of these children, the present study findings revealed that the IQ ranged from 50-71 with Mean of 56.2-5.2. This finding was nearly similar to Connors et al. (2004). Who performed his study In Alabama. In a study about Phonological reading skills acquisition by children with mental retardation . Who have mentioned that, the IQ ranged from 39-88 with Mean of 53.85 (8.80). This may be due to in this study the researcher used the same range of age of these children and IQ ranged from 50-69 is mild mental retardation Can be

expected to learn, Can learn up to about the 6th-grade level by late teens.

Personal characteristics of the teachers in this study, indicated that, the majority are adults and old adults, Have BSc and were females and they were from urban area this positive characteristics of the teacher that have an effect on the children coping and temperament. This finding was agreement with (Scott, 2003; Al Ajmi, 2006; Hand, 2008; Nitardy, 2008; John et al., 2009 and Gromoll, 2009). This means that, there is a hope in the improvement of the mentally retarded children if they looked after by an educated, positively attituded teachers. And the high level of education for the teachers promote with knowledge and skills to dealing with these children and is important to these children because they need special care and education.

Regarding of the experience years of the teachers, the present study finding revealed that the majority of them were experience years over than 20 years. This finding was similar to Nitardy (2008). Who performed his study in United States in study about "The Relationship between Career Development and Intent to Stay in a High Turnover Industry, Early Childhood Education and Care". who reported that Length of Time in the Profession were 20 plus years. This may be due to increase of experience year for teachers is important to understanding these children and how to deal with them.

The present study has also revealed that positively statistically significant correlation between temperament among mentally retarded children and their coping. This result was consistent with (Flynn, 2000; Angela Gionet, 2007). Who found that this was a significant positive correlation between temperament and coping skills. This might be due to Coping is a self-regulatory process that is not always conscious but may be influenced by temperament. and Children with difficult temperaments are less adaptable and have more negative reactions in school, at home.

Teacher's concept which is concerned with the child as a human being, the ability of the child to understand and their chance to be improved as well as their future as a citizen. In the present study revealed that there are only positive significant correlation between given their children a chance and ability of children to understanding (Table 11)

The current study has also demonstrated that their only positively statistically significant correlation between IQ of mentally retarded children and their coping. This result was in agreement with Paskiewicz, (2009) Who performed his study in the United States. In a study about A Comparison of Adaptive Behavior Skills and IQ in Three

Populations: Children with Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and Autism. Who found that the relationship between IQ and adaptive behavior in the mental retardation group and the learning disabled group was quite low. The discrepancy might be related to in this study was assessing one group of children. This may be due to Coping is a complex human behavior that is influenced by IQ and temperament and Coping is a process that involves the cognitive selection. therefore, when IQ of those children was higher the coping abilities are increasing.

According to the present study finding, there are positive statistically significant correlation between the teacher's concept as the general and regarding human being, understanding, and chance. but there are no statistically significant correlation between total teacher's concept and future as a citizen. (Table 13). and also not present references in this part of study in Egypt and any other places. This may be due to the teachers are believe that mentally retarded children are over worker and burden on the government and not able to form family and tolerate to responsibility and improvement economical status.

Regarding correlation between education levels of the teachers and teacher's concept as human being, the current study revealed that this was a negative statistically significant correlation. This result was in congruence with Al Ajmi (2006). In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In a study about Administrators and Special education teachers' perceptions regarding the use of functional behavior assessment for students with MR. who found that the perception of Saudi administrators and special education teachers regarding the use of functional behavior assessment on the basis of the type of degrees that they hold (bachelors, masters, doctorate, or other) was not statistically significant. This might be the present study using scale of teacher's concept regarding human being but the reference using scale of teacher's perception as functional behavior assessment. My be due to human being of these children is one of rights and teacher's concept for mentally retarded children as human being not require level of education but it is internal drive and empathy.

### **Conclusion:**

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that:

When IQ of those children was high, the coping abilities increased. The coping abilities and temperament are significantly and positively correlated. no statistically significant associations between teacher's concept with temperament and the coping abilities.

**Recommendation:**

Based on the main study findings, the following recommendation are suggested:

- The teachers should be continuously observe and evaluate of their children to recognize the temperament and coping abilities and their behaviors during day time in the class.
- Dealing with children by love, sympathy, empathy and caring.
- Allow the parents to Participation in the Rehabilitation programs, which includes all social, psychological, medical, educational and vocational.
- Emphasize, teacher's positive relationships with child to enhance the child's coping abilities.
- Integrate the disable child with the system of education of the normal children to develop positive attitudes and meaningful friendships between children with and without disabilities.
- Providing these children with recreational and social facilities that help them to ventilate their energy.

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