

## EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND: THE CASE OF MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS' CHILDREN IN VIENNA

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### Abstract

*The presence of Muslim immigrants' children in learning difficulties schools has a great concern for policy makers in Austria. The study was conducted to know the status of immigrants' children, factors responsible for the learning difficulties among immigrants' children and importance of parents involvement for the education their children with learning difficulties. There were eighty one (81) immigrant's children with learning difficulties and ten (10) teachers who were already involved with the education of children leaning difficulties were the part of the study.*

*Two instruments; questionnaire for children with learning difficulties and schedule interview for teachers were developed and used to achieve the objectives and test the hypothesis;. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for quantitative data and thematic analysis approach was used for qualitative data. The results showed that the presence of Muslim children with learning difficulties in SPZs is high as compared to Non Muslim in Vienna. The presence of male children was more than females. Parents less interest, home environment, parents' qualification, age of children, teachers' attitude with parents were powerful indicators responsible for learning difficulties among Muslim immigrants' children.*

**Key Words:** Muslim Immigrants, Immigrants' children, Learning difficulties, Education

### Öğrenme Güçlüğü, Din ve Etnisite İlişkisi Üzerine bir İnceleme: Viyanalı Müslüman Çocuklar Örneği

#### Özet

*Öğrenme zorlukları olan çocuklara hitap eden okullardaki Müslüman göçmenlerin çocukları Avusturyalı sosyal plan uzmanlarını endişelendirmekte olduğu görülmektedir. Bu araştırma göçmen çocuklarının statüsünü, öğrenme zorluğuna sebep olan faktörleri ve ailelerin konuya ilişkin ilgilerini anlamak için yapılmıştır. Bu çerçevede, çalışma seksen bir (81) öğrenme zorluğu olan çocuk ve bu konuda uzman on (10) öğretmeni kapsamaktadır.*

*Arasturmada anket ve mulakat yontemi kullanılmıstır. Öğrenme zorluğu olan Müslüman çocuklara anket uygulanmış, öğretmenlerle mulakat yapılmıştır. Kantitatif verilerin analizi için SPSS programı kullanılmıstır. Kalitatif (Nitel) verilerin analizinde ise tematik analiz yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Viyanadaki Müslüman olmayan topluluklarla kıyaslayınca, söz konusu eğitim kurumlarında öğrenme zorluğu olan Müslüman çocukların sayısının oldukça yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Erkek çocukların sayısının kızlardan daha fazla olduğu görülmüştür. Ailelerin ilgisizliği, uygun olmayan ev ortamı, ailenin eğitim düzeyi, çocukların yaşı ve öğretmenlerin velilere karşı tutumu öğrenme zorluğunun önemli sebepleri olarak ön plana çıkarken, dinin bu konuda olumsuz bir faktör olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Müslüman Göçmeneler, Öğrenme Zorluğu, Göçmen Çocuklar, Eğitim.

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## Introduction

Educational problems among immigrants' children attracted the attention of researchers for last fifty years (Crul, 2007). There are eight million inhabitants, more than 730,000 (or 9.1 percent) were foreign residents, with 62.8 percent of them coming from the successor states of the former Yugoslavia and from Turkey (Austrian census 2001). The dropout rate among immigrants' children in Austria is less than Holland and others but the performance of these children is lags behind than nonimmigrants' children due to background characteristics of immigrants such environment, economic status, starting year of schooling, parents' attitude (Crul, 2007)

The literacy rate in Austria is 99 %. Under the Austrian educational system, it is compulsory for all children who were permanently resident in Austria must to attend school for at least 9 years for the age of 6 upwards. There is no data available how many special needs persons in the country because question regarding disability was not asked during the last census, 2001. The information about special needs children who are enrolled in the special needs schools is available. In Austria, all types of schools are 5,796, among these, 325 are special needs schools with 13170 (4720 female) special needs children in Austria. In Vienna, there are 35 special needs school with 2941 children (1105 female) are located only in Wien. At primary level from grade 1-4, there are 1.2 (0.8 female) % special needs children. The large numbers of special needs children (1.9 %) are in grade 5-8. The average class size in special needs school is 6.8 per class. The total special needs teachers are 5768 in which 4895 are female (Report of Federal ministry of Education, 2008-09).

There are ten types of special needs schools available in Austria on the basis of disabilities and difficulties among children. All types of special schools exist, each with different curricula: Special schools with their own curricula. Sonder Peadagogy Zentrums are dealing of children with learning difficulties in Vienna. In 1962, Kirk used the term "learning disability" in the following definition.

"A learning disability refers to retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing arithmetic, or other school subjects resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and / or emotional or behavior disturbance. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors" (p. 263).

Language play a vital role in the learning process, the language of instruction in school is often different as spoken at home (Christensen and Sanat, 2007). Children who are unable to speak, read, or write the language of instructions in school as compared to other classmates, perform less (OECD, 2001). PISA (2000) study found out that pupils from immigrant families performed relatively poorly in the field of literacy, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture considers it an absolute priority to improve the reading skills of pupils whose mother tongue is a language other than German.

Buchner, (2009) discussed the services provided to person with disability in Austria that the support is provided in undistinguished and generalized way used on a competency

model but still academic research on community living is quite rare in Austria, and fails to take into account the subjective perspective of people with intellectual disabilities.

With reference to special needs children with learning difficulties in Austria, most of them are immigrants' children. PISA (2000) study found out that pupils from immigrant families performed relatively poorly in the field of literacy, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture considers it an absolute priority to improve the reading skills of pupils whose mother tongue is a language other than German.

A group of experts has been set up for this purpose; it will inquire into the reasons for pupils' failure and recommend measures to improve their performance. Researches proved that the performance of immigrant children's performance is low than permanent residence children with German mother language (OECD, 2009). It is natural that some children find learning difficulties in regular classrooms (Smith and Madsen, 2001). It does not mean they are not intelligent; it means they learn differently. Children with learning disabilities may be average or above average in intelligence. This situation is of great concern for policy makers not only in Austria but also in whole Europe. The integration of immigrants and their offspring into the receiving society is a primary challenge of globalization. There are many studies available but a few data is available for children with learning difficulties in Austria.

Although SPZs are dealing with these children who having problems in their learning but still There was a great need for such programs which help to solve their learning problems and provide direction for Austrian education system to develop different policies which help to immigrant children to reduce learning difficulties in schools. The researcher attempts to present a portrait, status of immigrants' children in learning difficulties schools and parents' cooperation and support with school staff. The present study was conducting with following objectives; 1) to know the status of immigrants children in learning difficulties school, 2) comparison of Muslim and Non-Muslim immigrant children in Wien, 3) suggestions how to reduce the learning problems among children with learning difficulties, 4) to know the status and importance of parents involvement for the education of children with learning difficulties, and 5) to know the factors responsible for the learning difficulties among immigrants children.

The findings of this study give us a clear portrait about status of immigrants' children especially Muslim immigrants in learning difficulties school with reference to gender, age range, native country, German proficiency level of child, mother and father. The collected information can be used for future planning of Muslim immigrants children not only in Austria but also in whole Europe.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Keeping in view and available resources, three Sonder Pädagogik Zentrums (SPZs), Vienna who showed their strong commitment and consent to participate in the study were selected.

- Eighty one (81) immigrant's children with learning difficulties were identified for detail information. Among 81 immigrants' children with learning difficulties, 55 were male and 26 were female. The age range of the children was from 6 to 15 years.
- Ten (10) teachers (8 female and 2 male), already involved with the education of children leaning difficulties were the part of the study. The age of teachers was 25 to 55 years and majority was belonged to age 35 to 45. There were 80% female teachers in the study (80%). The teacher student ratio was observed 1: 6 in averagely in all SPZ.

### **Instrumentation**

To achieve the objectives and test the hypothesis, following instruments were developed and used for collection of data: 1) Questionnaire for children with learning difficulties and 2) Schedule interview for teachers of SPZs.

*Questionnaire for children with learning difficulties;* Questionnaire for children with learning difficulties was developed with the purpose to collect the basic information about children present in learning difficulties schools in Vienna. There were four parts of this questionnaire. The first part deals with basic information about name of school and teacher, total number of students in a class along with Muslim immigrants' children. The second part deals with the information about children such as; gender, age, native country, age at the time of immigration, age at the time of admission in learning difficulties school, religion, level of proficiency in German language. The third part deals with the information of parents such as parents' communication level with school staff on three levels (1 = Good, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Poor), native country, German language proficiency on three levels (1 = Good, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Poor), religion, qualification, profession, and monthly income (optional). The fourth part deals with the information of child on basic skills; reading, writing, speaking, listening on three levels as referred above, behavior problems, and others disabilities. The class teacher was responsible for providing information on developed questionnaire of each immigrants' child in his or her class. Special written instructions were designed for teachers, which were explained to school directors and teachers (The sample of instruction is available in annexure.3). The sample questionnaire for children with learning difficulties is provided in Annexure-1.

*Interview schedule for teachers;* Interview schedule was developed with the purpose for collection of information, opinion, and suggestions from teachers who were involved with the education of children with learning difficulties in SPZs. There were two parts of this interview schedule; first part deals with the basic information about teacher such as; gender, age, academic and professional qualification, experience, per week workload, information about other assignments other than teaching, and lesson planning. The second part deals with the narrative information on written questions such as; problems from parents, teaching techniques used by teachers in SPZs, how to encourage parents to communicate with school staff?, process used for the assessment of children with learning difficulties, factors responsible for the learning difficulties among children, five

best methods for the education of children with learning difficulties, and how to improve the system of SPZ in Vienna. The interview schedule was conducted with teachers by researcher and with the help of concerned directors on their working place. The detail structured interview is provided in annexure. 2

### **Procedure of the Study**

This study comprised of six phases: 1) permission from Stadt Schulrat für Wien, 2) development and finalization of research instruments; 3) data collection on self-developed different instruments, 4) data analysis, and 5) report writing.

### **Research Hypothesis**

- 1) There is no difference of gender presence in SPZs
- 2) There is no relationship between religion and presence of immigrants children in SPZs.
- 3) There is no relationship between religion and children German proficiency level.
- 4) There is no relationship between fathers' native country and children German proficiency level.
- 5) There is no relationship between mothers' native country and children German proficiency level.
- 6) There is no relationship between the education level of parents and performance of children in their studies.
- 7) There is no significance difference of German proficiency level between Muslim and Christian mothers'.
- 8) There is no significance difference of parents' communication level between Muslim and Non Muslim.
- 9) There is no relationship between father qualification and children performance level in basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening and arithmetic).

### **Research questions**

1. Are teachers using new methodologies for the education of these children?
2. Are parents become equal partner in the education of their children?
3. Is there need for remedial program for children with learning difficulties?
4. Is there is relationship of effective instruction of teacher with students performance?

### **Data Collection**

The formal permission was granted from Stadtschulrat für Wien, Vienna to study the immigrants' children with learning difficulties. The addresses of eight schools were given by Stadtschulrat für Wien and out of these, only three schools were agreed to fully participate in the study and one school was participated partially (interviewed with

director). Data were collected from 81 immigrant children with learning difficulties on questionnaires including instructions for teachers about how to fill the questionnaire from immigrants' children. The questionnaire of each class was filled by concerned class teachers. The data was collected on self-developed questionnaires in German language by researcher. Information from children were collected by concerned class teachers due to restriction from directors, so guide line for data collection from children were prepared and explained to directors and teachers. In some school directors took the responsible to collect data and explain the guidelines to teachers. The guidelines were prepared and explained to school directors. Researcher used translator for interview with parents due to language obstructions.

### Data Analysis

There are two types of data; qualitative and quantitative. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for quantitative data and for qualitative data was analyzed through transcribed the interviews through thematic analysis approach.

### Results

*Status of children with learning difficulties enrolled in Sonder Pädagogik Zentrums (SPZs), Vienna*; In Austria, according to the Austrian Statistical Bureau, in mid-2006, 814,800 foreigners legally were lived in Austria, representing 9.8% of the total population, which is the highest rate in Europe. One third of total immigrants are living in Vienna. The information about enrollment status of native and immigrant children with L.D of three school participated in the study is presented in table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of children with learning difficulties in Special needs schools

School Code	Enrollment	
	Native (%)	Immigrants (%)
01	33	67
02	39	61
03	38	62

The above table demonstrated that average 63 % children with learning difficulties were in three schools in Vienna. The information about sex ratios of participants and their religion is presented in table 2

**Table 2:** Religion and sex of children

Religion	Male %	Female %	Total %
Islam	74	26	42
Christian	61	39	54
Anonymus	4	-	04

The above table listed the enrollment of immigrants children was high as compared to Non Muslim children in three schools for learning difficulties (SPZ) and majority of children with learning difficulties were male in Vienna.

The table 3 is showing the age range why range only age enough and distribution of children with sex ratio.

**Table 3:** Age and sex wise distribution of children with learning difficulties

Age	Male	Female	Total
7	1	0	1
9	1	0	1
10	2	0	2
11	4	2	6
12	7	6	13
13	18	4	22
14	14	4	18
15	8	9	17
17	0	1	1
Total	55	26	81

The majority of students (65%) were fall in the age range of 12 to 14. Most of male children were 13 years old and female were 15 years of total immigrant children with learning difficulties in Vienna. The information of age at the time of enrollment in SPZ showed that majority of students enrolled from the age 8 to 12 years and among these, majority of students were 10 years old at the time of enrollment. There is no significant difference of age at the time of enrollment with reference to religion. Researches proved that Language proficiency plays a vital role in learning process. In Austria, the official language in all schools is German. The German language proficiency was also observed through teachers. The below data provided the picture of German language proficiency among children with learning difficulties in Vienna on three level good, satisfactory, and poor.

**Table 4:** German Language proficiency of children with learning difficulties

Level of proficiency	Male	Female	Total	percentage
Good	23	11	34	42,0
Satisfactory	23	11	34	42,0
Poor	9	4	13	16,0

The table listed that 16 % children had poor level of proficiency in German. However percentage of sex ratio is same in both gender. Although there is a system available for enhancing German proficiency among immigrants but there is a need to improve this

system through which each newly immigrant can be get expertise over German before starting their regular education. The table 5 is showing the relationship of native parents' country and children proficiency level in German.

**Table 5:** Relationship of father native and children Deutsch level of proficiency

Level of German proficiency	Turkey	Serbia	Pakistan	Afghanistan	Chechen	Kosovo	Maz	Rumania	Others	Total	%age
Good	4	12	1	0	0	1	0	0	15	34	42
Satisfactory	4	12	1	5	2	2	1	1	6	34	42
Poor	3	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	13	16
Total	11	28	2	5	3	4	2	1	24	81	100

The table listed that the large number of children with learning difficulties belonged to Serbia and Turkey and poor proficiency level in German among children with Turkish background was recorded more than Serbian children with learning difficulties. The relationship of religion and German proficiency level was also estimated in this study. The table 6 is showing above mentioned relationship.

**Table 6:** Relationship of religion and German proficiency level of children with learning difficulties

German proficiency level	Islam %	Christian %	Unknown %	Total %
Good	26	52	66	48
Satisfactory	50	36	34	40
Poor	24	12	0	12

The data listed that the overall German proficiency level among Christian children is higher than Muslim children of learning difficulties in Vienna. Mothers' level of proficiency plays a vital role in mastery over any language. Parents can play the role of mentor and teacher in home for their children. The mothers' level of proficiency in Deutsch was 46 % satisfactory, 27 % poor and 27 % satisfactory. Muslim mothers' proficiency level in German as observed by class teachers was less than Non-Muslim mothers.

Parents' communication with school staff positively effect on students' performance. Teachers can get information from parents about home environment and facilities available in home. The gender wise parents' level of communication with school staff was also observed in this study; The findings demonstrated that the 37% prents had good communication with school staff, 37 % had satisfactory and 26% has unsatisfactory communication with school staff regarding the performmace and others matters of their children. The relationship of parents' communication with school and religion is presented in table 7.



**Table 7:** Relationship of religion and parents' communication with school staff

Parents' religion	Good %	Satisfactory %	Poor %
Muslim	21	44	35
Non Muslim (Christian)	52	27	21
Unknown	0	66	33

The table listed that the Christian parents had good communication with school staff as compared to Muslim parents. The poor communication among Muslim parents was also high. Research proved that children can do better in school when communication gap will be less between parents and teachers. There are number of ways that parents and teachers can keep in touch with each other, rather than relying on the scheduled parent-teacher conferences. The close communication between parents and teachers can help to solve different problems of students in studies. The one of the main reason for parents to remain less in contact with staff school may be the language barrier. The data also showed that Serbian parents have satisfactory level of communication with school staff as compared to other ethnic group as the ratio of Turkish mothers' level of German speaking is unsatisfactory than other ethnic group.

Parents of children with learning difficulties; In this study the information about both parents' of children with learning difficulties were collected regarding native country, native language, qualification, profession and monthly income. But due to some limitations from different school directors, the questions about parents' qualification, monthly income, and profession was remaining optional.

Fathers' information; There were 38 % fathers who have Serbian native language and 13 % has Turkish native language. Qualification of father also play very vital role in performance of their children by providing guidance in their studies at home. Only one percent child's father had qualification more than secondary education, 10 % had secondary education and no information was provided about 89 %.

The status of religious affiliation of fathers' showed that 52 % fathers' had affiliation with Christianity, 42 % with Islam, 5% had unknown status and 2 % without any information. Teachers did not provide information of 82 % of fathers' profession, among 18 %, most of belong to labor, and others belong to the profession of shopkeeper, and barber. In response of father monthly income, we received information only 7 % of fathers. The monthly income range was recorded from 1000 € to 3000 €, among these, most of parents had monthly income around 1000€.

Mothers' information; The collected data about mothers demonstrated that native countries of mothers were Serbia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Maz, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rumania, and others. Among these, 38 % mothers belonged to Serbia and 16 % belonged to Turkish. Qualification of mothers' also play very vital role in performance of their children. Teachers responded this question from record and also asking from students.

**Table 8:** Status of mothers' qualification

Qualification level	Frequency %
Uneducated	6
Primary	6
Secondary	14
Secondary +	0
Missing	74

The data listed that the 6% mothers of children with learning difficulties were uneducated, 6% had primary (5 years education), 14 % has 10 years education and about 74 % mothers, and teachers had no information about their education status. The status of religious affiliation of mothers' indicated that 44 % mothers' had affiliation with Christianity, 38 % with Islam, 6% had unknown status and 11 % were without any information. Mothers' level of German speaking was also recorded by teachers. The table 9 showing the information of German speaking level of mothers' of children learning difficulties.

**Table 9:** Mothers' speaking proficiency level in German

Level of Proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
Good	22	27.2
Satisfactory	37	45.7
Poor	22	27.2

The above table listed that most of mothers were with satisfactory level of German speaking but 22 % were with unsatisfactory level of proficiency in German. Teachers did not provide information of 78 % mothers' profession, among 22 % (10 % were house wives) and others were belonged to working class.

Status of children on leaning Basic skills; There are four basic skills; reading, writing, speaking and listening. The mastery over these skills helps to increase the performance of students in their studies. In this study teachers were asked to identify the children with immigrants' background who having the problems in four basic skills. The below table 10 showing the status of reading problems among immigrants children who enrolled in learning difficulties schools.

**Table 10:** Reading problem among children enrolled in learning difficulties schools

Proficiency Level	Male	Female	Total Frequency	Percent
Good	24	11	35	43.2
Satisfactory	11	8	19	23.5
Poor	20	6	26	32.1
missing	0	1	1	1.2

The data listed that 32 % of children with learning difficulties had problem in reading during their learning process. The children with learning difficulties from 13 to 15 years old were facing more problems in reading. The strength of children with age of 13 years were high (50%) and the strength of male children was also towering than female.

The table 11 showing the status of writing skills of children who enrolled in learning difficulties schools (SPZ).

**Table 11:** Writing problem among children enrolled in learning difficulties school

Proficiency Level	Male	Female	Frequency	Percent
Good	20	9	29	35.8
Satisfactory	12	8	20	24.7
Poor	22	8	30	37.0
missing	1	1	2	2.5
	55	26	81	100.0

The data listed that 37 % of children with learning difficulties had problems in writing during their learning process. The children from 11 to 15 years old were facing more problems in writing than other age group and strength of children with age of 13 were high (36%) among all children and strength of male children was towering than female.

**Table 12:** Speaking problems among children enrolled in learning difficulties schools

Proficiency Level	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage
Good	31	12	43	53
Satisfactory	8	7	15	18
Poor	13	4	17	21
missing	3	3	6	7.4

The data listed that 53 % of children with learning difficulties had good level of proficiency in speaking during their learning process and 21 % were facing problems in speaking during their learning process. The children from 12 to 15 years old were facing more problems in speaking than other children and among 12 to 15 age level of children, the strength of children with age of 14 were high (49%) and strength of male children was gigantic than female.

**Table 13:** Listening problems among children enrolled in learning difficulties schools

Proficiency Level	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage
Good	27	14	41	51
Satisfactory	15	10	25	31
Poor	13	02	15	18
	55	26	81	100.0

The data listed that 41 % children had good level of proficiency in listening and 18 % of children with learning difficulties had poor level of listening during their learning process. The children from 12 to 15 years old were facing more problems in listening than other children. The strength of children who were facing problem in listening of 14 years were high (57%) among 12 to 15 age level of children and strength of male children was lofty than female.

**Table 14:** Arithmetic problems among children enrolled in learning difficulties school

Proficiency Level	Male	Female	Frequency	Percent
Good	19	10	29	35.8
Satisfactory	15	5	20	24.7
Poor	15	15	30	37.0
missing	1	1	2	2.5
	55	26	81	100.0

The data listed that 37 % of children with learning difficulties had problems in arithmetic in their studies. The children from 11 to 15 years old were facing more problems in writing than other age group and strength of children with age of 13 were high (36%) among all children and strength of male children was towering than female.

**Analysis of interview Schedule with teachers:** All most all teachers do planning before teaching and did lesson planning daily. Per week workload of teachers was from one hour to eight hours. Most of teachers responded that they had opportunities of in service training once or twice in a year. The 40 % teachers responded the question of academic qualification which was from bachelor to Master degree and same situation with professional qualification most of teachers have professional qualification in Pedagogy. The analysis of seven leading questions was as under;

*Problems from parents;* Parents can be involved in any part of education and training of their children. There is no boundary for parents' participation. The federal law (Public Law 94-142, the "Education For All Handicapped Children Act") indicate the need and

importance of parent active participation in the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP) for each child. Majority of teachers responded that they were facing problems from most of parents, which create problems in improving the performance of their children. Teachers of leaning difficulties schools were facing the following major problems from parents; parents of immigrants' children have come from different culture and different background and that's why they were unable to integrate fully in the culture of Austria. Most of parents have German reading and speaking problems and so they feel hesitation to discuss the problems of their children with teachers and same time unable to guide their children in their studies. This situation leads to disinterest in schools and also the education of their children. Some parents have problems in locating good and secure job in the society and hence they much worried about their job security and have no time to take interest in the education of their children. .

*Teaching Techniques used by teachers in SPZ;* Majority of teachers that they were using the following techniques during their teaching learning process while teaching; 1) individual attention and different style with different students, 2) teaching in small groups, 3) division of complex information or lesson into small different steps for example breakdown an activity into different small steps, 4) activity based teaching in small groups, 5) always focus on strengths of students, 6) use of positive reinforcement during teaching learning process. A few of teachers were using following more techniques during the teaching to children with learning difficulties such as; rewrite the text into simple form and focus on child abilities and capacities so that children can understand the text quickly. Focus is on unit meaning and leaning with understanding.

*How to encourage parents to communicate with school?* Teachers responded that parents should be involved in class framework and school reform. Parents can be involved in solving school and educational issues. They can contribute in shape of good suggestions, support and physical help to solve the problems of school in preeminent ways.

Process used for the assessment of children with learning difficulties; Teachers responded that they used German language and mathematics during assessment and more focus on quantitative assessment, oral assessment is done only the students with disabilities such as visual, hearing, mental and physical disabilities.

*Factors responsible for the learning difficulties among children;* Majority of teachers responded that the main factors are 1) below-average talent of children or low intelligent quotient of children, 2) children are socially emotional and neglect, 3) poverty and malnutrition in yearly from the of 1 to 5 years specially, 4) lack of language skills and educated person in the family, 5) little knowledge of German among parents, and 6) no preschool attendance of children, in kindergarten basic skills of children can be improved and they can lean quickly as compared to other children. And some teachers also respond the following factors, stress environment of school and home, less motivation among children, low self esteem.

*Five best methods for the education of children with learning difficulties;* The majority of teachers responded that concentrate on words, leaning into small steps, task analysis

method, more and more revision, creative exercise, practical experience, use of simple language, use of concrete words rather than abstract words.

*How to improve the system of SPZ;* Majority of teachers responded that the present system of SPZ can be improve if increased supply in music, creative and sporting sector, number of students in a class should be less not more than 10 in each class. Services of psychologist, social workers, and special education teachers should be provided at home, number of civil servants, and helpers should be increase so that individual attention must be given on each student. The above suggestions are better, but the number of students already sufficient in most of schools, only there is limited schools, where the number of student in one class is more than ten but they are related to infrastructure and access. The service already available in schools are enough, there is need to best utilization of these services. There is need to improve the methodology used for the education of these children and more focus should be given in inclusive setting rather than isolation.

### **Onclusion and Recommendations**

The overall results of the study indicated that the hypothesis from 1 to 11 was rejected. The results of the study indicated that majority of children with learning difficulties in SPZ were with immigrants' background. The majority of children belonged to Christianity (54%) and Muslim (42%) and remaining (6%) did not expose their religious affiliation. In 2005 at least 18% (in Vienna more than 30%) of the population was either foreign or of foreign origin in Austria. Among these, Muslim is 4.2 %. The presence of Muslim children with learning difficulties in SPZ is high as expected with reference to Muslim ratio in Vienna. The majority of gender belonged to male in SPZ. The most of male children belonged to 13 years and female belonged to 15 years of both religions (Christian and Muslim) in SPZ. The majority of students enrolled with the age of 8 to 12 years. German proficiency level among children with learning difficulties was good and satisfactory and only 16% have poor level of proficiency which is the main problem during their studies in school. Majority of children belonged to Serbia and Turkey and at the same time they are also in majority in Vienna. German proficiency level in Christian ethnic group is high than Muslim due to many reasons such as home environment, education status and communication with school staff and other ethnic groups. The communication level with school staff was also less among Muslim parents. The majority of children have problem in reading and writing among 82% of children and few have problems in listening and speaking. These factors create problems among children which lead to learning problems or difficulties.

There is no boundary for parents' participation. The federal law (Public Law 94-142, the "Education For All Handicapped Children Act") indicate the need and importance of parent active participation in the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP) for each child. We should encourage parents to keep in touch with school staff about the performance and status of their child and also provide support to solve school matters. We should realize them that they are partner in schools. Teacher should also use language while communication with parents as simple as possible and do not blame

on parents about the low performance of their child in school. All SPZs should start afternoon support classes, which help to children in mastery over their subjects.

Early identification of learning disabilities or difficulties among immigrants children in mainstream schools is necessary. Early support must be provided to immigrants children so that the learning problems can be solved and dropout rate can be reduced because some parents responded during their interview that some of other families shifted from Austria to other English countries for the education of their children.

Many of researched proved that successful immigrants children have a longer road to success so extra year of schooling, creative and innovative methods of teaching can make them possible to show good performance in their studies. Parents level of involvement and communication with school staff was also observed very low due to working condition of parents, lack of proficiency in German language, fear of blame of low achievements of their children, fear of insult, bad experience from some teachers.

It is necessary to ensure parents involvement in schools. Parental participation in children's studies and school has a substantial effect on educational achievement. Parents can assist by gathering data about the student's performance both before and after the treatment and provisions of special services (Drew, et. al 1992). If parents are alerted to the critical areas being assessed, they can be more supportive and cooperative in instructional program. Parents' involvement can be increased by involving them in school activities, planning and frame work. Parents meetings should be organize in evening or holidays and special training so that they become equal partner in school in the education of their children. Training must be organized for teachers about how to increase parental involvement in school. Teachers should be bilingual as possible as with parents. Mother proficiency level was also need to improve, intensive focus must be given on this issue and in each school German speaking courses should be ensured. Some of the learning difficulties such as in reading, writing, speaking and listening can be eliminated through remedial language teaching program. There are also some problems such as mothers proficiency level can increased after optimal use of existing resources. The combination of dynamic diagnostic and assessment procedures, which are culturally valid will be helpful in identification of real problems among children and on the basis of counseling and group activities positive improvement can be possible. Teachers training institutions should train future teachers in such a way that they can design their own curricula in the light of the current social situation and likely trends in the schools.

For new immigrants, especially those entering secondary school, intensive involvement program with a preparatory phase and continuous language support will be helpful cope with other classmates. Teachers should be train in second language acquisition. Classroom teachers and language teachers should work in cooperation. The early start of compulsory school in a number of countries is extremely important for the acquisition of the second language. Children who are not ready or having problem in learning difficulty must be placed in same class and extra support must be provided to them. Longer route to success will be useful for children with learning difficulties

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