

A Comparative Analysis of the Self Esteem of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students

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Abstract: Present study was designed to make a comparison between sighted and visually impaired school students in relation with their self-esteem. The main objectives of this study were to measure self esteem of sighted and visually impaired students, to make a comparison between self esteem of sighted and visually impaired students and to investigate the role of students' demographic variations of gender, age and family socioeconomic status in determining their index of self esteem. For the measurement of self esteem, Self Esteem Questionnaire modified by Fleming and Courtney (1984) based on Revised Janis-Field Inadequacy Scale was used. It has 36 items and five subscales named as Self – Regard, Social Confidence, School Abilities, Physical Appearance and Physical Abilities. A stratified random sample of 200 students was taken from sighted and visually impaired schools going secondary and elementary level students. Among them 110 were male and 90 were female. Findings revealed that sighted school students have higher self esteem as compared to visually impaired school students and older age school students have high score on self esteem scale. It was also revealed that male sighted students have higher self esteem as compared to male visually impaired. Female school students have low self self-esteem as compared to male visually impaired and sighted students. Finding of the study will be useful for the visually impaired and sighted students and their teachers. Findings may provide opportunities to psychologist and school counselor as a device some strategy which can boost the self esteem level of Visually impaired students which ultimately helps in psychological and social adjustment at school and society.

Key Words: Self Esteem. Social Confidence. Physical Appearance. Visually Impaired Students.

Introduction:

Sum of feelings, cognition and judgment of abilities in educational, social, inherited and body image of individual is called self esteem. It is familiar perception that people have a tendency of less mental health and more acclimation in society who values themselves in different areas of their lives. When these are not performing well, they never behave inadequately and they hold right view of their capability. People are able to fix to the objections that come in their way by valuing themselves. They are more sophisticated and internally solid, due to this reason they are able to handle position in more healthy and healthy way. There is no easy way to explain the term self-esteem but one of the simplest way in which it has been delineate by Webster's dictionary, which define it as: "self-esteem is satisfaction with oneself". The term self-esteem has been rooted from the Greek word which means "reverence for self". The word self that is used in self-esteem refers to the values, beliefs, and attitudes that we had make for ourselves. In simplest way self-esteem is represented as accepting us as a way we are in the current situation.

Literature review:

Self esteem is an important concept in the field of the psychology and education. Different researchers have studied this area from various perspectives. In general self-esteem refers to the overall evaluation of a person. Leary & MacDonald[1] and Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon[2] have defined self-esteem as: "self-esteem is broadly well-defined assessment of the individual' attitude of his or her own self".

In social psychology self-esteem is consider as to be one of the main concept that has been studied in the research of Baumeister, Wells & Marwell, and Wylie as cited in Robinson, Shaver & Wringhtsman[3]. Teachers, administrators and parents are commonly concerned about students' self-esteem. Its implication is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of

all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good [4]. Harter & Rosenberg explained that self-esteem is associated with depression, anxiety, motivation and general satisfaction with one's life as cited Brinthaupt.T & Lipka.R [5]. Given these associations, children and adolescents who lack self-esteem may be more dependent on their parents and have lower occupational interests. Moreover the belief is widespread that raising an individual's self-esteem (especially that of a child or adolescent) would be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole. Baron & Byrne[6] stated that self esteem is an individual's attitude about him or herself, involving self- evaluation along a positive- negative dimension.

There are two types of self-esteem i.e. global self-esteem and specific self-esteem. Epstein explains global self-esteem as an overall evaluation of the wide range consequence related to one's experience whereas; specific self esteem name implies it refers to the narrow evaluation of the domains of oneself (as cited Murk's [7]).

In his theory, Maslow after a prolong research came to know that motivates people. He claimed that people have set of motivation system that is distinct to unconscious desires. The earliest and well-known description of Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes five broader layers: physiological, safety, social, esteem and self actualization needs those represented in a pyramid of hierarchical levels.

Figure

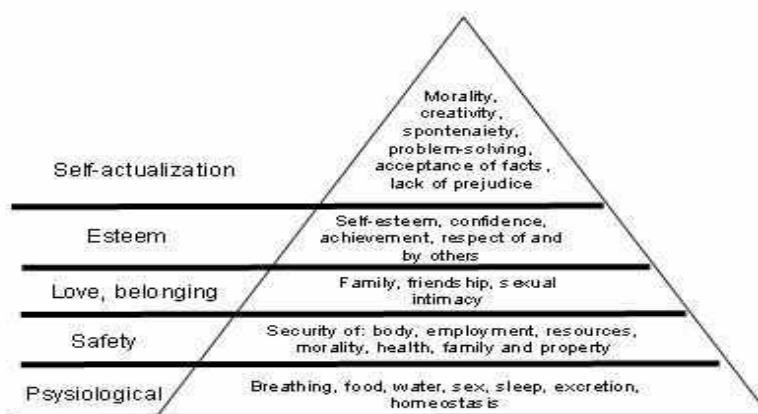


Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid. Taken from Hartzell.S[8]

Maslow affirmed that people are motivated to get certain desires, when one need is satisfied a person seeks to satisfy the next one and so on and so forth. Maslow distinguished between two types of esteem need that is low and high self esteem. The low ones need involves the respect of others need for status appreciation and consideration whereas high ones is need for self respect such as competence, independence and success. Maslow's opinioned that because of deficiency of respect and acceptance, individuals may not be able to grow and achieve higher level of self esteem (as cited Wright [9]).

Leary[10] in Sociometer theory stated that self esteem is as a psychological gauge or meter that examines the quality of peoples with society. The theory also monitors the level of environment in which the individual is exists accepted versus rejected by other people. The role of self esteem is different in psychological phenomena. According to him individual who is not valued and accepted by society, can have low self esteem and disturbed relation with other members of society.

Terror Management Theory first proposed by Solomon, Pyszczynski and Greenberg[11] suggested that an idea of self esteem is to buffer against theory psychological risk of death. According to this theory high self esteem reflects the successful contribution and incorporation of significant cultural worldview. On the other hand low self esteem reflects unsuccessful buffer against mortality anxiety due to collapse to meet cultural values. [12]

Another perspective on self-esteem comes from Self-Determination Theory [13]. A fundamental postulate of SDT is that humans have three innate psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness[13]. Competence refers to feeling effective in interacting with one's environment. Autonomy refers to feeling that one's behavior is freely chosen. This concept is often confused with individualism, or behaving separately from others. However, in the SDT framework, behaving in line with others can be autonomous so long as the individual feels that behavior is chosen freely [14]. Finally, relatedness refers to the desire to be connected to others. SDT argues that conditions that are supportive of these

three needs will foster behavior that is self-determined, or motivated by personal choice rather than external control. Such self-determined behavior is related to higher levels of well-being.

Like any other special person, people with visual impairment want to be treated like everyone else. Most of such people do not seek pity or even unnecessary help. Although they may need assistance in some situations but mainly they prefer to be independent. They appreciate the sensitivity of others but they want to be reminded of their similarities rather than their differences. Visual impairments seem to evoke more awkwardness than most of other disabilities. They have variety of symbols like white cane, thick or darkened glasses, and a guide dog. Possible contributor to our awkwardness around visually impaired people is the role that eyes play in social interaction. Poets, play writers and songwriters have long recognized how emotionally expressive the eyes can be. It is uncomfortable to talk someone who does not make eye contact with anyone. Such behaviour of the society sometime lead visually impaired person low self concept.

Since objective of education is not just to develop the cognitive skills but also to develop the overall personality development of students irrespective to their abilities and disabilities. Visually impaired children suffer from defects of their eyes that make them handicapped in terms of their visual ability and sense. According to Willis for many professionals and educators legal classification scheme inadequate, they have observed that visual acuity is not a very accurate predictor of how people will function or use whatever remaining sight they have. Although a small percentage of legally visually impaired individuals have absolutely no vision, the vast majority are able to see. For example an extensive study of legally visually impaired students found that only 18 percent were totally visually impaired as cited Zell [15]. For educational purposes, visually impaired individuals must learn to through Braille or through aural and tactile methods. Sometime Educators refer to use magnifying devices or large print books to low vision students' .low vision individuals who can read print, even if they need

Since this research area is vital that could provide information about psychological state of mind of school going students including sighted and visually impaired, but there is lack of research in this area. Even while conducting literature review it was concluded the even in Western framework not a single study was found which can contain the comparative analysis of the self esteem of the sighted and visually impaired students. So in the context of Pakistan, no study was found that could tell about above said comparison therefore, present research was planned to find out association between above said variables in Pakistani cultural context.

Problem Statement:

Problem of the study was to make a comparison between the self esteem of sighted and visually impaired schools students; it further aims to unravel the function of students' demographic variations of gender, age and family socioeconomic status in determining their level of self esteem

Objectives of Study:

1. To measure self esteem of sighted and visually impaired school students.
2. To make a comparison between self esteem of sighted and visually impaired school students.
3. To investigate the role of students' demographic variations of gender, age and family socioeconomic status in determining level of their self esteem.

Hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant difference in the self esteem of sighted school and visually impaired school students.

H2: Male sighted students will have higher self esteem as compared with male visually impaired students.

H3: Male sighted and visually impaired students will have higher self esteem as compared with female sighted and visually impaired students.

H4: Sighted students from higher income families have higher score on self esteem questionnaire as compared to visually impaired students.

H5: Older visually impaired students have higher score on self esteem questionnaire as compared to sighted younger students.

Methodology:

Population:

The population of the study was comprised of all elementary and secondary level visually impaired and sighted students studying in private or public sector institutions of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Sargodha and Attock districts.

Data was collected from various districts due to the fact that under Government of Pakistan Ordinance (2001) Devolution of Powers, the school education has gone under the District Governments and keeping in view the disperse population of visually impaired student researcher intend to collect data from various district of Punjab including capital territory Islamabad Rawalpindi. One of the major reasons of selecting this large population is this that as compare to sighted students the population of visually impaired students was reasonably low therefore; data was collected from four above said district

Sampling:

According to Gay [16], stratified random sampling is a way to guarantee desired representation of the relevant subgroups within the sample, means the population can be divided in to subgroups or strata. According to Gay 10% of population is sufficient for study to generalize on the whole population. Data was gather through stratified random sampling by dividing population on the basis of general and special education. After selecting two strum data of 200 was collected randomly from three districts of Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory.

Since research was quantitative and descriptive in nature, data was collected with the help of Self Esteem Questionnaire modified by Fleming and Courtney [17] based on Revised Janis-Field Inadequacy Scale. This scale has 36 statements which were categorized under following five subscales.

Self – Regard: It contains seven items (7, 13, 14, 26, 32 and 35). This scale measures self respect of respondents.

Social Confidence: It contains twelve items (2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 27, 31, and 33). This scale measures the confidence of respondents in society.

School Abilities: It contains seven items (9, 10, 17, 19, 22, 28, and 34). This scale measures the abilities of student in respondents.

Physical Appearance: It contains five items (3, 23, 25, 29, and 36). This scale measures the physical appearance of the respondents.

Physical Abilities: It contains five items (4, 8, 18, 24, and 30). This scale measures the physical abilities of the respondents.

Results:

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of sighted and visually impaired school students on Self Esteem Questionnaire for the variable category of student. This table describes the difference in the score of self esteem in both groups. The results revealed that sighted school students ($M = 115.2$) is having higher self esteem than visually impaired school students ($M = 110.27$). Scale wise analysis describes that sighted learner has high score on the subscale social confidence than visually impaired learners.

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of sighted and visually impaired students for the variable gender on Self Esteem Questionnaire. Table reveals that sighted male school students have high self esteem than sighted female school students whereas, visually impaired male school students are having high self esteem than visually impaired female school students. Overall sighted and visually impaired girls are having bit lower self esteem than males.

In table 3 describes the difference between the scores of sighted and visually impaired school students on Self Esteem Questionnaire for the variable gender , $p < .000^*$. Result shows there is a significant difference between the score of boys and girls in term of their self esteem.

Table 4 revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the scores of sighted and visually impaired school students on Self esteem Questionnaire for the variable age. $F, (63,136) = 1.583, p < .014$.

Table no. 5 indicates the mean and standard deviation of family monthly income of sighted and visually impaired school students. The sighted adolescent those monthly family income is less than 50,000 have low self esteem than the visually impaired students of same category. The visually impaired school students those monthly family income is 75,000 and above are having lower self esteem than visually sighted students of this income group.

Table 6 describes mean and standard deviation of sighted and visually impaired adolescent on Self Esteem Questionnaire. It describes that visually impaired younger students have higher self esteem than sighted ones. As compared with sighted school students mean score is higher at the age of 16 years. On rest of the age groups sighted students have higher level of self esteem when compared with visually impaired students.

Discussion:

The main purpose of study was to explore the research objectives which includes: to assessment of self esteem among sighted and visually impaired school students and to investigate the impact of demographic variables such as gender, age and family income on self esteem of sighted and visually impaired school students. Several hypotheses were formulated to test above mentioned research objectives.

The first hypothesis was there is a significant difference in the self esteem of sighted school and visually impaired school students. Results revealed that sighted school students have higher self esteem than visually impaired school students. Subscales results of self esteem informs that high self esteem is significantly correlated with self regard and social confidence.

The second hypothesis was male sighted students will have higher self esteem as compared with male visually impaired students. The result of study makes it clear that sighted students are having higher self esteem than visually impaired students. Third hypothesis was that male sighted and visually impaired students will have higher self esteem as compared with female sighted and visually impaired students.

Result on the variable gender shows that males sighted and visually impaired students are having higher self esteem than females sighted and visually impaired students. Literature review related also showed the same results as found by Arora [18] that visually challenged girls have less esteem than males.

Fourth hypothesis of the study was that sighted students from higher income families have higher score on self esteem questionnaire as compared to visually impaired students. The results shows that sighted school students whose monthly family income is more than 75,000 have higher self esteem among all groups. As far as the comparison between sighted and visually impaired is concerned overall sighted students of all income groups are having higher self esteem than visually impaired. The reason may be that mostly visually impaired school students are studying in government school because these students have lower socio-economic status. Same as this study Gilbert, Shah and Jadoon (2008) [19] and Smith and Smith (1996) [20] in their studies found that people who have low socioeconomic group share more burden of blindness than those of higher socioeconomic group.

The fifth hypothesis was that older visually impaired students have higher score on self esteem questionnaire as compared to sighted younger students. Overall results revealed self esteem develops gradually. As compared to older visually impaired, older sighted school students have higher self esteem.

Recommendations:

Since emotional intelligence is comprises of a large set of abilities that have been studied by psychologists for many years. Through this one of the many different aspects of self esteem were discovered in the context of special and normal students of elementary and secondary level. Study provided us unique relationship between unseen causes of students' behaviour, in schools, students have diverse nature, and some are doing in excellent way while other is doing carelessly. It is recommended that in order to create a sense of responsibility in the youth, teachers and parents must focus to promote self esteem of students through teaching, training, practical demonstration and becoming role model for students. Positive self-esteem also plays an important role in students' life; therefore in school an environment may be promoted that enhance positive self-esteem among students. Finding of the study will be helpful to special education teachers and managers. It is expected that on the basis of study's findings they may devise some strategy that can enhance the self esteem of their students because enhanced self esteem is help full for effective performance at school and work place in the long run.

1. Finding revealed that level of the self esteem of sighted school students is higher as compared to visually impaired school students so it is recommended that parents, teachers and policymakers may play their role to boost the self esteem to visually impaired students.

2. Male sighted and visually impaired school students have high self esteem as compared to female sighted and visually impaired school students therefore, need is there to put extra efforts on building self esteem of female visually impaired and sighted school going students.

3. Results reported that sighted students from higher income families have higher self esteem scale; it is therefore recommended that parents from lower income families put extra efforts for the betterment self esteem of their children.

Table 1
Comparison of Mean and Standard Deviation of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students on SEQ (N=200)

Subscales	Sighted Students (n = 100)		Visually Impaired Students (n = 100)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Regard	22.72	5.388	21.86	5.104
Social Confidence	34.90	6.801	34.35	6.076
School Abilities	23.28	5.023	22.22	4.400
Physical Appearance	17.86	4.422	16.45	4.213
Physical Abilities	16.44	3.945	15.39	3.365
Total	115.20	25.579	110.27	23.158

Table 2
Comparison of M and SD of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students on SEQ for the variable Gender (N=200)

Subscales	Sighted Students (n = 100)		Visually Impaired Students (n = 100)	
	Male students		Female students	
	N = 50		N = 60	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	22.70	3.981	23.15	5.281
Social Confidence	35.66	5.677	35.87	4.991
School Abilities	22.82	3.826	23.13	3.730
Physical Appearance	17.32	3.285	16.45	3.744
Physical Abilities	16.40	3.175	16.15	3.453
Total	114.9	19.944	114.75	21.199
	N = 50		N = 40	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	20.74	4.593	20.25	6.050
Social Confidence	32.14	5.425	33.18	7.812
School Abilities	21.74	4.179	20.70	5.743
Physical Appearance	16.40	4.789	15.43	4.992
Physical Abilities	14.48	2.358	14.10	3.888
Total	105.5	21.344	103.66	28.485

Table 3
t-distribution of Sighted and Visually Impaired Secondary School Students Score on SEQ for the Variable Gender (N=200)

Source	df	t	sig
Gender	198	3.915	.000*

*Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4
One – Way ANOVA of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students Score on SEQ for the Variable Age (N=200)

Source	df	F	sig
Age	199	1.583	.014*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5

Comparison of M and SD of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students on SEQ for the Variable Monthly Family Income (N=200)

Subscales	Sighted Students (n = 100)		Visually Impaired Students (n = 100)	
Less than 50000				
	N= 47		N=84	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Regard	20.77	5.023	22.08	5.151
Social Confidence	32.47	5.254	34.95	6.248
School Abilities	21.00	4.217	22.54	4.725
Physical Appearance	15.60	4.287	16.14	3.869
Physical Abilities	14.83	3.547	15.35	3.599
Total	104.67	22.328	111.06	23.592
between 51000- 75000				
	N= 26		N=14	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Regard	21.77	4.141	23.00	7.884
Social Confidence	32.77	4.598	35.36	6.184
School Abilities	22.77	3.525	20.64	4.733
Physical Appearance	17.15	3.947	16.43	6.073
Physical Abilities	16.12	3.947	16.14	4.130
Total	110.58	20.158	111.57	29.00
75000-above				
	N= 27		N=02	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Regard	23.33	2.801	11.00	2.828
Social Confidence	37.48	6.375	24.00	0.000
School Abilities	24.04	3.436	17.00	2.828
Physical Appearance	18.78	3.178	9.00	0.000
Physical Abilities	15.85	2.161	9.00	2.828
Total	119.48	17.951	70.00	8.484

Table 6

Comparison of M and SD of Sighted and Visually Impaired School Students on SEQ for the variable Age (N=200)

Subscales	Sighted Students (n = 100)		Visually Impaired Students (n = 100)	
13 years				
	N = 19		N = 01	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	22.47	5.048	26.00	0.000
Social Confidence	33.84	6.030	32.00	0.000
School Abilities	22.68	4.460	25.00	0.000
Physical Appearance	16.16	3.404	19.00	0.000
Physical Abilities	15.26	2.663	17.00	0.000
Total	110.41	21.605	119.00	0.000
14years				
	N = 32		N = 14	

	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	22.28	3.457	21.07	5.636
Social Confidence	34.63	6.272	34.57	5.170
School Abilities	24.16	3.836	22.43	4.847
Physical Appearance	18.66	3.158	15.07	4.085
Physical Abilities	15.81	2.811	13.29	3.625
Total	115.54	19.534	106.43	23.363
15years				
	N = 42		N = 10	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	20.54	4.605	21.00	5.518
Social Confidence	32.61	4.483	35.40	9.033
School Abilities	20.39	3.255	21.00	3.432
Physical Appearance	15.66	4.464	15.60	3.893
Physical Abilities	15.12	3.148	15.80	3.706
Total	104.32	19.955	108.8	25.582
16years				
	N = 07		N = 75	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-regard	24.71	3.302	21.38	5.042
Social Confidence	38.57	8.284	34.92	5.515
School Abilities	23.86	3.716	24.54	5.651
Physical Appearance	18.29	4.990	16.08	4.173
Physical Abilities	15.71	3.498	15.00	2.677
Total	121.14	23.790	111.92	23.058

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