

A study of Self Esteem of Physically Disadvantaged Students: A Comparative Analysis of Demographic variations

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Abstract

The current research addresses the area of physical and special education side by side. The research was designed with four major objectives. The major objective was to assess self-esteem level of the students with physical disabilities. Further it was aimed at comparison of self esteem on the basis of the physical disability, gender and grades/age. The researcher followed comparative survey-based research design to conduct the research. The population of the study consisted of 193 physically disadvantaged students studying in 08 special schools of Islamabad. 124 physically disable students contributed as sample. The tool for data collection was adopted from the work of Rosenberg (1965) and revised by Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) was used as a research instrument. The results revealed that nearly all the students were at average level of self esteem. Statistically significant difference was found on the basis of physical disability in self esteem level of students. Students with low IQ level exhibited lowest level of self esteem in comparison to other types of physical disabilities. However, no significant difference was found in self-esteem of the students on the basis of gender. Further on the basis of grade/age there was a significant difference, the students of grade 9th were better in comparison to the students of grade 10th. Thus, it was recommended that physical activities like games and sports may be the compulsory part of school time. Daily 1 – 2 hours need to be allocated for the physical activities, because the physically-challenged students need such activities more than normal children. Role playing and simulations may also be arranged for students at schools, so that physically disable students may learn to interact with each other in a positive way. The interaction would help them to increase their self-confidence.

Key Words: Self Esteem, Physically disadvantaged and Physical Education

Introduction

Health is the most important blessing of Allah given to any living creation. The famous proverb 'Health is Wealth' also supports that health is the most important element of human life. A healthy person can not only deal with daily life matters easily but can also bear the psychological pressures of work and family life. Medically it is proved that long duration illnesses can not only disturb the physical health but also affect the psychological state of mind. However, this is also a fact that everyone is not given everything on the face of the earth. Thus, there are certain cases in which people are suffering from certain diseases, accidents and mishaps. As a result of such circumstances sometimes some people have to face the loss of some major part of the body. This situation is termed as physical disability.

Physical disability can be caused by birth as well as due to any certain mishap at any stage of life. Physical disability may be referred to any physical disorder that can affect the daily routine matters of one's life. This may include blind, deaf and dumb persons. It also includes physically handicapped people, people with weak eyesight or with hearing disabilities. Such type of disabilities affects on the interpersonal skills, confidence and ability to deal with the people normally. This also affects the self-esteem of the individual. Parents can play a vital role in shaping their children's minds.

It is a very natural observation that in many cases people who have any kind of physical disability also suffer from some psychological issues. Depression, loneliness, low motivation, de-socialization, low self esteem are the common effects of such disabilities. In many developed countries, governments have established centers where such people can come and share their problems with psychologists. In these countries such psychological counseling services are also provided at school as well.

However, in Pakistan unfortunately we do not have such type of facilities in our schools. In most cases we do not have special schools separately for handicapped individuals. Studying in regular schools with normal students is also a challenge for these special students. In such cases problems related to self confidence, behavior, motivation, socialization and self esteem are observed. Special students need extra and special attention and care from the teacher as well. In this regard our teacher training programs also need improvement.

Keeping in view the situation, the current study has been designed to trace the variation and compare the levels of self-esteem level of physically disadvantaged students based on demographical variation of the students. In doing so the research is focused on suggesting measures to improve self esteem through physical activities.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of self esteem among students with physical disabilities.
2. To compare self esteem of students with physical disadvantaged students with mentally disadvantaged students.
3. To present a gender-based comparison of self-esteem level of physically disadvantaged students.
4. To compare self-esteem level of students based of Grade/Age.

Research Hypothesis

1. Statistically no significant difference is in self-esteem level of physically disadvantaged students.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in level of self-esteem of physically disadvantaged students on the basis of gender.
3. There is no difference in self-esteem level of physically disadvantaged students on the basis of Grade/Age.

Significance of the Study

The research study would be significant in many ways. It is the most needed area of research in Pakistan. In most of the cases in Pakistan the special students are studying with the regular school system. Here they face problems related to the availability of the facilities. In most of the schools' psychologists are not available. Special students need guidance and counseling services more than normal students. Similarly other facilities like games, sports, plays, simulations and peer group learning activities are more important for students with physical disabilities.

In this regard this research would be beneficial for special children studying at all levels. Students will get administrative and teaching support by the implementation of the research recommendations. The teachers would get guidance related to the psychological issues and problems of students with physical disabilities. In this way they would be in a better position to deal with the daily classroom issues. The school management would also benefit to learn the ways to facilitate such students in better way.

Literature Review

Self-esteem as a personality construct is only an estimate of its own, so it is usually considered private and personal. In general, it means that a person is worth everything to him or herself. The composition of self-esteem includes many beliefs, such as the evaluation of their appearance, emotions, cognition, and behavior. Self-esteem is a distinctive human quality for necessary for social survival and overall development. It will be based on a person's faith and consciousness automatically generated, and with a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings, and behavior together. Self-esteem is our own evaluation, our own overall attitude and positive or negative understanding about our own self. It can be calculated clearly or absolutely. Disability is one of the most uncomfortable feelings, because most of the times disable person do not understand why everyone is "normal" but they are not. They knew that their physical disability had limited their performance, and that they had a correct analysis of them in the young mind. What they feel is that they are not similar to normal people, and these differences greatly limit them in their daily lives and performance. This really gives these children a great deal of confusion and frustration (Pizzi, 2018).

Robertson (1978) describes self-esteem is an individual's own assessment of his own speech and public behavior is the best estimate of personal evaluation. Among all these, the community tries to suppress their feelings and tries to avoid them from the normal world, which will seriously affect the individual in all respects. Disability is one of the general terms covering barriers and movement restrictions. Restrictions on the function or

structure of the person as a participant in the restriction are still a problem that is an issue of personal participation in life. Thus, disability is a multifaceted fact that triggers the interaction between a person's physical type and the social characteristics of his / her living.

Disabled children may sometimes be considered "different" by other students. In some cases, this could lead to exclusion from play or companion and social isolation experience. This experience of segregation and marginalization is a common factor in children's mental health troubles. However, children with special needs can also experience good mental health and well-being in a respect providing and supportive environment by appreciating and promoting their strengths. All children, naturally, have a positive relationship and feel a sense of belongingness towards their institution. These positive experiences are particularly important for children with other needs. The term "disability" refers to a wide range of conditions that limit the ability of people to manage their daily lives to some extent. Different disabilities are usually divided into categories such as mental retardation, learning disabilities, sensory and speech disorders, acquired brain damage or physical disability. Disability has restrictions on what children can do. It may limit them to participate in some of the activities they have done by their classmates. It is vital to see the whole child, not just a disability or illness. Providing support for children in need is also important to reduce the limits of their participation and maximize the chances of success. This method helps to build the power of self-restraint and try new things. It promotes valuation and accommodates all children in a way (Dix, 2010).

There are also many important studies reported that there is a lack confidence, self concept and self esteem among people with disabilities. In this regard teachers and parents can really help children in different ways. They can encourage them to take risks (social, classroom and sports), by assuming failure to help them face difficult or challenging tasks, to avoid harassment and protection of others (Linda, 2008).

An individual with any form of disability has one or another problem of interaction with the community. Disability is a hurdle in the way of the performance of one or more of the elements of a generally accepted daily life. This means that the individual cannot have a certain degree of independence (Reynell, 1976). Disabled students around the world are likely to have limited socialization, feel neglected, and experience more isolation than normal students in any educational institution because disability is found to have effect their level of self-esteem either positively or negatively. The effect depends on self-perception of students and perceptions of other people about the special students. If a special student is treated negatively, they are likely to lack self-confidence. Lack of self-confidence cannot be referred to lack of ability. This may be just a person's own set of false beliefs. The way of dealing with people, society which can affect the self-esteem. Physical disability and community attributes affect a person's self-confidence (Skinner, 2001).

Positive self -esteem is considered as an indicator of students' academic achievement. Self-esteem seems to have effect on ability of children to learn and perform. Self-esteem also seem to have effect on motivation of students for their academic learning and

performance. Research has approved that students with disabilities have a greater risk of possessing low self-esteem (Lyons, 2012). According to studies, major disabilities do not seem to affect general self-esteem and minor physical disability, such as clumsy and coordinated barriers, because society can see why major people with disabilities can not do everything for themselves. Some studies have shown that fewer children, children with disabilities and young people are less likely to experience more loneliness, more ridicule and / or neglect than people with disabilities. People with disabilities often receive negative reactions related to their physique which contributes to the possession of low self-esteem. Students with physical disabilities generally possess negative self-esteem than normal students, but who have performed well in academic, sports, theater and other areas of study have a high degree of self-esteem (Cabra, 2003).

Renick and Harter (1989) point out that students who are with learning disabilities are more likely to be students who are not having learning disabilities. Those who compare their own self with others may feel that other students are better because of being normal, which may lead to lower self-esteem. Factors that may affect the self-esteem of a particular student include but are not limited to understanding their learning disabilities (Rothman, 1995), expectations of others, learning methods, academic performance, peer and peer school, and the academic performance of high school students (Marzano, 2003).

While some researchers agree that self-esteem will affect academic achievement (Colvin, 2000). In A study by Kloomek and Cosden (1994) used 72 students with learning disabilities. They found that those with lower self-concept were having low level of academic achievement.

Narimani and Mousazadeh (2010) also found significant differences in self-esteem between the average score of disabled and normal students. Lasker (2010) points out that compared with healthy children, children with disabilities have similar serious psychosocial problems. Puranen, Seuri, Simoli and Elo (1999) found that disabled participants showed symptoms of anxiety and depression compared with the general population.

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher had adopted survey based comparative style of research. Further in a broader prospective it was based on quantitative analysis of the data.

Population

Population of the study was consisted of all the student enrolled in special schools of Islamabad city. Data showed that total eight Special school were working in Islamabad in which 193 disabled students were studying.

Sample

Through convenient sampling technique a sample of 124 students with physical disabilities were selected as a sample for data collection.

Tool

For the purpose of data collection, the self-esteem assessment scale developed by Rosenberg (1965) was used as data collection instrument. The scale was revised in 2003

by Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs. The revised version was based on 10 items and this version was adopted for the purpose of data collection.

Data collection and analysis

Data was collected through personal visits to special education schools by the researchers. After collecting the data, data was analyzed with statistical package for social sciences 2.1 edition. The following table No. 1 explains the statistical procedure used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Table No. 1
Data Analysis

Hypothesis	Statistical analysis
Ho1	ANOVA
Ho2	t Test
Ho3	t Test

Results

Table No. 2
Self Esteem Scale Reliability

Scale	Items	Reliability
Self Esteem Assessment Scale	10	.62

Table No. 2 shows that the reliability of the scale was found .62. It indicates that the scale was reliable up to satisfactory level.

Table No. 3
Level of Self Esteem

Level of self esteem	Score	N	Percentage
Low	0 – 20	49	39.5
Average	21 – 40	75	60.5
High	41+	-	-

Table No. 3 shows that majority (60.5%) of the students were having average level of self esteem, While 39.5% of the students were at low level of self esteem. However no one of the students was having high level of self esteem.

Table No. 4
Disability based Comparison

Variable	Disability	N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Self Esteem	Blind/Partial blind	17	22.59	25.30	118	0.00

Deaf	39	21.46
Dump	30	16.40
Spina Bifida	08	30.00
Poliomielitis	10	29.20
Handicape	20	27.70

*p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table No. 4 shows there was statistically significant difference (F = 25.30) found in self esteem of the students on the basis of physical disabilities. Dump students were having the lowest level of self esteem (mean = 16.40) in comparison to others, while handicapped students were found better (Mean = 27.70) with reference to self esteem.

Table No. 5
Gender based Comparison

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig
Self Esteem	M	86	22.01	1.47	122	.14
	F	38	23.84			

*p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table No.5 shows that there was no statistically significant difference (t = 1.47) found between male and female respondents with reference to the self esteem.

Table No. 6
Age based Comparison

Variable	Grade/ Age	N	Mean	t	df	Sig
Self Esteem	9 th	66	23.82	2.53	122	.02
	10 th	58	21.16			

*p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table No. 6 shows that there was statistically significant (t = 2.53) difference found between the students of 9th and 10th grade with reference to self esteem. The students of 9th grade were found better in self esteem in comparison to the students of 10th grade.

Discussion

A large number of professionals around the world are working on rehabilitation. Vigorously assist the disabled children to live in the normal society a normal life. Sometimes their efforts have achieved great success. Self esteem is the self concept that anyone creates for his/herself. It is the set of beliefs about own self. This concept helps in gaining confidence and enables the individual to deal with the society in a better way. Self esteem is the basic human psychological need that molds the personality. It is the

sense of being worthy, respectable and valuable. In the mid 60's Morris Rosenberg worked on the concept of self esteem and developed Rosenberg self esteem scale (1965). The same scale is worldly known as a reliable instrument to assess self esteem. The scale developed by Rosenberg (1965) has been revised and used by many researchers latter on. In this context many researchers show that high level of self esteem increases the chances of success in once educational and professional career. It helps in social adjustment as well. It has also been observed that social pressures, financial problems, family background, cultural settings and physical disabilities affect the level of self esteem. So is the case with this current research. The major objective of the researcher was to assess the level of self esteem of the students with physical disabilities. The results revealed that none of the physically disable student was having high level of self esteem. However there was statistically significant difference found on the basis of disability and age/grade in self esteem of the students. The dump students were having lowest level of self esteem in comparison to other types of disable students. Surprisingly it was also found that the student of grade 9th were better in self esteem in comparison to the students of grade 10th. That shows that as the students grow they decrease the self esteem and self concept. It reveals that the physical disabilities affect the self esteem of the students. As the students with such disabilities grows and move in our society, they face multiple issues. These issues are majorly concerned with psychological state of mind as well. Thus the non – supportive environment affects negativity on the self esteem of the individuals.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that physical activities like games and sports may be the compulsory part of school time. Daily 1–2 hours need to be allocated for the physical activities, because the physically disable students need such activities more than normal children.
2. Role playing and simulations may be arranged for students at schools, so that physically disable students will interact with each other in a positive way. The interaction would help them to increase their self confidence.
3. Teachers serving in special education schools may also be given special training after every 6 months related to dealing with students with less confidence or psychological issues.
4. Students may be motivated by using motivational strategies in the classes on regular basis.
5. Different festivals and national days may be celebrated in schools so the student may learn to interact and develop relationships.

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