

Self-Esteem and Emotional Stability of Visually Challenged Students

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The present paper attempts to study certain demographic variables as determinants of self-esteem and emotional stability of visually challenged students. The sample constitutes 100 visually challenged students of Ahmadi School for Blinds, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, out of which 63 are boys and 37 girls belonging to the age range of 5-18 years. The tools self-esteem inventory and emotional stability test for children were used for the study. The data collected were analyzed statistically by using stepwise regression analysis. Out of the demographic variables of gender, age, class, family system and area of living, only gender emerged as the significant predictor of emotional stability of visually challenged students and none of the demographic variables emerged as predictors of self-esteem of these students.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Emotional Stability, Visually Challenged Students

In the past, challenged children were generally excluded from the purview of nominal experience. They have been treated as defective beings and believed that these children will not profit from regular schools and their facilities. In the early nineteenth century as the idea of democracy, individual freedom and egalitarianism swept in west, and advancement in learning theory and technology contributed to the emergence of optimistic attitude towards challenged pupils. UNESCO envisaged the most positive response to this section of population in the year 1946. In India educational provisions for challenged children has become a priority as a result of the National Policy on Education 1986. All these attempts brought the galore of publicity on the needs of the blind in the world and in India as well. The population of visually challenged people in India is approximately 40.5 million. Individual whose normal learning and development is impaired by visual conditions and who therefore, need specific conditions and related services in order to develop their abilities can be identified as visually challenged (Whitmore, 1981).

Demographic data refers to selected population characteristics as used in government, marketing or opinion research, or the demographic profile in such research. Commonly used demographic include: Gender refers to an individual's "psychological type", it is acquired through experience. An individual can be viewed as either masculine or feminine. It refers to the differences between men and women. Age may refer to the length of time that an organism has lived. Education is a broad concept; it refers to all the experiences in which children can learn something. The nuclear family or conjugal family is the basic unit of family organization in virtually every society. It is generally defined as a married couple and their children (including adopted and fostered children, as well as the couple's natural children). Joint family consists of a man, his wife, their adult sons, their wives and children, younger children of parental couple (Gore, 1968).

Over the past few decades, self-esteem has been the theme of numerous conferences and the subject of many books. The topic has huge exposure, and parents and teachers

have been endlessly instructed about how important it is to build a child's self-esteem. Self-esteem is a widely used concept both in popular language and in psychology. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

Emotional stability is considered as one of the important aspect of human life. It is one of the effective determinants of the personality patterns. An emotionally stable individual has the capacity to withstand delay in satisfaction of needs, capability to tolerate a reasonable amount of frustration, belief in long term planning and is able of delaying or revising his expectations in terms of demands of the situations.

Kling, Hyde, Showers and Buswell (1999) conducted a study to examine gender differences in global self-esteem. Result indicated that male score higher on standard measure of global self-esteem than females but the difference is small. Mullis and Chapman (2000) studied the relationship between coping, gender, age and self-esteem in adolescents and found that adolescents with higher self-esteem used more problem-focused coping strategies and adolescents with lower self-esteem used more emotion focused coping strategies. Vasuki and Reddy (1997) explored the self-esteem of single children using an ex-post facto design, which revealed that most of the children had high self-esteem and no gender differences in the self-esteem of 12-15 years olds were found. Overall all boys showed high self-esteem, and also indicated significant differences in the self-esteem of boys of the two age groups whereas the same was not observed in the case of girls.

Hay and Ashman (2003) investigated gender differences associated with the development of adolescents' sense of general self-concept and emotional stability were

investigated with 655 adolescents. Relationships with parents were important for males' emotional stability, but not females. Peer relations were more influential in the formation of adolescents' emotional stability than parental relationships. Aleem (2005) examines difference between the mean scores of male and female students on emotional stability and revealed that male students are found to be more emotionally stable than female students.

Objectives:

1. To find out whether demographic variables e.g. gender, age, class, family system and area of living predicts self-esteem of visually challenged students.

2. To identify whether demographic variables e.g. gender, age, class, family system and area of living predicts emotional stability of visually challenged students.

Method

Sample:

The sample of 100 visually challenged students was selected from Ahmadi School for Blinds, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The sample consist 63 boys and 37 girls. All the students are ranged in age between 5 and 18 years.

Tools:

Self-Esteem Inventory: Self-esteem of students is measured through self-esteem inventory, developed by Prasad and Thakur (1977). It consists of 30 items. Of the thirty items, seventeen were socially desirable and thirteen were socially undesirable. The scale was developed with a view to assess personally perceived self and socially perceived self. Split-half reliability co-efficient of both sets of the inventory is .82 and .78 for personally perceived self and socially perceived self respectively. Retest reliability coefficient found for both the tests were .69 and .66 respectively for personally perceived self and socially perceived self.

Emotional Stability Test for Children:

Emotional stability of children is measured through Emotional Stability Test for Children, developed by Sengupta and Singh (1985). This scale contains 15 items for testing emotional stability of children. The maximum possible score of this test is 15. Test- retest reliability was .70 which was significant beyond .01 level and split-half reliability was .55.

Results

Table-1: Self-Esteem Regressed on Gender, Age, Class, Family System (FS) and Area of Living (AL) of Visually Challenged Students

Variables	Standardized Coefficient	t-Value
Gender	-.159	1.502
Age	-.224	1.549
Class	.040	.277
FS	-.014	.135
AL	.047	.455
R ²	.06	

Table 1 projects that 6% variation in self-esteem can be explain on the basis of the five predictor variables, i.e. gender, age, class, family system and area of living, but all the five predictors do not contribute significantly in explaining self-esteem of visually challenged students.

Table-2: Emotional S tability Regressed on Gender, Age, Class, Family System (FS) and Area of Living (AL) of V isually Challenged Students

Variables	Standardized Coefficient	t-value
Gender	.557	6.58
Age	-.185	1.598
Class	-.098	.846
FS	.096	1.174
AL	-.045	.545
R ²	.40	

Table 2 describes that 40% variation in self-esteem can be explain on the basis of the five predictors i.e. gender, age, class, family system, and area of living, but only gender emerged as a significant predictor in

explaining emotional stability of visually challenged students. Age, class, family system and area of living have no significant emergence as the predictor of emotional stability of visually challenged students.

Discussion

Table-1 shows that the five predictor variables, i.e. gender, age, class, family system and area of living do not contribute significantly in explaining self-esteem of visually challenged students. Munford (1994) conducted a study and found no significant gender differences in levels of self-esteem. The majority of studies have found that during adolescence, females report lower self-esteem (Cairns, McWhirter, Duffy, & Barry, 1990; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997; Martinez & Dukes, 1991; Quatman & Watson, 2001) and greater depressive mood (Marcotte, Fortin, Potvin, & Papillon, 2002) in comparison to males. Some research has also shown that not only do adolescent females report lower self-esteem, but their self-esteem decreases and depressive symptoms increase over time when compared with males (e.g., Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Peterson, Sarigiani and Kennedy (1991) indicated that blind men had more positive and realistic self-concept than blind women. Rothenburg (1997) also noted these differences and found that women scored higher on personal identity, physical, family and social self-concept and men scored higher on self satisfaction and moral self-concept. Alfered-Liro and Sigelman (1998) found that male college students fare better in the transition between secondary and tertiary education in terms of their self-concept. Male and female students start with same level of self concept, and female decline over the first 18 months of studies before starting to catch up with their male counterpart. Marsh (1990) suggests that it is possible that the female students will exhibit lower levels if self-concept than their male peers. Kling, Hyde, Showers, and Buswell (1999) found that male score higher on standard measure of global self-

esteem than females but the difference is small. A study has done by Seifert and Miller (1988) states that males judge less harshly than females, which in turn causes female performance and behavior to be evaluated negatively which decreases their self-esteem. Marjoribanks and Mboya (2001) found that male participants had significantly higher score on perceptions of their physical, emotional stability and relations with their peers, whereas the female participants had significantly higher scores on perceptions of their music abilities. Kaminski, Shafer, Neumann, and Ramos (2005) found that boys reported higher self-concept than girls on the physical ability and physical appearance subscales, but girls had higher self-concept than boys on the reading subscale. Cheng and Puge (1989) found that male tended to have higher self-esteem than the female. Maehr and Nicholls (1980) suggested that some gender differences in self-esteem might be due to a response bias, in that girls have been found to be more modest in self-report measures than boys. Furthermore, some research has shown that gender differences in adolescent self-esteem may be linked to gender differences in the perception of physical appearance. For example, a longitudinal study of students in the 3rd through 11th grades indicated that in elementary school, boys and girls viewed their physical appearance equally, but at the end of high school, girls' views of their physical appearance was significantly lower than those of boys (Harter, 2000). Connor, Poyrazli, Ferrer-Wreder, and Grahame (2004) found that age is not significantly correlated with self-esteem.

Findings on age as a predictor of self-esteem have been inconsistent. Various longitudinal studies (Bergman & Scott, 2001; Block & Robins, 1993; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997; Wade, Thompson, Tashakkori, & Valente, 1989) and a cross-sectional study (Mullis & Chapman, 2000) found that self-esteem levels remained constant with increased age, and therefore increased age

was not a significant predictor of self-esteem. Other longitudinal researches indicated a gradual increase in self-esteem across adolescence (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987; O'Malley & Bachman, 1983; Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman & Midgley, 1991). Conversely, Robins and his colleagues (2002) provided a comprehensive picture of age differences in self-esteem from age 9-90 years. Self-esteem levels were high in childhood, dropped during adolescent, rose gradually throughout adulthood, and decline sharply in old age. Hoppe (1995) reported in his study that the correlation between self-esteem and age was 0.6. He found that age determines self-esteem. Old people tend to have higher level of self-esteem than do younger people. Some research indicated that self-concept remains stable over the life span. While others indicate that it can increase with experience. It is therefore possible that older students will exhibit higher level of self-concept than the younger students (Marsh, 1990). When children were younger they rarely thought about self-esteem and what it meant or even how it could possibly shape them as a person. As they got older, self-esteem gradually became important and determined how they viewed themselves especially when their peers started to have an influence or impact on their life. Age, as a predictor of self-esteem, has yielded varied findings.

Table 2 shows that only gender emerged as a significant predictor in explaining emotional stability of visually challenged students. Age, class, family system and area of living do not play any significant role in describing self-esteem of visually challenged students. Arora (2002) found in his study that visually challenged girls are emotionally less stable than boys. Gramer and Imai (2002) proposed that females are less emotionally stable than males. Budaev (1999) found that females have higher agreeableness and lower emotional stability than males. Gramer and Imai (2002) also reported that men's emotions are stable than women. Brabner

(2003) indicated that females tend towards affection and sadness, and males incline to pride. Affection and sadness are categorized negative emotions (low emotional stability); pride is classified low agreeableness (Gomez, 2006). In addition, Wolfradt and Dalbert (2003) found that females tend to neuroticism (low emotional stability). Aleem (2005) reported that male students are more emotionally stable than female students.

Conclusion

The results indicate that out of above demographic variables only gender predicts significantly emotional stability of visually challenged students. None of the demographic variables predict self-esteem of visually challenged students. However, the size of the sample, the environmental setup and some other variables may be playing some role for such findings.

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