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SELF-CONCEPT OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILY

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Abstract

Earlier research findings point outs the development of a child's self-concept, when they have a visual impairment, follows similar steps to that of a sighted child, although the visual defect will influence this process. The present investigation is intended to examine the development of self-concept of visually impaired students in relation to socio-economic status of their family. The study is expected to reveal many interesting finding and thereby increase the knowledge base regarding the self-concept of visually impaired students. The main objective of the study is to find out the status of self-concept of children with visual impairment in relation to their socio-economic status. The research design selected for the present study is descriptive survey method. A descriptive survey is used for fact finding with adequate interpretation and it clearly states the characteristics of a particular situation or group or individuals. In this study the investigator selected random sampling procedure for the selection of sample of students with visual impairment. The results reveal that the self-concept of children with visual impairment is in average level. As per demographic comparison, the gender is a significant factor in the development of self-concept of visually impaired students and the other factors like, religion, locality, monthly income, father's and mother's occupation, age and number of siblings are not a significant factors.

Key words: *Self-Concept; Visual Impairment.*

Introduction

A person's self-concept is based on their sense of identify and is rooted in their sense of self worth. Families and other significant persons need to encourage the student to develop a good self- concept in a person with a visual impairment. Society's values toward persons with visual impairments will contribute to the student's sense of self worth and many prevent the student from feeling inadequate. It is important to provide the student with opportunities to experience genuine success. It is also vital to allow the student to make decisions, take responsibility, and take risks and foster independence.

Research findings point outs that the development of a child's self-concept, when they have a visual impairment, follows similar steps to that of a sighted child, although the visual defect will influence this process. However, we have no evidence that the lack of vision has a general effect on visually impaired children. Researches highlight the major roles of body image and language in the case of blind child's self-concept. The most fundamental aspect of the blind child is his self-concept. The manner in which the child learns to view himself has a tremendous impact on his future ambitions, accomplishments and personal happiness.

Although Lowenfeld (1980) perceived public attitudes to be growing more positive towards visually impaired, Hardman, Drew, Egan (1987) have more recently observed that this perception is not entirely supported by literature. As Hardman, Drew and Egan (1987) put it, ``attitudes of the public, are not, at present, one of acceptance and integration'' (p.299).

One inference that has been repeatedly drawn in the literature is that the attitudes of the public have somehow impacted negatively upon the self- perception or self-concept of individuals with visual impairments (Hardman, Drew and Egan, 1987; Kirk & Gallagher, 1983; Peterson, 1987). In turn ''low'' self-concept has been associated with academic under-achievement, physical incapability, and social maladjustment.Young children are faced with a variety of problems and challenges. According to Shoaf (1990) many children today struggle to cope with a world more uncertain and more frightening than ever before. The dilemma confronting young ''special'' children has continued to challenge teachers to search for self-concept enhancement strategies.

Statement of the Problem: The problem for investigation is entitled: *"Self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to socio-economic status of family"*

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

Self-concept: Self-concept is the set of ideas that a person has about himself. These ideas run through all his emotional experiences, habits, memories, traits and values.

Students with Visual impairment: Any reduction in central vision or visual accommodation because of malformation, Disease, or Injury is a visual impairment. Any visual impairment can be corrected through prescription of Lenses or Surgery. When vision is still limited after such interventions a student may need special services to benefit from the educational process. Such individuals constitute the visually impaired population.

Need and Significance of the Present Study

The present investigation is intended to examine the development of self-concept of visually impaired students in relation with their socio-economic status of family. The study is expected to reveal many interesting finding and thereby increase the knowledge base regarding the self-concept of visually impaired students. The findings of this study will be helpful to the parents, special educators, social workers, counselors, administrators and researchers to get an idea about the development of self-concept of visually impaired students and there by identify their role for helping such students. The findings of this study give directions for further research in this area.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are,

- To study the self-concept of students with visual impairment.
- To study the self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to socio-economic status.
- To study the self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to age, gender, and number of siblings.

Hypotheses

- There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to religion, locality, monthly income & father's and mother's occupation.
- There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to age, gender, and number of siblings.

Methods

Methods Adopted

The research design selected for the present study is descriptive survey method. A descriptive survey is used for fact finding with adequate interpretation and it clearly states the characteristics of a particular situation or group or individuals.

Tools and Techniques

1. **General Data Sheet**
2. **Children's Self-concept Scale (CSCS)**

General Data Sheet: The General Data sheet consists of questions to collect information regarding relevant General data to study the variables of the investigation, along with information regarding promotional prospects.

The Children's self-concept scale (CSCS): The scale has been prepared after the well known Piers-Harris, Children's self-concept scale (1969). The test contains eighty items in all with 'Yes' or 'No' responses. It includes 14 lie items to detect whether the children and adolescents have filled it accurately or not. It is a verbal paper-pencil test. The six sub-scales which are included in the self-concept scales are considered to be important in the psychological world of childhood and adolescence.

Samples for the Study

The study population is comprised of visually impaired students studying in special schools of Kerala. In this study the investigator selected random sampling procedure for the selection of sample of students with visual impairment. With the sample constitute 40 visually impaired students (20 males and 20 females) studying in three special schools in Kottayam, Trissur, and Kozhikode districts respectively.

Statistical Techniques Used

1. Computation of Frequencies and Percentages.
2. Computation of Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation.
3. Computation of t-value to test the significance of difference between the means of two groups of data.
4. One way analysis of Variance.

Results & Discussion

Table-1, Categories, Number and Percentage of self-concept of visually impaired students.

Categories of Self-Concept	Range of Scores	Frequency	Percent
Low	Below 34	5	12.5
Average	35-55	31	77.5
High	Above 56	4	10.0
Total		40	100.0

Table-1 reveals that the self-concept of visually impaired children lies in the average category. This study analyses the level of self-concept in dimension wise, this reveals that the self-concept of visually impaired children in all dimensions comes in the average level and not in a single dimension they have above level of self-concept. This is to be seriously considered in all phase of educational planning. But most of the studies in self-concept among normal students reveal that they have above level of self-concept. This may be due various internal and external factors influencing self-concept.

Table- 2,Mean, S.D & 'F'- value for the significance difference in self-concept among Male students with visual impairment in terms of *religion*.

Religion	N	Mean	S.D	'F'- value	Level of Significance
Hindu	10	47.9000	10.07141	.760	N.S
Christian	6	53.6667	10.11270		
Muslim	4	51.5000	3.87298		
Total	20	50.3500	9.17821		

Table- 2 indicates the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of self-concept of male visually impaired children with respect to their religion. The highest mean value obtained is by the children of Christian religion followed by the students of Muslim and Hindu respectively. It is seen that the obtained F-ratio is .760.This value is not significant at 0.01 levels or 0.05 levels. So it can be concluded there is no significant difference in self-concept of male visually impaired children with respect to the difference in religion they belongs.

Findings reveal that in the case of male and female visually impaired children Hindu religion has been placed in the last position which in the case of most of the studies in normal students is entirely different in which students from Hindu religion comes in the highest position. From this we can assume that families who believe in Hindu religion have more caring and concern for their children may be related with faith in religion, god concept and influence of epics. But the findings of self - concept in visually impaired that Hindu visually impaired got low position compared to other religion may be due to the fact that impairment of child affects severely affects the faith in religiosity and this influences their approach to visually impaired child.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of Male students with visual impairment in relation to their religion.

Table- 3,Mean, S.D &'t'- value for the significance difference in self-concept among Female students with visual impairment in terms of *religion*.

Religion	N	Mean	S.D	't'- value	Level of Significance
Hindu	12	37.7500	5.73863	-1.090	N.S
Christian	8	41.0000	7.61577		

From the table- 3, it is seen that the obtained t-value is -1.090, which is not significant. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in self-concept of female visually impaired children with respect to the difference in religion they belongs. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in self-concept with respect to religion can be accepted in the case of female visually impaired children.

Discussion in the male students mentioned above is applicable to female students also.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of Female students with visual impairment in relation to their religion.

Table- 4,Mean, standard deviation and't'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their locality.

Locality	Number	Mean	Standard. Deviation	't'- value	Level of Significance
Rural	18	46.3333	10.38664	.959	N.S
Urban	22	44.3636	9.19392		

From the table- 4, it is seen that the obtained t-value is .959, which is not significant. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in locality they reside. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to locality can be accepted.

There is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in locality they reside. This may due to the factor that the internal factors influence the self-concept of visually impaired children more than external factors.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their locality.

Table- 5,Mean, Standard Deviation and 'F'- value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their monthly income of family.

Monthly Income	Number	Mean	Standard. Deviation	'F'- value	Level of Significance
Below 3000	16	43.5000	10.15874	.443	N.S
3001 -7000	8	43.5000	4.40779		
Above 7000	16	46.5000	11.33137		
Total	40	44.7000	9.73548		

Table- 5 indicates the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to their monthly income of family. The highest mean value obtained is by those visually impaired children who come from families having income above 7000.Students coming from families having monthly income below 3000 and income between 3001 to7000 have same levels of self-concept which is comparatively lower than those students coming from families having income above 7000.

It is found that the obtained F-ratio is .443. This value is not significant at 0.05 levels. So it can be concluded there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in monthly income of family. Hence the null hypothesis can be accepted.

Children coming from families having above 7000 monthly income shows more self-concept which may be due to the fact that they may have good facilities ,caring opportunities for disabled child. Next below 3000 group children more self-concept this may be due to the fact that most of the parents in this group comes under occupation groups daily wages, agriculturist and jobless they also get time to care and spent time with the children.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their monthly income of family.

Table- 6,Mean, Standard Deviation and't'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their father's occupation.

Fathers Occupation	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	't'- value	Level of Significance
Daily Wages	22	43.2727	9.18167	-1.026	N.S
Professionals	18	46.4444	10.36523		
Total	40	44.7000	9.73548		

From the table-6, it is seen that the obtained t-value is -1.026, which is not significant. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in Fathers Occupation. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to Fathers Occupation can be accepted.

This may be due to the fact that professional parents themselves have more self-concept which help them to make their child more reality oriented and self-concept oriented. Several factors may help for them for this like their higher education, security in income, self-esteem, more relationships with higher self-concept people.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their father's occupation.

Table- 7,Mean, Standard Deviation and'F'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their Mother's occupation.

Mothers Occupation	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	'F'- value	Level of Significance
Daily Wages	10	43.9000	5.44569	.043	N.S
Professionals	8	45.0000	11.31371		
House Wives	22	44.9545	10.96521		
Total	40	44.7000	9.73548		

Table- 7 indicates the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to Mothers Occupation. The highest mean value obtained is by those visually impaired children whose mothers work as professionals. It is found that the obtained F-ratio is .043.This value is not significant at 0.05 levels. So it can be concluded there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in monthly income of family.

The discussion in the case of fathers occupation mentioned in the above table is applicable here too.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their Mother's occupation.

Table- 8,Mean, Standard Deviation and 't'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their age.

Age	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	't'- value	Level of Significance
11-14	17	42.2941	10.47476	-1.358	N.S
15-18	23	46.4783	8.96898		

From the table- 8 it is seen that the obtained t-value is -1.358, which is not significant. So it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in age of visually impaired as categorized 11 to 14 and 15 to 18. Hence the can be accepted.

Still the age group 15 to 18 has more mean value than age group 11 to 14 ,the reason why there is no significant difference in self - concept must be considered seriously that in normal course the higher age group need to show more scores. This can be attributed to the fact that the below age group may got opportunity to live in an more advanced period only and that these group gets more advanced learning experiences.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their Age.

Table- 9,Mean, Standard Deviation and't'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their gender.

Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	't'- value	Level of Significance
Male	20	50.3500	9.17821	4.478	S
Female	20	39.0500	6.56526		

From the table- 9, it is seen that the obtained t-value is 4.478, which is significant at .01 levels. So it can be concluded that there is significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in gender of visually impaired as categorized Male and Female. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

This significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in gender may be due to the fact that male children get more opportunity to interact with other people and engage in plays unrestrictedly which in the case of females is different. One other reason may be that male children have more opportunity to initiate talk; more opportunities to meet and they engage in serious talks and are more frank compared to female group.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their Gender.

Table- 10,Mean, Standard Deviation & 'F'-value of self-concept scores of visually impaired students with respect to their number of siblings in the family.

Number of siblings	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	'F'- value	Level of Significance
1	24	43.5417	9.08883	.359	N.S
2	14	46.9286	11.39814		
3	1	43.0000	.		
4	1	43.0000	.		
Total	40	44.7000	9.73548		

Table- 10 indicates the arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores of self-concept in visually impaired children with respect to their number of siblings. The highest mean value obtained is by those visually impaired children who have 2 siblings. The mean scores of visually impaired children who have 1 sibling come next and for those having 3 and 4 siblings have same mean value that is lower comparing the other two groups.

It is found that the obtained F-ratio is .359. This value is not significant at 0.01 levels or 0.05 levels. So it can be concluded there is no significant difference in self-concept of visually impaired children with respect to the difference in number of siblings in the family. Hence the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in self-concept with respect to difference in number of siblings in the family can be accepted.

Visually impaired children having 2 and 1 sibling show more self-concept than those having 3 and above 4 siblings. This may be due to the fact that if there is two siblings the parents can care them conveniently, home will be livelier and the visually disabled child get know things from different opinions of siblings. In the case of 1 sibling the normal sibling may not sometimes understand the peculiarities of disabled brother and there is chance of behaving indifferently to the disabled.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in self-concept of students with visual impairment in relation to their number of siblings in the family.

Key findings

- The study reveals that the self-concept of visually impaired students is found to be in average level.
- The religion of visually impaired male students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The religion of visually impaired female students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The locality of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The monthly income of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The father's occupation of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The mother's occupation of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The age of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.
- The gender of visually impaired students is a very significant factor to their self-concept.
- The number of siblings of visually impaired students is not a significant factor to their self-concept.

Conclusion

The self-concept is the accumulation of knowledge about the self, such as beliefs regarding personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles. Beginning in infancy, children acquire and organize information about them as a way to enable them to understand the relation between the self and their social world. This developmental process is a direct consequence of children's emerging cognitive skills and their social relationships with both family and peers. Above facts as well as this study point out the significance to give importance to self-concept as well as other psychological constructs along with the care of physical wellbeing at the early phase of development onwards to visually impaired students in general and in Kerala context. Protection and care must not be seen from physical view point only.

Parents, teachers and other care-takers must realize and understand the problems and developmental needs faced by visually impaired child clearly. Then only they can act appropriately in facilitating the self-concept development. Visually impaired children encounter difficulties in the development of his or her identity. This will shorten their relationships with world around him and in turn limit them from gaining the necessary amount of experiences leading to problems in the development of a progressive understanding of him. These facts must be taken under consideration in the planning and execution of management of this population. Lack of training institutes, training programs may aggravate this issue in the future and may lead to delay in the proper integration and inclusion of this population from the mainsream.

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