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A Study of Self-concept among Physically Disabled and Normal Students



Mridula Rawal

Retd. Reader, Edu. Dept.
Juhari Devi Girls PG College,
Kanpur

Neeta Agnihotri

Lecturer, B.Ed. Dept.
Brihaspati Mahavidyala,
Kanpur

Abstract

The goal of education is to enable the child to enter the world after formal education is over as an active participant in society and a responsible contributor to it, capable of achieving as much independence as possible. For the normal children, the road they have to travel towards these goals is rather smooth and easy, for the disabled, it is fraught with obstacles. Nevertheless for them too, progress will be possible as they gradually overcome one obstacle after another on the way to success. The self concept plays a very important role in achievement of life goals. Therefore, an attempt was made to study the self-concept among physically (sensorily) disabled and normal students. For this purpose, a multi-stage stratified random sample of 800 students was obtained. The data collected on self constructed scale on the self-concept was analyzed by the techniques of Analysis of Variance and the t- test. Results revealed a significant difference between the two population, and the most suffered group was that of disabled girls. The disability becomes the focus of an individual's life, his whole identity. Since these disabled children have to satisfy their educational, social, emotional needs under exceptional circumstances, they need special help from their parents, their teachers and their community. Disability is not a tragedy but something to be coped with.

Keyword: Self - concept (Physical, Moral, Social, Emotional, Intellectual, Educational dimensions), hysically disabled(Senserorily)

Introduction

Self concept is an image which an individual has of himself (Burns 1982). It is of paramount importance in learning process of social interaction, building of self esteem and the achievement of life goals. Since, physical component is such an important factor in the development of an individual, it could be argued that physical disability affects self-concept formation most profoundly (Cohen, 1977). Students with the disabilities may be isolated or rejected by their peers, and in general, the more visible the handicap, the more rejection and isolation (Yucker 1987, Lumbana 1982). Avoidance by peers and teachers, coupled with lower expectations by adults about them all hamper motivation to achieve and participate (Barbara1985, Gerstein 1988, Landrum & Kauffman 1992).

Many individuals with disabilities learn early in life that they have negative role in this society. Their response is often passive, rigid thinking and failure to take part in life- because the expectation placed on the individual with disability are negative (Warfield 1948), Young people with physical disabilities have much to contribute to society, although society has so far too often failed to recognize this. An empirical study of the physically disabled in comparison with normal might provide useful insights for making welfare activities for the disabled more effective and worthwhile. Therefore the present investigation was taken up to find the effect of physical disability on the self concept of the students.

Objectives of the Study

following objectives were laid down for the study-

1. To study the effect of physical disability on the self concept of the students.
2. To study the effect of sex difference on self concept of the students.
3. To measure the interaction effect of the two factors on self concept of the population to be studied.

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Method

Sample

A multi-stage stratified random sample of 800 students were obtained for the study, the details of which are given below-

Table No. 1- sample plan

Sex	Hearing Disabled	Visually Disabled	Total Disabled	Normal Urban	Normal Rural	Total Normal
Boys	100	100	200	100	100	200
Girls	100	100	200	100	100	200
Total	200	200	400	200	200	400

Total= 800

Tool :

A self concept scale constructed by the investigator was administered on normal and sensorily disabled students. It measures self-concept in total as well as in six areas, i.e. physical, moral, social, emotional, intellectual and educational areas. The reliability and validity recorded were 0.98 and 0.97 respectively. The scale was standardized on normal as well as on disabled students. High scores indicate good self concept while individuals scoring low tend to have poor self-concept.

Results and Discussion

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the scores obtained on the self concept scale were subjected to analyses by using statistical techniques of Analysis of variance and the critical Difference. The variable wise results and their interpretations are being presented below-

1. Total self concept

The self-concept is taken here as the individual's view of himself that results from the interaction of the person with other people. The scores obtained by analysis of variance on total self concept are entered in the following table:-

Table No. 2- Anova Total Self-concept

Source of Variation	dt.	SS	MSS	F
Physical Status (A)	3	77706.67	25902.22	150.71 ***
Sex (B)	1	2964.50	2964.50	17.25 ***
Interaction (AxB)	3	4970.49	1656.83	9.64 **
Error	792	136124.02	171.88	
Total	799			

GM = 51.77

S.D. = 13.11

Note:

A= Physical Status

A₁= Normal Urban A₂= Normal Rural

A₃= Hearing Disabled A₄= Visually Disabled

B= Sex (B₁= Boys B₂= Girls)

*** = Significant at 0.001 Level of Significance

** = Significant at 0.01 Level of Significance

* = Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance

NS= Not Significant

ANOVA Table No. 2 shows that the F ratio for the physical status (A) was significant at 0.001 level which shows significant differences among four

groups of physical status mentioned above. Normal Students scored significantly higher (M= 61.40) than the disabled students (M= 42.14). F ratio for the sex (F=17.25) was also significant beyond 0.001 level of significance. Boys felt themselves better than girls (D= 3.85) in respect of self-concept. F ratio of 9.64 for the interaction effect between physical status and sex was also significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that the effect of physical status on the self concept was not independent of the effect of sex. A study of the mean scores of physical status x sex would be helpful in drawing out the conclusion-

Table No. 3- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B ₁)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A ₁)	63.66	63.38	0.28 NS
Normal Rural (A ₂)	58.40	60.17	1.77 NS
Hearing Disabled (A ₃)	43.04	37.13	5.91 *
Visually Disabled (A ₄)	49.08	38.70	10.98 *

SE_D = 1.85

C.D._{5%} = 3.64

As can be observed from the above table, there was no significant difference between the boys and girls in urban as well as in rural regions. But among the groups of disabled students, the hearing and visually disabled girls had lower self-concept than their counterparts. Thus it can be said with 95% confidence that though physical disability does affect the formation of self-concept, the girls suffered most.

Result on Areas of Self-Concept.

The Extract of F-test on all the six areas of self- concept i.e., Physical, Moral, Social, emotional, intellectual and educational is given in the following table:-

Table No. 4- Extract of the F-test on Areas of Self-Concept

Source	Physical	Moral	Social	Emotional	Intellectual	Educational
Physical Status (A)	166.64 ***	18.68 ***	120.64 ***	97.15 ***	113.54 ***	101.70 ***
Sex (B)	4.21*	25.24**	19.95***	20.81***	2.41 (NS)	5.11*
Interaction (AxB)	9.71**	13.87**	7.34**	6.85**	5.55**	1.35 (NS)

Physical Dimension of self-concept

This area of self-concept represents an individual's body image created largely through his/her interaction with others. The results given in table No. 4 show that F ratio of 166.46 for physical status was significant beyond 0.001 level of significance. It shows significant difference between normal and the physically disabled groups (M Diff.= 8.76). The effect of sex (F= 4.21) was significant at 0.05 level of significance suggesting that boys (M= 8.52) had more favorable attitude towards their physical status than the girls (M= 8.11). F ratio for the interaction effect was also significant at 0.01

level implying that the joint interplay of the two variables contributed significantly to this aspect of the self concept. The mean scores of physical status x sex are given in the following table:-

Table No. 5- Physical Status x Sex Mean

Groups	Boys (B ₁)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A ₁)	10.88	11.16	0.28 (NS)
Normal Rural (A ₂)	9.50	10.47	0.97*
Hearing Disabled (A ₃)	6.63	5.41	1.22*
Visually Disabled (A ₄)	7.06	5.40	1.66*

SE_D = 0.3974

C.D._{.5%} = 0.78

It is clear from the above table that normal boys and girls in urban region were statistically at par, but in rural region the girls scored significantly higher than boys, indicating that they perceived their physical condition better than the boys. But among the groups of disabled, the girls scored significantly lower than the boys. This shows that though entire disabled group was significantly more poor than the normal group on physical aspect of the self concept, the disabled girls were more sensitive towards their disability and that the disability was responsible for deterioration of their physical self image.

Moral Dimension of self-concept

Moral aspect of the self-concept represents individual's view of his moral values. The results given in table No. 4 show that F ratio (F= 18.64) for the physical status was significant at 0.001 level of significance, indicating significant differences between the two groups of physical status, i.e. normal and physically disabled (Mean diff. = 1.19). The effect of sex (F= 25.24) was significant at 0.001 level of significance suggesting that the boys (M= 10.97) perceived themselves morally higher than the girls (M= 10.05). The interaction effect between physical status and sex (F= 13.87) was also significant beyond 0.001 level of significance implying that the effect of physical status on moral aspect of the self concept was not independent of the effect of sex. A summary of the means of physical status x sex is shown in the following table:-

Table No. 6- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B ₁)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A ₁)	11.06	11.43	0.37 (NS)
Normal Rural (A ₂)	11.01	10.93	0.08 (NS)
Hearing Disabled (A ₃)	10.10	8.80	1.30 *
Visually Disabled (A ₄)	11.73	9.05	2.68 *

SE_D = 0.37

C.D._{.5%} = 0.72

It is clear from the above table that there was no significant difference between means of normal boys and girls in both the regions. But hearing and visually disabled students scored significantly lower than the normal students, and among the disabled, the girls suffered most.

Social Dimension of Self concept:

This aspect of self-concept represents a person's view about his/hers social status in the society. As can be seen from Table No. 4, the F ratio of 120.64 in case of physical status was significant at 0.001 level of significance. It shows significant difference between normal (M= 9.67) and physically disabled (M=6.15) students. The F ratio (F= 19.95) for the sex difference was also significant at 0.001 level indicating that the boys (M= 8.33) perceived themselves better than the girls (M= 7.49) on social interaction. The F ratio of 7.34 for the interaction effect between physical status and sex was significant at 0.01 level of significance. It shows that physical status X sex interaction contributed significantly to the self concept regarding an individual's judgments and values of his social abilities and qualities. The mean scores for the combination of physical status and sex are given in the following table-

Table No. 7- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B ₁)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A ₁)	10.21	10.03	0.18(NS)
Normal Rural (A ₂)	9.09	9.33	0.24 (NS)
Hearing Disabled (A ₃)	6.88	5.16	1.72*
Visually Disabled (A ₄)	7.13	5.43	1.70*

SE_D = 0.367

C.D._{.5%} = 0.74

The above table shows that there was no significant sex difference among normal students in both the regions. Though the disabled students scored significantly lower than the normal students, hearing and visually disabled girls perceived themselves as deficient more frequently in social interaction than the boys with similar physical status.

Emotional Dimension of the self- concept

It is evident from table No. 4 that F ratios for physical status, sex difference and the interaction effect were highly significant. It shows that disabled students (M= 6.31) showed comparatively more poor self concept on emotional aspect than the normal students (M= 9.74). In the same way boys (M= 8.49) had significantly better self concept regarding their emotions than the girls (M= 7.56). The significant interaction effect suggests that the two variables contributed significantly to the emotional aspect of the self concept. The mean scores are given below-

Table No. 8- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B ₁)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A ₁)	10.40	9.81	0.59 (NS)
Normal Rural (A ₂)	9.31	9.46	0.15 (NS)
Hearing Disabled (A ₃)	6.59	5.70	0.89*
Visually Disabled (A ₄)	7.67	5.28	2.39*

SE_D = 0.41

C.D._{.5%} = 0.80

As can be observed from the above table that normal boys and girls in both the regions were statistically at par. The disabled students and specially the disabled girls perceived themselves comparatively

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more poor than the normal students on emotional dimension of the self-concept.

Intellectual Dimension of Self- concept

Intellectual dimension of the self concept represents an individual's view about his intellectual abilities conceptualized by the feedback he/she received from others. As can be observed from table No. 4, all the four groups of physical status differed significantly from one another. It shows that disabled students (M= 6.52) perceived themselves less intelligent than the normal students (M= 9.95). It is interesting to note that boys and girls were statistically at par on this dimension. But the significant interaction effect shows that the effect of physical status on intellectual aspect of the self concept was not independent of the effect of sex. The table below shows the mean scores for this interaction:-

Table No. 9- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B1)	Girls (B2)	Diff. (B1- B2)
Normal Urban (A1)	10.33	10.36	0.03 (NS)
Normal Rural (A2)	9.19	9.92	0.73 (NS)
Hearing Disabled (A3)	6.35	5.80	0.55 (NS)
Visually Disabled (A4)	7.66	6.26	1.40*

SE_D = 0.38

C.D._{.5%} = 0.75

It can be concluded from the above table that disabled students and specially the disabled girls perceived themselves as less intelligent and devaluated their worths and intellectual abilities.

Educational Dimension of self-concept:

Educational self-concept is created largely through the information an individual receives from the interaction with his peers, teachers and other people around him. The extract of scores obtained on educational aspect are entered in table No. 4. It is observed that F ratio (F= 101.70) for the physical status was highly significant indicating significant difference between normal and disabled students on educational aspect. Though both the groups of disabled students scored significantly lower (M= 7.12) than normal students in both the regions, (M= 10.43), the hearing disabled (M= 6.75) received more negative feedback by the people around them about their worth than the visually disabled students (M= 7.86) and this led them to devalue their abilities in the field of education. A significant F ratio for the sex (F= 5.11) shows significant sex difference. Boys (M= 9.00) were more confident in their educational activities than the girls (M= 8.55). The F ratio for the interaction effect was insignificant on this aspect. The perusal of the result in table No. 10 will help in finding the conclusion-

Table No. 10- Physical Status x Sex Means

Groups	Boys (B1)	Girls (B ₂)	Diff. (B ₁ - B ₂)
Normal Urban (A1)	10.78	10.59	0.19 (NS)
Normal Rural (A2)	10.30	10.06	0.24 (NS)
Hearing Disabled (A3)	6.49	6.26	0.23 (NS)
Visually Disabled (A4)	8.43	7.28	1.15*

SE_D = 0.40

C.D._{.5%} = 0.79

It is observed from the above table that hearing disabled boys and girls scored significantly lower than their counterparts, i.e., visually disabled boys and girls to the extent of 1.94 and 1.02 respectively. It can be concluded with 95% confidence that though disabled students had comparatively lower self concept than the normal students about their educational worths and abilities, the hearing disabled boys and girls suffered most.

Thus, the disabled group had shown lower self concept than the normal group on total as well as on physical, moral, social, emotional, intellectual, and educational aspects of the self concept. Unfavorable experiences in different crisis points may signify a sense of incompetence. The hearing and visually disabled child, therefore, feels inadequate, inferior and socially unacceptable. He is likely to exhibit characteristics of absence of inner control, impulsiveness and lack of empathy. This may affect social relationships in school as well as in social environment and may lead them to have a greater tendency to develop negative self concept (Lawrance 1991, Kadalac et.al.2004). The negative psychological impact conceals the disabled child's real potential. There may be an under estimation of oneself and the self concept formed may not be appropriate to the real self (Trychin 1991).

Therefore, Parents and teachers are required to be sensitive to how children see themselves and their abilities because it can be more destructive than a physical disability or an acknowledged learning disability.

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