

# Self-Concept and Perceived Loneliness: A Comparative Study of Mainstreamed and Segregated Visually Impaired Students

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study self-concept and loneliness among visually impaired students of Amritsar district. The sample consists of 35 visually impaired students of eight senior secondary schools both mainstream as well as in segregation of Amritsar district by using purposive sampling technique. The study reported that there is no significant difference between the self-concept of visually impaired boys and girls studying in mainstream and segregation, who are blind by birth and due to an accident. There is significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired boys and girls but no significant difference between the loneliness of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation, who are blind by birth and accidental blind.

**Keywords:** Self-Concept, Loneliness, Mainstream, Segregation.

## Introduction

Vision is among the most important senses in humans. Any kind of loss or decrease in vision can cause severe consequences in people's life, their growth and development. Children with visual impairment face several difficulties in their everyday life in the cognitive, social and motor domains of their development (Kotsis & Andreou, 2004). It is generally recognized that both the visual loss itself, as well as its subsequent effects, cause unique difficulties in the emergence of a positive self-image, and confront impaired children and adolescents with considerable challenges (Clampert, 1981) especially regarding social contacts. The consequences of poor physical conditioning observed in children with visual impairment include exclusion and marginalization from peers (Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; Kalloniatis & Jonston, 1994). This results in feelings of insecurity, loneliness, poor self-concept and disappointment (Lieberman & McHugh, 2001).

Self-concept has been defined as a dynamic and organized system of beliefs, attitudes, and views that each person offers to achieve a true pattern of his/her identity (Simon & Gagnon; 2011). Studies have indicated that self-concept is the basis of all motivated behaviors. Self-concept embraces different "selves" in one's personality and identifies them. Potential "selves," on the other hand, provide the required motivation for one's actions. Thus, self-concept is related to self-esteem and people with high self-esteem usually have a distinctive self-concept as well. Self-esteem, as one of the most important aspects of personality and determinants of human behavioral characteristics and development, includes a set of attitudes and beliefs expressed by people in their relationships with the outside world (Peuskens & Knapend; 2005).

## Review of Literature

Meighan (1971) analyzed a sample of 203 adolescents with visual disability (102 women and 101 men), 120 were completely blind and 83 had partial vision. The results showed significant differences between the Self-concept of the blind and that of the people who were not blind. However, no significant differences were observed between the subgroups of adolescents with visual impairment. Satapathy and Singhal (2001) conducted a study with a sample of 79 visually impaired adolescents from 13 to 21 years of age, analyzed the relations between socio emotional adjustment and several personality variables. The results revealed that

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socio-emotional adjustment correlated significantly and negatively with stress, behavior problems, withdrawal behavior, and lack of attention, and positively with self-esteem. Shapiro, Moffett, Lieberman, and Dummet (2005) investigated the perceptions and performance of 43 children and adolescents with visual impairment, aged 8-21 years old, in relation to their physical appearance, physical ability and social approval. The findings of the study indicated that the low scores of the participants in physical ability may imply children's low self-esteem in performing motor tasks. Pinquart and Pfeiffer (2013) examined perceived identity of 178 visually impaired (24 with second disability) 526 sighted students. The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference in perceived identity between students. Furthermore, Identity perceived among children with congenital visually impaired was low when compared with children with acquired visually impaired. Datta and Talukdar (2016) conducted a study with 25 visually impaired students from both special and mainstream schools and found no differences between gender and scores on self-concept. The majority of the students with visual impairment scored low on all dimensions on self-concept.

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of visually impaired girls and boys.
2. There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired girls and boys.

**Table 1: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of visually impaired boys and girls on Self-concept scale**

Dimensions of Self-concept	Mean (Boys N=26)	Mean (Girls N=9)	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
a) Behavior	11.53	11.00	33	0.94	t <sub>a</sub> = 0.53
b) Intellect	14.53	11.77	33	0.94	t <sub>b</sub> = 2.97**
c) Physique	8.88	7.44	33	0.60	t <sub>c</sub> = 3.30**
d) Anxiety	8.11	5.77	33	1.28	t <sub>d</sub> = 1.82
e) Popularity	7.76	7.77	33	0.67	t <sub>e</sub> = 0.01
f) Happiness	6.53	7.67	33	0.58	t <sub>f</sub> = 1.89

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

### Self-Concept Behavior

Table 1 depicts that mean scores of visually impaired boys is 11.53 and that of girls is 11.00. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept behavior of visually impaired boys and girls is 0.94. The t-value comes out to be 0.53, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between self-concept behavior of visually impaired boys and girls.

### Self-Concept Intellect

Table 1 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired boys is 14.53 and that of girls is 11.77. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept intellect of visually impaired boys and girls is 0.94. The t-value comes out to be 2.97, which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist significant difference between self-concept intellect of visually impaired boys and girls. The Self-concept intellect of visually impaired boys is found to be higher than that of girls.

3. There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of visually impaired students in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).
4. There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired students in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).
5. There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of students who are blind by birth and due to accident.
6. There is no significant difference between the loneliness among students who are blind by birth and due to accident.

### Research Methodology

#### Sample

The sample consisted of 35 visually impaired students (aged 13-18) from eight senior secondary schools of Amritsar district. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Of the 35 students with visual impairments, 26 were boys and 9 were girls. Of the participants, 49% (n=17) were studying in mainstream and 51% (n=18) were studying in segregation.

#### Tools Used

1. Children's Self-concept scale (Ahluwalia, 2005)
2. Perceived Loneliness Scale (Jha, 1997)

### Results and Discussion

#### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of visually impaired girls and boys students.

### Self-Concept Physique

Table 1 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired boys is 8.88 and that of girls is 7.44. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept physique of visually impaired boys and girls is 0.60. The t-value comes out to be 3.30, which is significant at 0.01 levels. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist significant difference between the self-concept physique of visually impaired boys and girls. The Self-concept physique of visually impaired boys is found to be higher than that of girls

### Self-Concept Anxiety

Table 1 depicts that mean scores of visually impaired boys is 8.11 and that of girls is 5.77. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept anxiety of visually impaired boys and girls is 1.28. The t-value comes out to be 1.82, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that

there exist no significant difference between the self-concept anxiety of visually impaired boys and girls.

### Self-Concept Popularity

Table 1 depicts that mean scores of visually impaired boys is 7.76 and that of girls is 7.77. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept popularity of visually impaired boys and girls is 0.67. The t-value comes out to be 0.01, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that exist no significant difference between the self-concept popularity of visually impaired boys and girls.

### Self-Concept Happiness

Table 1 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired boys is 6.53 and that of girls is 7.67. Standard error of difference between score of self-concept happiness of visually impaired boys and girls physique is 0.58. The t-value comes out to be 1.89, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept happiness of visually impaired boys and girls.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that out of six dimensions of self-concept, a significant difference in only two dimensions (i.e., physique and intellect) was found. Hypothesis 1 which states that "There is no significant difference between the self-concept of visually impaired girls and boys students" is partially rejected.

**Table 3: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation on Self-Concept Scale**

Dimensions of Self-concept	Mean (Mainstream N=17)	Mean (Segregation N=18)	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
a) Behavior	11.23	11.56	33	0.80	t <sub>a</sub> = 0.37
b) Intellect	13.52	14.11	33	0.82	t <sub>b</sub> = 0.73
c) Physique	8.35	8.65	33	0.52	t <sub>c</sub> = 0.57
d) Anxiety	7.35	7.66	33	0.93	t <sub>d</sub> = 0.33
e) Popularity	7.64	7.87	33	0.56	t <sub>e</sub> = 0.36
f) Happiness	7.11	6.54	33	0.51	t <sub>f</sub> = 1.09

### Self-Concept Behavior

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 11.23 and that of segregation is 11.56. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept behavior of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 0.80. The t-value comes out to be 0.37, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no difference between the self-concept behavior of visually impaired students studying mainstream and segregation.

### Self-Concept Intellect

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 13.52 and that of segregation is 14.11. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept intellect of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation intellect is 0.82. The t-value comes out to be 0.73, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept intellect of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation.

### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired girls and boys students.

**Table 2: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of visually impaired boys and girls on Loneliness Scale**

Gender	N	Mean	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Boys	26	99.01	33	3.90	2.82**
Girls	9	110.00	33		

\*\*significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 depicts that mean scores of loneliness of visually impaired boys is 99.01 and that of girls is 110.00. Standard error of difference between mean scores of visually impaired boys and girls loneliness is 3.90. The t-value comes out to be 2.82, which is significant at 0.01 level.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that hypothesis 2 which states that "There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired girls and boys students", is rejected. The loneliness among visually impaired boys is found to be higher than visually impaired girls.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between the self-concept of visually impaired students studying in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).

### Self-Concept Physique

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 8.35 and that of segregation is 8.65. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept physique of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 0.52. The t-value comes out to be 0.57, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept physique of visually impaired students studying mainstream and segregation.

### Self-Concept Anxiety

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 7.35 and that of segregation is 7.66. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept anxiety of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 0.93. The t-value comes out to be 0.33, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept anxiety of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation.

### Self-Concept Popularity

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 7.64 and that of segregation is 7.87. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept popularity of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 0.56. The t-value comes out to be 0.36, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept popularity of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation.

### Self-Concept Happiness

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 7.11 and that of segregation is 6.54. Standard error of difference between mean scores of self-concept happiness of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 0.51. The t-value comes out to be 1.09, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept happiness among the visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that hypothesis 3 which states that "There is no significant difference between the self-concept of visually impaired students studying in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special)" is not rejected.

### Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired students studying in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).

**Table 4: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation on loneliness scale**

Category	N	Mean	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
Mainstreaming	18	100.01	33	5.24	0.57
Segregation	17	103.04	33		

Table 4 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students studying in mainstream is 100.01 and that of segregation is 103.04. Standard error of difference between the mean score of loneliness among visually impaired students studying in mainstream and segregation is 5.24. The t-value comes out to be 0.57, which is not significant at 0.01 level.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that hypothesis 4 which states that "There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired students in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special)" is not rejected.

### Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of students who are blind by birth and due to accident.

**Table 5: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of students who are blind by birth and due to accident on Self-concept scale**

Dimensions of Self-concept	Mean (By birth blind N=26)	Mean (Accidental blind N=9)	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
a) Behavior	11.15	12.11	33	0.93	1.07
b) Intellect	14.21	12.73	33	1.03	1.45
c) Physique	8.51	8.22	33	0.65	0.46
d) Anxiety	7.52	7.35	33	1.00	0.21
e) Popularity	7.81	7.41	33	0.25	1.60
f) Happiness	6.52	7.63	33	0.58	1.89

### Self-concept Behavior

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students blind by birth is 11.15 and that of accidental blind is 12.11. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind self-concept behavior is 0.93. The t-value comes out to be 1.07, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the Self-concept behaviors of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind.

### Self-concept Intellect

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students by birth blind is 14.21 and that of accidental blind is 12.73. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind self-concept intellect is 1.03. The t-value comes out to be 1.45, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no

significant difference between the self-concept intellect of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind.

### Self-concept Physique

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students by birth blind is 8.51 and that of accidental blind is 8.22. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind self-concept physique is 0.65. The t-value comes out to be 0.45, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept physique of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind

### Self-concept Anxiety

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students by birth blind is 7.525 and that of accidental blind is 7.3. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind

self-concept anxiety is 1.00. The t-value comes out to be 0.21, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the self-concept anxiety of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind.

### Self-concept Popularity

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students by birth blind is 7.81 and that of accident blind is 7.41. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind self-concept popularity is 0.25. The t-value comes out to be 1.60, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the Self-concept popularity of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind.

### Self-concept Happiness

Table 5 depicts that the mean scores of visually impaired students by birth blind is 6.52 and that of accidental blind is 7.63. Standard error of difference between scores of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind self-concept happiness is 0.58. The t-value comes out to be 1.89, which is not significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that there exist no significant difference between the Self-concept happiness of visually impaired students by birth blind and accidental blind.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that hypothesis 5 which states that "There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of students who are blind by birth and due to accident" is not rejected.

### Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference between the loneliness of students who are blind by birth and due to accident.

**Table 6: Showing mean scores, standard error of mean, t-value of students who are blind by birth and accidental on loneliness scale.**

Category	N	Mean	d <sub>f</sub>	SE <sub>D</sub>	t-value
By birth blind	26	101.02	33	6.10	0.65
Accidental blind	9	105.01	33		

Table 6 depicts that the mean scores of loneliness of visually impaired students who are blind by birth is 101.2 and that of those accidental blind is 105.01. Standard error of difference between the mean score of loneliness of visually impaired students who are blind by birth and accidental blind is 6.10. The t-value comes out to be 0.65, which is not significant at 0.01 level.

On the basis of above table, it can be concluded that Hypothesis 6 which states that "There is no significant difference between the loneliness of students who are blind by birth and due to accident" is not rejected.

### Findings

1. It is concluded that out of six dimensions of self-concept, a only in two dimensions (i.e., physique and intellect) a significant difference was found with respect to gender. The Self-concept Intellect and Self-concept Physique of visually impaired boys are found to be higher than that of girls.
2. There is a significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired girls and boys students. The loneliness among visually impaired boys is found to be higher than visually impaired girls.
3. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of visually impaired students studying in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).
4. There is no significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired students in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special).
5. There is no significant difference between the Self-concept of students who are blind by birth and due to accident.
6. There is no significant difference between the loneliness of students who are blind by birth and due to accident.

### Educational Implications

1. It has been found that visually impaired boys show better self-concept intellect than that of their girl counterparts. So, teachers and parents should try to develop the intellect of girls by engaging them in activities through auditory aids. More focus should be given on the uses of their other senses such as hearing and touching or feeling the aids used in their learning.
2. It has been found that visually impaired boys show better self-concept physique than that of their girl counterparts. The findings imply that teachers of special education should develop the programs to engage these students in various types physical activities like dance, recreational games etc
3. The findings imply that there is significant difference between the loneliness among visually impaired girl and boy students. So, in order to reduce the loneliness among these students teachers should create good environment and provide opportunities for better interaction of visually impaired children with their sighted peers in order to improve the problem of loneliness among visually impaired students. They should be made to understand that they are not different from sighted but they are just like or even can be more efficient in some activities than any other normal individual.
4. The findings also imply that there is no significant difference between the Self-concept and Loneliness of visually impaired students studying in mainstream (regular) and segregation (special). There is no need to open new schools for blind children but integrate them with the sighted schools and in order to develop the hidden potentiality of visually handicapped children. Government and non-government

organizations should implement integrated educational other programmers for their improvement. The role of the schools is most significant for helping visually impaired students. This should encourage the visually impaired students to take part in various activities and should ensure more facilities for them with the help of social welfare ministry. The school campus should be reshaped scientifically for the visually handicapped so that they are not deprived of experiences, activities, social acceptance, and social co-operation.

5. From the findings it is reported that there is no significant difference in the Self-concept as well as Loneliness of the students who are blind by birth and due to accident. It was found that majority of the respondents were blind by birth due to inherited problems, some were blind by illness due to typhoid, anemia and accidentally. Most of the children were satisfied with the attitude of friends and teachers toward them in socio-cultural norms of the society. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the technical training being provided by them. There is great need that parents of blind children must be encouraged, supported and to take an active role in the education of disable children. Parental counseling and needed professional and other support would reduce the burden on the parents and family.

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