



MENTAL HEALTH OF VISUALLY DISABLED, ORTHOPAEDICALLY DISABLED AND NON-DISABLED STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Present study compared the mental health of Visually Disabled, Orthopaedically Disabled and Non-disabled students. The sample consisted of 90 male students (30 visually disabled, 30 orthopaedically disabled and 30 non-disabled) of grade 8 to 10 purposively selected from Panipat, Ambala and Chandigarh. The researcher used descriptive survey method for the present study. The 56 items Mental Health Inventory (MHI) developed by Dr. A. K. Srivastava and Dr. Jagadish (1983) was used for collection of data. Data obtained were analyzed using statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test. Findings indicate significant difference in the mental health of visually disabled and orthopaedically disabled students, with orthopaedically disabled students having better mental health than their visually disabled counterparts. Significant difference also exists in the mental health of visually disabled and non-disabled students, with non-disabled students having better mental health than visually disabled students. Results further reveal a significant difference in the mental health of non-disabled and orthopaedically disabled students, with non-disabled students having better mental health than their orthopaedically disabled counterparts. Implications of mental health were suggested for visually disabled and orthopaedically disabled students specifically.

key words : *Mental health, Disabled, Visually Disabled, Orthopaedically Disabled.*

A nation's greatest asset is its people, the more so when they are endowed with the highest attainable standard of health which promotes creativeness, dynamism, determination, productivity and self-confidence to move ahead. Health is basic requirement, not only for the fulfillment of human aspirations but also for the enjoyment by all mankind of a better quality of life. Mental, physical and social health is vital strands of life that are closely interwoven and deeply interdependent. The development of mind and brain has prominent place in human development. The capacity to work while maintaining the health is mental health. Mental health is crucial to the overall well being of individuals, societies and countries. A person with positive mental health uses interpersonal assets and skills to function successfully in his or her daily life. Mental health problems emerge when these assets and skills begin to deteriorate, resulting in a struggle to cope with life's challenges and responsibilities. The continued deterioration of these skills signals the onset of mental illness as significant distortions to thinking, coping, and responding dominate personal functioning and impairs a person's ability to perform the activities of daily life (Skalski and Smith, 2006). Taking these facts into consideration, the investigator made an attempt to compare the mental health of Visually Disabled, Orthopaedically Disabled and Non-disabled students.

Objectives

To compare the mental health of visually disabled and orthopaedically disabled students.

To compare the mental health of visually disabled and non-disabled students.

To compare the mental health of orthopaedically disabled and non-disabled students.

Hypotheses

There exists no significant difference in the mental health

of visually disabled and orthopaedically disabled students. There exists no significant difference in the mental health of visually disabled and non-disabled students.

There exists no significant difference in the mental health of orthopaedically disabled and non-disabled students.

Research Design : Present investigation adopted a descriptive survey research design. Ninety male students (30 visually disabled 30 orthopaedically disabled and 30 non-disabled) purposively selected from grade VIII to X of Panipat, Ambala and Chandigarh constituted the sample of the present investigation. Mental Health Inventory (MHI) of Srivastava and Jagadish (1983) was used to measure the mental health of students. It constituted of 56 items covering six dimensions of mental health namely, positive self-evaluation, realistic perception, integration of personality, autonomy, group orientation attitudes and environmental competence. Each statement has four alternatives (always, often, rarely and never). MHI has a split half reliability of .73. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics like Mean and Standard Deviation. Inferential statistics like t-test was employed to compare the mental health of Visually Disabled, Orthopaedically Disabled and Non-disabled students.

Results

Table-1

Comparison of mental health of Visually Disabled (V.D.) and Orthopaedically Disabled (O.D.) students

Group	N	M	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
V.D.	30	141.84	9.90	2.91	Significant at 0.01 level
O.D.	30	148.83	8.80		

Table-1 reveals that 't' ratio for the difference between the mean scores of Visually Disabled and Orthopaedically Disabled students is significant at 0.01 level. It shows a significant difference in the mental health of both groups; with Orthopaedically Disabled students are mentally healthier

than their visually disabled counterparts. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "there exists no significant difference in the mental health of Visually Disabled and Orthopaedically Disabled students" is rejected.

Table-2

Comparison of mental health of Visually Disabled (V.D.) and Non-disabled (N.D.) students

Group	N	M	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
V.D.	30	141.84	9.90	4.70	Significant at 0.01 level
N.D.	30	15.50	13.70		

Table-2 depicts that 't' ratio for the difference between the mean scores of Visually Disabled and Non-disabled students is significant at 0.01 level. It means a significant difference in the mental health of both groups exists; with Non-disabled students are mentally healthier than their Visually Disabled students. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "there exists no significant difference in the mental health of Visually Disabled and Non-disabled students" is rejected.

Table-3

Comparison of mental health of Orthopaedically Disabled (O.D.) and Non-disabled (N.D.) students

Group	N	M	SD	t-ratio	Level of Significance
O.D.	30	148.83	8.80	2.74	Significant at 0.01 level
N.D.	30	15.50	13.70		

Table-3 indicated that 't' ratio for the difference between the mean scores of Orthopaedically Disabled and Non-disabled students is significant at 0.01 level. It indicates a significant difference in the mental health of both groups; with Non-disabled students are mentally healthier than their Orthopaedically Disabled counterparts. Hence the earlier stated hypothesis "there exists no significant difference in the mental health of Orthopaedically disabled and Non-disabled students" is rejected.

Educational Implications : The findings of the present study have ample implications for school administrators, teachers, parents, special educators and other professional

working in the field of disability. Results have significant educational implications with special reference to visually disabled and orthopaedically disabled students as results indicate that these students have poor mental health in comparison to their non-disabled counterparts. It implies that visual disability and orthopaedic disability adversely affect mental health of school students. In view of this findings school authorities, special educators, teachers and clinical psychologists are required to take appropriate measures to improve the mental health of students with disability. The society and educational institutions have a major role to play in the improvement of mental health of these students. Sometimes the expectations of society, attitude of parents and peers play very significant role in developing feeling of inadequacy, depression etc. To eliminate such feelings, school authorities, teachers and parents need to provide a congenial environment for the optimum psychosocial development of students with disabilities. School authorities should bring these students to the main stream by providing opportunities of full participation in socio-cultural and academic life. The school authorities should see to it that students are given vocational training and daily living skills in order to increase their self-confidence and root out feelings of inadequacy or depression. Curriculum need to be reviewed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The teachers and society in general should assist the students by letting them take up challenges and activities which will help the students to develop confidence. Mental health development programmes, developed by many institutions and experts can be used with appropriate modifications to improve the mental health of such students.

References :

Skalski, A. K. & Smith, M. J. (2006). *Responding to the mental health needs of students*. US Department of Education.