

A Comparative Study of Mental Health of Normal and Visually Challenged Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and absence of disease. According to world health organization (WHO) mental health is a form of well-being where a person can recognize his / her own power, can overcome their daily stressful life and able to contribute his or her own society. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by many hormonal changes, brain, and physical development, emotional and behavioral development. Mentally healthy children and adolescents enjoy their lives positively; they function well at home, school and their community. While visually impaired (absence of visual ability or loss of perception of visual stimuli) adolescents experience severe psychological and behavioral problems especially during adolescent period. The objective of the present study is to compare the normal and visually challenged adolescents in terms of mental health. For measuring the mental health of both groups well-being scale (WEMWBS) was administered. The data was collected from blind school (Ahmadi school) and Aligarh Public School (N=100). For the statistical analysis t test was used. The result of this study revealed that there was a significant difference between both the groups of normal and visually challenged adolescents on mental health.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Adolescent, Visually Impaired.*

According to WHO (2007) Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. The definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, ability to live a full and meaningful life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. According to the psycho-social observation, health is much more than the absence of disease. A person who has no disease is not ill, but they can't be mentally healthy until all the dimensions are not completed, i.e. biological, psychological and social factors, all these factors will be included when we talk about mental health. In the context of positive psychology, mental health includes an individual's life

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fulfilled through joy and happiness, and it maintains the balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Moreover, people who are mentally healthy can deal difficult situation in a better manner (Smith and Segel, 2011). According to the WHO, child's mental or behavioural disorder will rise and become one of the five most common causes of morbidity, mortality, and disability among children by the year 2020 (WHO, 2001). As part of one's overall health, mental and emotional health or well-being is an essential condition to enable one to control one's life successfully. *UNICEF (2011) report estimate that around 20 percentage of the world's adolescence have a mental health or behavior problems. Keyes and (2002, 2005) and Huppert and Whittington (2003) carried out an empirical study for the independent of positive and negative well-being, they reported that mental disorders are not opposite ends of a single field rather it incorporates distinct, though correlated, axes. Keyes (2005) carried out a data from the MIDUS (midlife in united states) study in USA, it showed that 50% of the population are moderately mentally healthy, 17% are flourishing, 10% are languishing and remain 23% of population diagnosed mental disorders such as depression.*

WHO defines "adolescence is the period of human growth and development that start after childhood from 10 to 19 years". This is a stage where they try to find out their own identity and can form social interaction with others. Here all the psychological and bodily development occurs. The huge biological changes that occur in the brain are in frontal lobe that is responsible for the decision making, planning (Begley, 2000).

It is a time between childhood to adulthood that involves biological, cognitive and social-emotional changes. Moreover, many adolescents seem in the form of passive role (Hall, 1904).

Visually challenged

Visual impairment also known as vision loss or vision deficiency, this impairment leads to a person to cannot see any object to a degree that cause a problems not fixable by usual means, such as glasses. Due to vision loss people have difficulty with their daily normal life such as reading, walking and driving etc. As of 2012 report there were 285 million people those were visually challenged of which 246 million had low vision and 39 million were blind. The National Assistance Act 1948 states that a person can be certified as severely sighted impaired if they are "so blind as to be unable to accomplish any task for which eyes are needed. The term blindness is used for complete or nearly complete vision loss (Marberley et al. 2006). Sharma (1998) found that visually challenged was frustrated when compared with their sighted counterparts. Secondly visual disabled perform to be inferior so their study involvement was concerned. Visually challenged had feelings of dependence and helpless, they needed special attention when entering in the stage of adolescence. Studies reported that visually impaired had experience severe psychological and behavioral problems, specifically during adolescence period. Wong et al (2009) investigated the impact of visual impairment on quality of life in a study of 1249 adolescents aged between 11 to 18th years showed that the levels of psychological and school

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functionality are significantly low. Jan et al (1977) reported that 57% children with visual impairment have psychiatric disorder including diagnosis of adjustment disorder, conduct disorder and personality disorder. Fisher et al (1991) examine that in every social situation, the person who is having disabilities their thoughts and feelings were found more negative in comparison to normal one. Even other studies reveal that blind people have some extra sensory perception, Zehran (1965) find out that blind children possess the same personality characteristics as well as sighted one. Tillman and Osborne (1969) observed that blind children were superior on repetition of number indicating short term memory and attention.

Issues of adolescence:

The major issue of adolescence is forming their own identity (Erikson, 1998). Erikson said that adolescent experience a life crisis of 'ego identity' verses 'role diffusion'. Ego identity is an attitude in which individual seeks 'who one is' and 'what for their existence' moreover those adolescents who do not develop ego identity may have experience role conflict that lead toward anxiety and depression. Adolescents period can cause a great deal of anxiety for the visually challenged person, they not only face the usual developmental challenges but also the added strain of his or her physical handicap. Many studies have predicted the increment of vulnerability and difficulty arising during the development of children and adolescent with visual impairment.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare visually challenged and normal adolescents on mental health.
2. To compare visually challenged girls and boys on mental health.
3. To compare visually challenged girls and normal sighted girls on mental health.
4. To compare visually challenged boys and normal sighted boys on mental health.

Hypotheses:

Alternate hypotheses were formulated.

H01 - Visually challenged and normal adolescents will differ significantly on mental health.

H2- Visually challenged girls and boys will differ significantly on mental health.

H3- Visually challenged girls and normal girls will differ significantly on mental health.

H4- Visually challenged boys and normal boys will differ significantly on mental health.

METHOD

Participants

The total sample size was 100 adolescents age range 12 to 18 years. They were divided into two groups 50 of them normal sighted from Aligarh public school and 50 of them visually challenged from Ahmadi blind school Aligarh.

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Measures

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale was developed by Joseph, Tennant, Parkinson, and Stewart- Brown, (2007), this measure was used to assess the mental health of the adolescents. It's a 5-point Likert scale consisted of 14 items ranging from 1 (none of time) to 5 (all of the time) the total score obtains by adding of score on all item. The reliability of the scale was .84 and test retest reliability was 0.83.

Procedure

First of all, permission was taken from the chairperson of the school from the both groups of participants. The data were collected individually. Before administrating the questionnaires purpose of the study was introduced to the group with the collaboration of school teacher. After the interaction with adolescents' rapport was established with them and normal adolescents were asked to read the given instruction carefully. Now they were requested to not leave any item without answering. Participants were given ample amount of time to complete the questionnaire properly. In the case of participants who were visually challenged they were also given same instruction and rapport was form with them. Here the questionnaire was instructed verbally with each items with option. When the both groups had completed their task thanks were given to them.

Ethical issues

Participants agreement was taken before administering the questionnaires, only those participants were selected who were willingly to cooperate in the study.

Variable

- Independent variable (gender or Male/Female).
- Dependent variable (mental well-being).

Statistical Analyses

The data were analyzed by using of Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 16. The mean of visually challenged group was compared to normal sighted group. Independent 't' test was administered for analyzing the significance of difference between two groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table no. 1 showing the significance of difference between normal and visually challenged adolescents.

Variable	Participants	Mean	N	SD	Df	t	Level of sig
Mental well-being	Normal	47.72	50	8.748	98	3.452	P< .01 (significant)
	Visually challenged	56.42	50	7.326			

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The level of statistical significance is often expressed in terms of probability value (p). The data was analyzed statistically by using SPSS, and Mean, SD; t values (tabulated value) were computed. If p value is less than the t value, then there will be significant differences between two groups.

Table no 1 shows the score of visually challenged group (Mean= 56.42, SD=7.326) and normal group (Mean= 47.72, SD=8.748) respectively. The t-value was greater than p value, so it can be said that there was significant difference ($p < .01$, $t = 3.452$) between normal sighted and visually challenged adolescents. The mean value of mental well-being of the visually challenged adolescents was significantly higher than normal adolescents. Thus, higher mean value of visually challenged showed that they were more positive about their mental well-being than normal sighted adolescents. The reason for this significant difference can be that, visually challenged were more positive about their life as they received a lot of care and guidance from their care taker.

Table no. 2 showing the significance of difference between visually challenged girls & boys.

Variable	Participants	Mean	N	SD	Df	t	Level of sig
Mental well-being	Girls (V.C.)	60.48	25	6.571	48	3.943	P < .01 (significant)
	Boys (V.C)	52.36	25	7.926			

Note: Visually challenged (V.C.)

Table 2 revealed that the score obtained by visually challenged girls were higher (Mean= 60.48, SD= 6.571) as compared to score obtained by visually challenged boys (Mean= 52.36, SD=7.926). The t value ($t=3.943$, $p < .01$) was found greater than p value at the point of significance level (.01). So it showed the significance of difference between visually challenged girls and boys. The result revealed that visually challenged girls were having better mental health as compared to visually challenged boys, which can be seen from the mean score of visually challenged girls. In this study girls were found more optimistic about their futures and received high affection from others than boys due to which their mental well-being was found significantly higher as compared to boys. The majority of adolescents with visually challenge have reported that they are gratified with support, however some studies have revealed that they did not found adequate social support (Anderson et al 1982, Nemskick et al 1986, Chang and Schaller 2000). Kef (1999) conducted a study, he said that girls with visual impairment report more peer support than boys.

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Table no. 3 showing the significance of difference between normal boys & visually challenged boys.

Variable	Participants	Mean	N	SD	Df	t	Level of sig
Mental well-being	Normal boys	48.00	25	8.751	48	-.846	P>.01 (insignificant)
	Visually challenged boys	52.36	25	7.926			

Table no-3 explained the score of the normal boys (Mean=48.00, SD=8.751) and score of visually challenged boys (Mean=52.36, SD= 7.926), above finding revealed that the mean score of visually challenged boys were to some extent higher as compared to normal boys. The t value was found insignificant at 0.01 level (t= .846, p>.01). It means that there was no significance difference between both the groups. Thus, visually challenged boys and normal sighted boys had equal mental well-being. Study conducted by Huurre and Aro (1997) indicated that adolescents with visual challenged were similar to their peers group in psychological well-being.

Table no. 4 showing the significance of difference between normal girls & visually challenged girls.

Variable	Participants	Mean	N	SD	Df	t	Level of sig
Mental well-being	Normal girls	47.44	25	9.242	48	-5.749	P< .01 (significant)
	Visually challenged girls	60.48	25	6.571			

The mean value, SD, and their level of significant can be seen from table no 4, for normal and visually challenged girls. The score obtained by normal girls was found lower (Mean=47.44, SD=9.242) than the score of visually challenged girls (Mean=60.48, SD= 6.571). The mean value of the visually challenged girls significantly higher as compared to normal girls. The t value was found significant at .01 level (t= 5.75, p< .01), it predicted that there was a significant difference between these two groups. The visually challenged girls were found to have better mental well-being. The reason for this significant difference can be that visually challenged girls were living in a highly protective and caring environment due to which they do not face many issues which normal girls faced and thus improving their mental well-being.

CONCLUSION

The obtain score of visually challenged group (Mean=56.42, SD=7.326) was compared to normal group (Mean= 47.72, SD= 8.748), showed that difference between these two groups. In our study visually challenged group was found more mentally healthy as compared to sighted

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group, because they are living in a peaceful environment, and are not bothering by people as normal sighted are facing. They all have found extra care and social support from other and peer's groups, every adolescents looking happy and have self-faith that they can do any-thing. Therefore, every adolescent has needed social support, responsible decision making, positive attitude and have social collaboration skill, these kind of things may develop their mental health status and also **prevention programming lead toward development**. Our study was supported by Kef and Devkovic (2004), Koenes, Karshmer (2000), they said that welfare can be positively affected by physical well-being, strong friendship and family network, encouragement by adults toward independent. Thus if appropriate support given by parents, teachers and other significant people to the individual who are visually challenged can also be altered toward healthy future which latter adds to developing healthy personality and multi-faceted development in life. Adolescence mental health plays a dynamic role in each phase of life and deprived of mental health can lead to decrement of any performance in his/her life.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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