

## Disability- Its Impact on Self-Esteem of Young Adults Pursuing Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

The investigation attempts related to self-esteem among children and adolescents without disabilities have been made to considerable extent; however, research regarding children, adolescents and more specifically young adults with disability attending any post-secondary program has been scarce in the country. The present study examined the self-esteem among young adults with diverse disabilities who attended college, university or any post-secondary program, as well as investigated the factors that may have direct or indirect impact on the self-esteem among this specific category of population. Specifically, this study aimed to identify the level of self-esteem among young adults with varying disabilities pursuing higher education. More specifically, the study also investigated whether male and female with specific disabilities differed in their levels of self-esteem, and if their visibility or non-visibility of disability has any contribution to the total value of self-esteem. In addition to this, attempts were made to determine whether nature of disability, economic status of family does have any direct or indirect consequence on the total value of self-esteem. There were 51 participants with varying disabilities between the age group 18-25, with majority of participant's males (30) and females (21), with 35% orthopedically handicapped, 33% Visually impaired, 16% Hearing Impaired, 2% Autism Spectrum Disorder (Savant) and 14% with other disabilities. The findings after administration of different statistical procedures reflected that there exists a significant difference between gender and total value of self-esteem, which was found to be considerably lower in female population; the possible reason may be their emotional instability in comparison to male, or due to the role that is brought up by society and family to them so that boys have a perception of being more independent than girls which consequently elevates the self-esteem of boys or also the female population is believed to be more conscious about their physical appearance in contrast to the males. The individuals with disability may exhibit the feelings of inferiority, less engagement in self-initiated activities, feelings of faith limitations in self-capabilities and development of reduced levels of personal autonomy and self-control. The financial soundness may let you explore the nature more and the more you explore the more the diverse experience and the more the diverse experience the higher the knowledge regarding self-limitations and capabilities. Additionally, the financial constrains may hinder the academic progress of the individuals with disability as the demands for success needs the resources which may be

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Received: December 10, 2022; Revision Received: February 06, 2023; Accepted: February 11, 2023

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inadequate for someone with financial restraints. Ultimately it was found that the majority of the respondents (82 %) display average level of self-esteem while fewer (18%) exhibit the lower level of self-esteem. This may be due to the successful academic accomplishments and fulfillment of aspirations despite the limitations posed by the nature.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, disability, self-control, adult.*

**B**orn as a person with disability will leave you helpless at many stages of life and this will place the person in the world's largest minority group. A considerably high population with disability lives in less developed countries where the people have least services that are considered to be essential for an individual such as education, health care and specialized services. Self-esteem although has not yet any universal definition refers to the judgmental, evaluative or affective aspect of conception about self. Rosenberg suggested that it is self-structure dimension. Self-esteem takes into account an individual analyzing his/her image progressively or regressively. Alterations in self-esteem can occur in response to variations in demands on lives of people, space and time. Disability is a long and persistent process and its acceptance encompass the next mentioned phases: denial and shock, withdrawal and mourning, reaffirmation and reassessment, depressive state, mobilization and coping, self-acceptance and self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem people are the ones who accept the limitations that are real and are believed to be most successful in achieving goals, ambitions and make their life worth. Low esteem is inversely related to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety that is a decrease in self-esteem lead to an increase in psychological issues. The minority group especially persons with disability continually suffer poor self-esteem and stigmatization. Self-esteem is considered as an integral for an individual's sense about the value of their own worth, a primary constituent of mental health plus a powerful indicator of wellbeing. there is also an expansion in investigating this construct among adolescents and children's recently, the reason being dissimilitude in mental health and educational outcomes corresponding to varying degrees of the life satisfaction. Throughout their life, a disabled people are facing more of discrimination and stereotypes within their society that could put the person with additional pressure while trying to meet the society's impossible standards. The persons with disability may likewise deteriorate to a lower level due to improper adjustment of personality.

Self-esteem is affected by a number of variables while development of concept about self and the disability adds more. Parents or caregivers are believed to be paramount in shaping the self-esteem. Deficiency of self-confidence doesn't necessarily reveal deficiency of ability but rather means the lack of appropriate strategies in shaping the abilities. Society can also play an equally important role in influence of person's concept about him or herself. In mental health and personality balance self-esteem plays a leading role.

Successful academic experiences and achievements during the academic life whether in schools or colleges or in universities is thought to be considerable contributor to the development of self-esteem. Consistent failure or success most likely has a strong impact on individual's self-esteem. In terms of personality, stability in emotions, extroverted, and dedicated and conscientious individuals are the ones experiencing elevated self-esteem.

### ***Types of Self-Esteem***

#### ***High:***

Accept and admit varying drives and internal emotions or feelings, whether those being negative or positive and disclose those drives to others accordingly their choice.

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### *Low Self-Esteem:*

Low self-esteem people are likely to be critical of themselves. When evaluating self-worth some are dependent on the approval and some are influenced by praise of others.

### *Implicit, explicit, narcissism and threatened egotism*

An individual's disposition to analyze himself either positively or negatively in a spontaneous, unpremeditated and unconscious manner is briefly described as implicit self-esteem. While as in contradistinction explicit self-esteem implies more intentional and reflective self-evaluation. When an individual has a disposition that constitutes a superfluous adoration for him is narcissism. It is delineated by an inflated perspective of self-worth.

Threatened egotism is specified as a response to criticism that jeopardizes the ego of narcissists. Aggression and hostility is a frequent reaction of these individuals.

### *Secure Vs defensive self-esteem*

An individual can have a high self-esteem and hold on to it confidently where they do not require reassurance from other people to sustain and continue their positive self-view.

Defensive high self-esteem people internalize subconscious doubts about self and find themselves unsecured, which may become the reason to respond negatively to whichever criticism they may receive.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In general, the identity of disability is described as an individual's experience of himself in relation to their own disabilities (Darling, 2013). The self is an integration of people own experiences of themselves, that is; "Me", and their actions within social circumstances, for an example, the adjustment of an individual's interactions with others while presenting himself in varying social contexts, that is, the "I" (Aboulaflia, 2016). Individuals with lifelong disabilities or individuals who live with disabilities since early childhood and, probably develop relatively positive perceptions of their disability (Darling, 2013; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). Children who are aware of their own strengths, for instance, function better in spite of having disabilities than others who are excessively sensitive to their differences from others (Kayama & Haight, 2014). The instant an individual with disability recognizes that his struggles are because of his disability, rather than deficiency of his effort or morality, he can regain a sense of confidence and begin to perceive himself more positively (Kayama & Haight, 2014). Yet, the awareness of individuals of their disablement does not certainly lead to their acceptance of "disabilities," in part, due to stigmatization, and negative connotations associated with disabilities (Lalvani, 2015). The limited social participation of individuals with disabilities is due, in part, to a lack of resources particularly in terms of finance, which are necessary for the local implementation of national policies determining disability services (e.g., Chopra, 2013; Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Research Design*

Descriptive study design was employed to discover the findings on self-esteem of young adult population with disability pursuing higher education.

### *Universe And Sampling*

A sample size comprising of 51 young adults with disability pursuing higher education in various institutions were the respondents for the study. Simple random sampling was employed for the collection of data requisite for the study.

## **VARIABLES**

### ***Independent***

- Gender (Male/Female)
- Age (18 years-25 years)

### ***Type of Disability (Physical, Visual impairment, Hearing Impairment, Autism and Others)***

### ***Dependent***

- Level of self-esteem

### ***Hypothesis***

- There exists a significant difference between the gender and comprehensive self-esteem among young adult students with disability pursuing higher education.
- There exists an association between visibility of disability and overall self-esteem among young adult students with disability pursuing higher education.
- There is an association between nature of disability among young adults with disability pursuing higher education and global self-esteem
- There is an association between gender and attitude towards self among young adult students with disability pursuing higher education.
- There is an association between economic status of family (income) overall self-esteem among young adult students with disability pursuing higher education.

### ***Description of Tool***

The researcher of the present study had constructed a biographical questionnaire that was utilized to gather information on gender, visibility of disability, age of onset of disability, employment status, support of family and peers along with other relevant demographic and qualitative information. In addition to this, the *Rosenberg self-esteem scale* was employed to gather information for determining the level of self-esteem. It is a 10-item scale that estimates global self-worth by estimating both negative and positive feelings regarding the self.

### ***Procedure for Data Collection***

The data was collected from primary sources, that is; post-secondary institutes, colleges and universities providing higher education to disabled. Rosenberg self-esteem scale was employed for estimating the self-esteem of young adults with disability pursuing higher education.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data was analyzed after the collection of sample by the application of varying statistical measures and principles.

### ***Significance of Study***

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the status of self-esteem among the varied young adult population with disability as the individuals with disability do not respond uniformly about their obstacles. The focus will be on the impacts of disability on the self-esteem among young adult population and the reasons that deteriorate the self-esteem as well as the possible reasons that intensify the self-esteem of young individuals with disability pursuing higher education. Although studies on self-esteem of adults with disability are there, but studies related to young adults with disability pursuing higher education are minimal.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- There exists a significant difference in comprehensive self-esteem between female and male young adult students with disability pursuing higher education.
- There exists an association between the visibility of disability and overall self-esteem.
- There's an association between the nature of disability and its impact on the global self-esteem.
- There exists an association between the self-attitude and adult female and male population with disability pursuing higher education.
- There exists an association between the economic status (family income) and total value of self-esteem.
- Ultimately, the outcome predicted the probability of the impact of varying factors including gender, visibility of disability, family income, and nature of disability are believed to have an impact on the self-esteem even some factors do deteriorate the value of self-esteem of college going students with disability.

### *Limitations and Suggestions*

The difficulty in communicating the non-verbal students with disability as the scholar of the present study is not sufficiently trained for the non-verbal communication, such as sign language.

Inadequate assistance was provided by the colleges in locating the students with disability and also when located they were found to be engaged in their busy classroom schedule.

Further investigation into the sensitivity and suitability of Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSE) can be conducted prior to administration with specific adults with disability, so that the instrument can be modified, if necessary, in order to include and eliminate potential content specific items for persons with disability.

The present study be replicated with a population other than young adult students with disability pursuing higher education, i.e., their peers with disability who did not have any post-secondary educational experience.

Future research endeavors similar to the present study be conducted with a sufficiently large sample so that it's possible to control for the effects of societal support, severity of disability, communication mode, onset of disability, along with the academic progress or accomplishments.

Further research to supplement the scope of present investigation involving inquiries into the potential relationships between self-esteem and varying qualitative topics which were investigated incidental to this primary study: (1) Sense of loneliness, (2) Feelings of discrimination, (3) Sense of social isolation, (4) Perceived level of peer and family support and (5) Sense of common identity with other disabled peers.

## CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to discover if relationship exists between the gender, visibility of disability, economic status (family income), nature of disability and total value of self-esteem of young adult students with disability pursuing higher education, and based on the research findings it has been concluded that these factors have a significant impact on the

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self-esteem of young adults with disability pursuing higher education. Diverse academic experience may become the factor that can hamper the reduction in global self-esteem as it will give someone with disability the knowledge of acceptance, limitations as well as capabilities which eventually can prove to be the reason for improving the global self-esteem.

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### Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and render my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. L Cresenta Shakila Motha, Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Rehabilitation Science, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli for her guidance, understanding, patience. I whole heartedly place on record my sincere appreciation to my eminent Holy Cross College, affiliated to Bharathidasan University; Tiruchirappalli, all the respondents, institutions, the administration as well as staff members whose approvals and consistent support are the reason for the prosperity of this research.

### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

**How to cite this article:** Amjad Hussain (2023). Disability- Its Impact on Self-Esteem of Young Adults Pursuing Higher Education. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 495-500. DIP:18.01.053.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.053