

## Peer study in integrated classroom on social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students

### Abstract

Social adaptation and self-esteem are two essential components for the academic success of visually impaired students, which are affected by various factors. Having a classmate as a learning partner for visually impaired students can help to create and strengthen these psychological characteristics. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of peers in the integrated classroom on the social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students. The method used was causal-comparative. The statistical population of this research included all visually impaired students of elementary school. The statistical sample included 20 people (10 people in the experimental group and 10 people in the control group) who were selected using the available method. The measurement tools used in this research were Cooper Smith's self-esteem questionnaire and Inder Bitzen and Foster's social skills scale. The results of the research showed that the presence of peers in the integrated classroom has a positive and significant effect on the social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students.

**Keywords:** *Peers, Vision Student, Social Adjustment, Self-Esteem*

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### Introduction

Adolescence, the transition from childhood to adulthood, is characterized by unique physical and psychological changes and social demands [1]. The social maturity of adolescents with disabilities is not only affected by physiological and psychosocial changes that occur during adolescence but also by the specific nature of disabilities [2]. The persistent chronic stress of deficits, such as potential limitations in activities of daily living and functional independence, and psychological and social effects resulting from physical differences with peers, may synergistically affect the psychological and social health of disabled children and adolescents with visual impairments. (those who are blind or have low vision) maybe at psychological and social risk [3].

Researchers have found in some studies that vision disorders may cause [4]. Adolescents feel incompetent and inferior, which is believed to reflect their lack of social acceptance, academic achievement, physical disability, and social maladjustment [5]. However, other studies have shown that visually impaired individuals are at greater risk of developing low self-esteem than their sighted counterparts [6]. It is also known that many teenagers with visual impairments have problems relating to their peers. They may be socially isolated, have fewer friends, and have smaller social networks than sighted teenagers [7]. In addition, many of them have reported that visual impairment affects their social personality and self-esteem [8].

Most visually impaired adolescents report that their relationships with their parents are close and that they receive social support mainly from their family members [9]. However, some studies have reported that adolescents with disabilities may receive insufficient social support or the "wrong type" of support (eg, overprotection) from their families. Although many studies have found some problems in

psychosocial development among visually impaired adolescents, visual impairment may not necessarily cause problems in psychosocial functioning. Research factors, such as the definition of outcome concepts, selection of groups, and data collection methods, may explain some of the reported differences. Social support, which has been defined and operationalized in several ways, can generally be considered as resources provided by other people [10]. Social support from parents and friends plays an important role in the development of self-esteem in these children's adolescence. slow [11]. This issue can improve the well-being of such people through the psychological effects of the mere presence of others, preventing isolation, realizing the value of being part of a network, and receiving help when needed. Therefore, social support not only strengthens self-esteem and self-confidence. Rather, it creates a sense of security and control over themselves and the environment in them. Although it should be mentioned, there is little information about the relationship between social support and self-esteem among adolescents with visual impairments, which we will discuss further [12].

Atta Dekht and his colleagues investigated the role of metacognitive beliefs and emotional intelligence of blind people in predicting social adaptation and comparing it with normal people [13]. In another research, they investigated the effectiveness of social skills training on the self-esteem of blind students. In another study, Aghaei and his colleagues investigated the effectiveness of mobility and orientation training on social skills and social adaptation of blind students. Therefore, the study presented here investigated the effect of peers in the integrated classroom on the social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students [14].

### Methodology

The method of the current research is causal-comparative. The statistical population of this research includes all the blind

people of Zahedan City. The total statistical population consists of 100 blind students who have been selected randomly and includes two classes of 10 students at a combined secondary school level, the method of conducting the research has been that two groups of 10 blind individuals are selected, one of these classes consists of only blind students and the other class consists of a combination of blind students and their peers. Then, the considered questionnaires (the social skills evaluation questionnaire and the self-esteem evaluation questionnaire) are given to the blind students of the two classes, and the obtained results are analyzed through the SPSS software. The inferential statistics utilized in this research include an analysis of covariance. The measurement tool methods utilized in this research are as follows:

*A) Cooper Smith's self-esteem questionnaire*

Self-esteem measurement tools are usually based on factors that are related to one's self. This questionnaire has 58 items, 8 items of which are lie detectors, and 50 items are related to variables such as general self-esteem, social self-esteem, and family and education self-esteem in this research. The obtained Cronbach's alpha is equal to 0.81 which indicates the adequate internal homogeneity of the self-esteem questionnaire's questions.

*B) Inder Bitzen and Foster's social skills scale*

The selected data collection tool in this research is Inder Bitzen and Foster's social skills test. The selected questionnaire includes 39 items and ranges from true to false and is determined based on a 5-point Likert scale. In general, this questionnaire includes two parts of positive behavior and negative behavior. The grading method is the same for both parts. The social skills questionnaire conducted by Inder Bitzen and Foster consists of 40 questions, and its validity for the positive section is equal to 0.86, 0.75 for the negative section, and 0.85 for the inner stability section.

Its convergent validity is evaluated through various methods including comparing this questionnaire to self-evaluation information, peer group evaluation, and sociometric assessment. The assessed validity and the obtained results indicate the suitable convergent validity and detection validity of this questionnaire [18].

**Research Findings**

It can be indicated from Table 1 that the experimental group got less grades in the social skills and self-esteem pre-test than the control group while getting higher grades in the social skills and self-esteem post-test. Ultimately, after conducting a follow-up test after one month, the self-esteem and social adjustment grades of the experimental group were marginally increased.

In this research, statistical methods are carried out in two descriptive and inferential levels. In Table 2, we analyze the

self-esteem variance regarding self-esteem and social adjustment variables.

**Table 1: The average tested grades of self-esteem and social adjustment's pre-test and post-test**

Test		Experimental group		Control group	
		Average	Standard deviation	Average	Standard deviation
<b>Social skills</b>	Pre-test	171	19.81	154	21.08
	Post-test	237	12.51	181	18.31
<b>Self-esteem</b>	Pre-test	25	6.14	35	7.34
	Post-test	78	5.01	41	7.98

The averages of the two groups illustrate that the experimental group's post-test grade was increased compared to that of the control group. So, it can be stated that the social skills training led to an increase in the experimental group's self-esteem grades.

A covariance analysis statistical test was utilized to test the research hypothesis according to the research's outline to evaluate the effect of peers in the integrated classroom on the social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students with the control group through a pre-test and post-test and further, to measure the variables. The presumptions were investigated before conducting the test.

**Table 2: Leven's test**

Test	F	Df1	Df2	Sig.
Social skills	2.076	2	35	<b>0.3</b>
Self-esteem	1.89	2	35	<b>0.4</b>

The calculated F value in Leven's test is smaller than the F in the table which indicates the homogeneity of the variances in the two groups. moreover, since the significant degree of Leven's test variables is greater than 0.05, this test is not significant. Thus, the equation assumption of the variances is established for this variable.

To justify the homogeneity of the regression slope, the dispersion scale of the dependent variable and covariance should be drawn simultaneously for the groups. the identical direction lines of the regression slope of the groups show that the presumption is established. The scatter plot was utilized for this purpose. Since the slope direction lines of the graphs are

nearly identical based on the graph, the presumption was established.

**Table 3: Covariance analysis of self-esteem, its variables, and social adjustment**

Variance source	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Total average	F	Significance degree
Covariance variable (pre-test)	289	1	289	6.14	0.01
Group(post-test)	491	1	491	10.44	0.02
Error	1543.01	26	51.22		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2323.01</b>	<b>28</b>			

Table 3 indicates that there are significant differences regarding variables such as self-esteem and social adjustment between the two blind groups in the two classes ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Discussion

In general, the purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of peers in the integrated classroom on the social adjustment and self-esteem of visually impaired students. According to the conducted research, it was identified that the presence of peers in the integrated classroom has a positive and significant effect on the social adaptation and self-esteem of visually impaired students. Pandey [16] indicated that there was a significant difference in the adjustment of the visually impaired students at home, school, and personally in special and integrated setups.

Students who study in public schools with sighted students have more emotional control due to interaction with their sighted peers. Pant and Joshi (2016) showed that visually impaired students in inclusive environments have more stable emotions than visually impaired students in special environments. This emotional stability makes visually impaired students experience more self-esteem due to interaction with sighted peers [16].

Self-esteem is one of the determining behavior factors in humans. The judgment that individuals make upon themselves determines their encounters with different matters. An individual who has low self-esteem and has no value or respect for himself may get affected by isolation, loneliness or [aggressiveness](#), and anti-social behavior. Self-esteem can be imagined as a combination of thoughts, emotions, feelings, and experiences formed in the process of social life. A combination

of thousands of takes, evaluations, and experiences that an individual has from himself makes him feel pleasant, valuable, or vice versa. Since each individual has a unique potential capacity, children who are affected by evaluative conditions feel hopeless to some extent. They can't do completely as others say and be honest with themselves. But this does not mean that self-expression leads to conflict. Carl Rogers believes that when we fail to achieve our unique potential capacity, we hurt others or behave in anti-social ways. Social skills are skills that we use to start communicating and interacting with each other. These interactions can be verbal or non-verbal, occurring through body figures and gestures, body language, and appearance. The matter of socialization and having the potential to interact with others is of utmost importance in all stages of life. Scientists define social skills as follows: The acquired prosocial behavior that enables an individual to interact with others in a way that increases the probability of their positive behaviors and prevents their negative reactions. Social skills are a combination of behaviors that are used in individual communications with others and yields positive outcomes. Social skills not only provide others with the start and persistence of mutual and positive relationships with others, but it also creates the purposeful ability in an individual to communicate with others. "A skilled individual in the social fields is a person who can achieve his aims comprehensively using communicating with others". In different regions even in different families and different timespans, conflicts can be observed regarding the children's behavior. Unlike in the past when children had to stay in silence and pay attention, nowadays children are expected to talk with assertion and be able to express their needs.

### Conclusion

According to the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the integrated education environment can be a more suitable environment for the self-esteem of visually impaired students. Rubul showed that visually impaired students show higher positive self-concept and more adjustment than their peers in a special school setting. As a result, guiding students in general education environments and interacting with sighted peers can help with these psychological variables.

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### Conflict of Interest:

We are grateful to the visually impaired students who cooperated with us in this project and we proudly present this research to them.

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