

MENTAL HEALTH OF THE STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

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ABSTRACT

The global competition in almost all facets of human endeavor call psychologists, social workers, educators and researchers generally, to the need to continuously search for active variables that can enhance human resource development (Gupta and Kumar. 2010). The present study was conducted to find out the level of mental health of the visually impaired under graduate students of language departments both Tamil and English. The researcher used the Mental Health Inventory developed and standardizes by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983). The results indicate that the majority of the visually impaired under graduate students have above average level of mental health, and there was no significant difference between the level of mental health of the students with visual impairment of B.A. Tamil and B.A. English. Further, there is not much significant difference between the level of mental health of the totally blind and partially blind undergraduate students.

Introduction

The present day competitive world scenario compels every individual to run along the stream of fast moving and ever demanding life style, and to cope with the emotional fluctuations caused by. Because of the exploding growth of population and the expectation for quality of life, it becomes a mandatory to be healthy, vigilant and active all the time. Health indicates psychosomatic well being. Thus, health is a broader concept including physical, social and mental health. Mental health has been reported as an important factor influencing individual's various behaviours, activities, happiness and performance (Gupta and Kumar. 2010).

Mental Health is increasingly seen as fundamental to physical health and quality of life and thus needs to be addressed as an important component of improving overall health and well-being of an individual. It is determined by multiple and interactive social, psychological, and biological factors, just as health and illness in general (Desjarlais et al., 1995). Many misconceptions exist among the general public, and even professionals, regarding the concept of mental health. This is due to the fact that mental health is undervalued in many ways in the present societies. The concept is often confused with societal stigma and negative attitudes.

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In common language, the concept of mental health is used in different ways, and often it has negative connotation because it is associated with severe and chronic mental illness (Purushothaman and Nagle, 2012).

The WHO, defines mental health as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2001b). Mental health is an indivisible part of the general health and well-being. The positive value of mental health, which contributes to human well-being, quality of life and creativity, is not accorded high priority. Building an evidence base is an incremental process. It should be culturally sensitive and use a wide range of research methods. The necessity for expanding the evidence base is more relevant to sense the reality of those working and living in low-income countries (WHO, LMIC, 2007). Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his/her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his/ her communication (Jang & Others 2000).

Objective

The objective of the present study is to assess the level of mental health of the students with visual impairment both totally blind and partially blind from Tamil and English language departments of Loyola College, Chennai, India.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between undergraduate students from Tamil and English language Departments with visual impairment in their mental health.
2. Totally blind and partially blind under graduate students from Tamil and English language departments do not differ in their level of mental health.

Delimitation of the study

The present study was carried out to assess the mental health of the undergraduate students with visual impairment of the language departments of Tamil and English only. Since the sample consists no female representatives the gender difference in the level of mental health is not studied.

Research Design

The present research is a survey with convenient sampling (Huddar, 2008). Research design refers to the systematic scheduling of the times at which treatments are administered to subjects and at which observations are made of the performance of the subjects. Research design is not only a replacement for careful measurement, analysis, and reasoning, rather it is

an important component of the research process of establishing cause and effect relationships. By combining careful research design with appropriate measurement, analysis, and reasoning, we can strengthen the validity of the conclusions; we can draw from our research efforts (Vockell, 1983). The investigator adopted the normative survey design to carry out the present study. He used non-parametric quantitative statistics to analyse the data.

Sample

The sample for the present study is the visually impaired under graduate students of the language departments (Tamil & English) of Loyola College, Chennai, and Tamil Nadu who are using the Resource Centre for the Differently Abled, Loyola College. The investigator adopted convenient sampling technique and selected 56 out of 64 visually impaired students that include 42 partially blind and 14 totally blind from the language departments (Tamil & English) of Loyola College.

Research Tool

The researcher has used the Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983). The inventory has 54 items under six dimensions such as positive self evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group oriented attitudes and environmental mastery.

Administration of the Research Tool

The researcher approached the sample of the study after the regular class hours in the Resource Centre for the Differently Abled (RCDA) sponsored by the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, inside the college premises. He met the students with visual impairment in small groups and spent reasonable time with them, and helped them to fill up the research tool. The researcher read the items for the totally blind students individually and filled in their responses appropriately, since the number was small. Partially blind students filled the tool with the little help of the special trainers. Within a span of three days the researcher was able to administer the tool to the whole sample and recorded the data.

Interpretation of the data

Table-I
Overall Level of Mental Health of the Under Graduate Students with Visual Impairment of the Language Departments

Level of Mental Health	N	Percentage
Very Good	0	0.0 %
Good	18	32.14 %
Average	21	37.5 %
Poor	14	25 %
Very Poor	03	5.35 %
Total	56	100%

Figure-1
Level of Mental Health of the Students with Visual Impairment

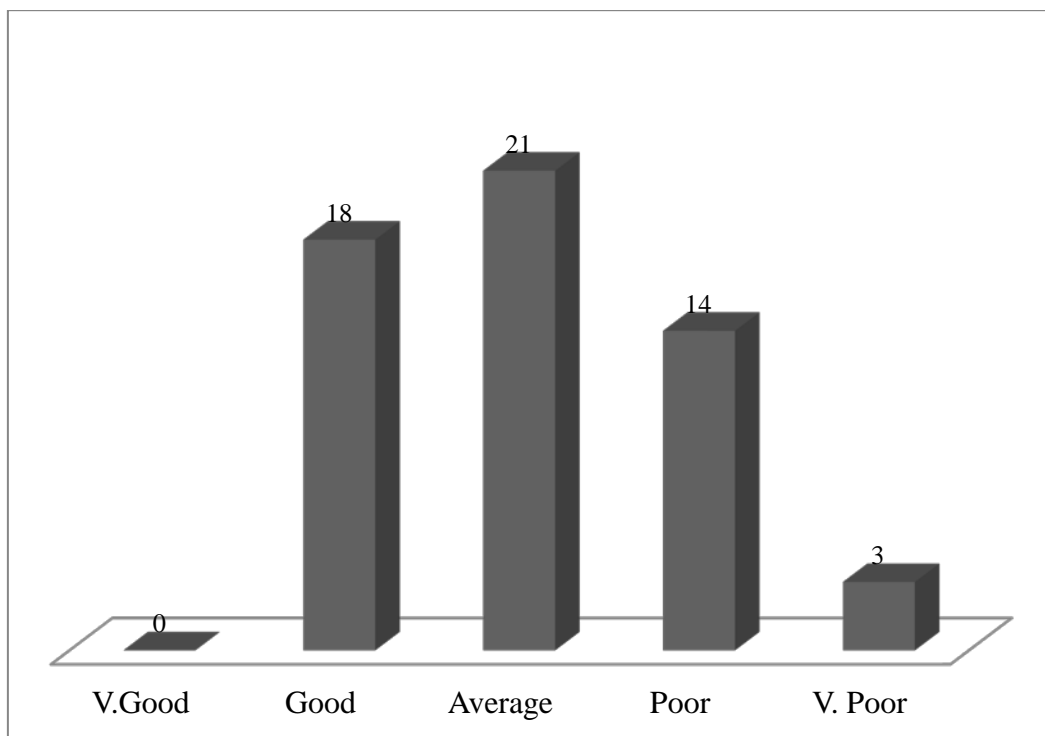


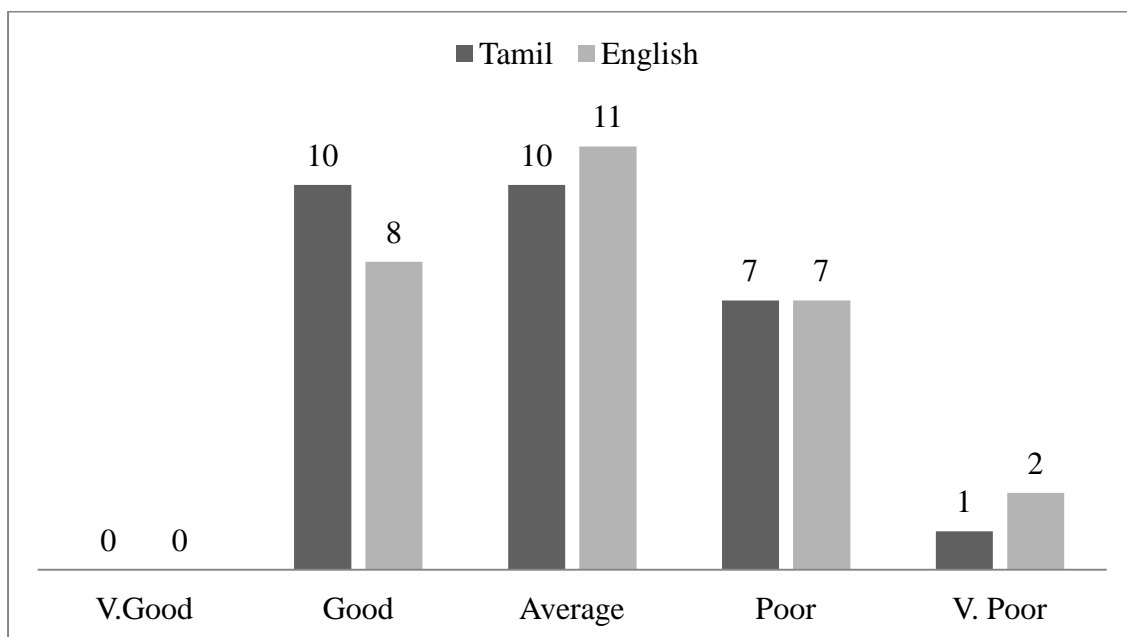
Table-II

Overall level of Mental Health of the Students with Visual Impairment of the Tamil and English Language Departments

Level of Mental Health	N	
	Tamil	English
Very Good	0	0
Good	10	8
Average	10	11
Poor	7	7
Very Poor	1	2
Total	56	

Figure-2

Level of Mental health of the Visually Impaired Students from Tamil and English Departments



Hypothesis-1

There is no significant difference between undergraduate students from Tamil and English language Departments with visual impairment in their mental health.

Table-III

the mean, SD and 't' value of Tamil and English students with visual impairment

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' value		Remark 0.05 level
				Calculated	Table	
B.A. Tamil	28	164.75	14.99	0.438	2.00	Not Significant
B.A. English	28	161.65	14.96			

Since the calculated 't' value is less than that of table value, it is interpreted that there is no significant difference between the level of mental health of the undergraduate students with visual impairment of language departments (Tamil and English) and therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis-2

Totally blind and partially blind under graduate students from Tamil and English language departments do not differ in their level of mental health.

Table-IV

the mean, SD and 't' value of the level of mental health of the totally blind and partially blind undergraduate students of language departments (Tamil and English)

Category	N	Mean	SD	't' value		Remark 0.5 level
				Calculated	Table	
Totally Blind	14	160.13	14.05	0.181	2.021	Not Significant
Partially Blind	42	164.26	15.23			

Since the calculated 't' value is less than that of table value, it is interpreted that there is no significant difference in the level of mental health of the totally blind and partially blind undergraduate students of language departments (Tamil and English) and therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Major Findings and Discussion

1. Out of 56 students with visual impairment no student (0 %) has very good level of mental health, 18 students (32.14 %) possess a good level of mental health, 21 students (37.5 %) show an average level of mental health, 14 students (25 %) have a poor level of mental health and 3 students (5.35 %) have very poor level of mental health in the administration of the Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983). The computerized assistive devices in the RCDA help these students with visual impairment in a wide range of aspects of their activities of daily life such as communication skills, study skills, ICT skills, etc. The contribution of the people working in the resource centre is very friendly and empathetic in maintaining rapport with the students with visual impairment and helping them based on the individual needs of each and every visually impaired student. After attending the regular classes in the regular classroom with the normal students they come to the resource centre in the afternoon and spend around five hours all the weekdays where they feel at home and happy interact with their counterparts and the centre officials as well. The helps and support they cherish in the resource centre make them confident to face this world. This is evident from the present study that 69.65 % of the students with visual impairment with an above average level of mental health and only 30.35 % have a below average level of mental health.
2. From Table-III it is found that the calculated 't' value (0.438) is lesser than the table value and it is interpreted that there is no significant difference between the level of mental health of undergraduate students with visual impairment of language departments (B.A. Tamil and B.A. English). This result is justified as both Tamil and English students are studying in a same college and using the same resource centre, the treatment and the facilities offered to them look most similar and they are provided with best opportunities to mingle with each other without any hesitation. Since the same training given to them to use the computers, other electric and digital devices in the resource centre the students feel convenient and courageous to learn.
3. Inference of Table-IV shows that totally blind and partially blind undergraduate students of language departments (Tamil and English) do not differ in their level of mental health.

Conclusion

The global competition in almost all facets of human endeavor call psychologists, social workers, educators and researchers generally, to the need to continuously search for

active variables that can enhance human resource development (Gupta and Kumar. 2010). From a review of literature on visual impairment and mental health, it is clear that vision loss is consistently associated with depression. Vision loss remains a substantial predictor of depression, even after age, gender, financial strain, and social support are controlled for (Wagner, 1994). The present study has a little contradiction to the above cited research finding. The findings of the present study is justified with the care and support rendered by the college teachers and the staff of the resource centre made the students with visual impairment feel at home and developed a sense of courage and contented. Yoshida et al, (1998) found that the visually impaired college students were similar to the normal college students in terms of their mental health and personality, which shows that mental health of the visually impaired college students, can be normal and good.

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