

AN ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF YOUNG ADULT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AND WITHOUT DISABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Disabled students are an integral part of any institution. If disabled students studied at the university level, their self-confidence, self-esteem, psychological well-being, and quality of life would develop. Studies related to the quality of life and psychological well-being of disabled students are still limited in India. **Aim:** The aim of the present study was to assess the quality of life and psychological well-being of disabled students and compare them with those of students who are not disabled. **Methods and Materials:** The sample consisted of 50 disabled students and 50 non-disabled students of either sex, aged between 20 and 30 years. Ryff's psychological well-being and the WHO quality of life scale were used to assess psychological well-being and quality of life. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. The ethics committee at our university gave its approval to the study. **Results:** There were significantly lower scores in disabled students compared to non-disabled students in almost all the domains of quality of life and all the dimensions of psychological well-being. No significant differences were found between male and female disabled students on all domains of psychological well-being and quality of life, except for personal growth dimensions of psychological well-being. **Conclusion:** Our study suggests poor quality of life and psychological well-being in disabled students as compared to non-disabled students.

Keywords: Quality of life, psychological well-being, disabled students, and students without disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education can assist people with disabilities in understanding their rights, getting respect from others, finding better jobs, and developing their interpersonal skills (Nasir & Efendi, 2016; Singal et al., 2015). The experience of life satisfaction and positive affect, along with occasional and low levels of negative affect, has been characterised as

psychological wellbeing (Diener et al., 1997). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), "humans' perception of their position in life in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns as well as the culture and value systems in which they live" makes up quality of life (WHO, 1997). According to research by Murtaza et al.

(2022), pupils who are normal and those who are impaired have significantly different self-esteem and quality of life. It was also found that female normal and disabled students had poor self-esteem and quality of life as compared to male normal and disabled students.

People with physical disabilities received the lowest scores across nearly all dimensions, whereas people with vision impairments received the lowest scores in facilities-related domains. People with speech and hearing impairments believed they faced greater discrimination than their peers (Jani et al., 2022).

Civico et al. (2021) conducted research on a sample of 182 pupils, 110 of whom were without impairments and 72 of whom had disabilities. There was a noteworthy distinction seen between those with impairments and those without disabilities for the overall score and the four-dimensional psychological wellness measure. The psychological well-being of students with disabilities was worse than that of students without disabilities

Emerson et al. (2020) conducted a study on the psychological well-being of men and women with disabilities and found that women participants had lower psychological wellbeing than men, especially in the areas of happiness, value, and life satisfaction.

Cheng and Sin (2020) conducted a study among university students with hearing impairment and found that quality of life and psychological well-being were poor.

Samsari and Soulis (2019) conducted a comparative study of people with and without physical disabilities and found that people with physical disabilities have worse well-being than people without physical disabilities.

Mpofu et al. (2017) discovered that teenagers with physical impairments had high levels of autonomy and choice, purpose in life, healthy relationships with others, excellent personal

growth, and self-acceptance.

According to Pinquart and Pfeiffer (2011), people with visual impairments had significantly worse psychological well-being than people without disabilities.

Teens with visual impairments showed lower PWB than their peers in good health, according to research by Wong et al. (2009).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Objectives

- ◆ To assess and compare the psychological well-being and quality of life of disabled and non-disabled students.
- ◆ To assess the differences in psychological well-being and quality of life between male and female disabled students.
- ◆ To assess the differences between psychological well-being and quality of life among visually impaired and orthopaedically handicapped students

Method

In the current study, 50 disabled students and the other 50 non-disabled students were selected through the purposive sampling method at different institutions in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India. The participants' age range was 20 to 30 years for both groups.

Tools

Sociodemographic and clinical data

sheet: A unique sociodemographic and clinical data sheet was created specifically for this study in order to gather data on factors like age, sex, types and percentages of disabilities, abuse history, any psychiatric disorders in the family, and history of substance use.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales

(PWB): The 42-item Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) was developed in 1989 by psychologist Carol D. Ryff. The scale comprises six dimensions and forty-two items.

Respondents rate their agreement or disagreement with 42 items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being strong agreement and 7 representing extreme disagreement. The Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1989) has internal consistency reliability values ranging from 0.86 to 0.93.

World Health Organization Quality of Life-Brief (WHOQOL-BRIEF): Developed in 1998 by the World Health Organisation. Four dimensions of quality of life are covered by a 26-item self-report questionnaire: three items for social interactions, eight for the environment, six for psychological health, and seven for physical health. With a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 for each score item and 0.67, 0.67, 0.76, and 0.83 for each of its domains—physical health, psychological, social relationships, and environmental—the WHO quality of life was found to be satisfactorily reliable.

Procedure: The researcher informed the university's administration of the study's goals. After receiving consent from the students and the university's administration, the researcher administered the WHO quality of life scale and the psychological well-being scale. The ethics committee at our university gave its approval to the study.

Statistical analysis: For data analysis, SPSS 20 (IBM) for Windows was utilised. Number and percentage were used in descriptive statistics for discrete or categorical data, whereas mean and standard deviation were used for continuous variables. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the continuous variables. The level of significance was kept at the $p < 0.05$ level.

RESULTS

Table-1: Group comparison of socio-demographic characteristics between disabled and normal students.

Variable	Disabled Students (N=50)	Normal students (N=50)	t (df =98)	p
	Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean $\pm$ SD		
Age	24.24 $\pm$ 3.18	23.10 $\pm$ 1.98	2.602*	.011
Income per month	54980.00 $\pm$ 20261.04	56760.00 $\pm$ 12395.78	.530	.597
Variable	Disabled Students (N=50)	Normal Students (N=50)	χ^2 (df=1)	p
Gender	Male	25	.000	1.00
	Female	25		
Religion	Hindu	48	3.05	.160
	Muslim	2		
Education	UG	26	3.30	.106
	PG, and Above	24		
Marital Status	Single	49	.344	1.00
	Married	1		
Residence	Rural	35	.047	1.00
	Urban	15		

Table-1: shows the socio-demographic characteristics of disabled students and normal students. Age was significantly higher in disabled students than in normal students ($t = 2.602$, $p = <.05$). There were no significant differences found between disabled students and normal students in religion, education, marital status, and residence.

Table-2: Characteristics of Disabled students (N=50).

Variables		n (%)
Types of disabilities	Visual	25 (50)
	Orthopaedics	25 (50)
Disabilities percentage	40%	2 (4)
	50%	5 (10)
	60%	6 (12)
	70%	7 (14)
	80%	10 (20)
	85%	1 (2)
	90%	19 (38)
Family history of disability	Yes	8 (16)
	No	42 (84)
Onset of disability	By birth	29 (58)
	Other reasons	21 (42)

Table-2: displays the characteristics of disabled students. Fifty percent of the students were visually impaired, and 50% were orthopaedically handicapped. Out of 50 students, 2 students had 40% disability, 5 students had 50% disability, 6 students had 60% disability, 7 students had 70% disability, 10 students had 80% disability, 1 student had 85% disability, and 19 students had 90% disability. Sixteen percent of the students had

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a family history of disability. 58% of the students had disabilities by birth, and 42% of the students had disabilities for other reasons.

Table-3: Comparison of quality of life and psychological well-being between disabled and normal students.

Dimensions of QOL	Disabled (N=50)	Normal (N=50)	t (df=98)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Physical	25.00 ± 4.14	28.56 ± 2.66	5.112***	<.001
Psychological	21.42 ± 4.83	22.06 ± 2.34	.842	.402
Relationship with others	9.94 ± 2.79	11.16 ± 1.36	2.775**	.007
Environment	27.02 ± 5.41	29.98 ± 3.29	3.301***	.001
Overall QOL and General health	7.88 ± 1.76	8.00 ± .98	.419	.676
Domains of psychological well-being	Disabled (N=50)	Normal (N=50)	t (df=98)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Autonomy	27.20 ± 4.94	29.46 ± 1.66	3.062**	.003
Environmental mastery	28.02 ± 4.18	30.50 ± 2.29	3.672***	<.001
Personal growth	28.16 ± 6.70	32.86 ± 3.24	4.463***	<.001
Positive relations with others	28.42 ± 5.24	33.78 ± 3.42	6.050***	<.001
Purpose in life	29.16 ± 5.52	36.52 ± 3.83	7.737***	<.001
Self-acceptance	28.16 ± 5.98	35.88 ± 3.38	7.940***	<.001

p<.01 level (2-tailed); *p<.001 level (2-tailed)

Table-3: shows a comparison of quality of life and psychological well-being between disabled and normal students. There was a significant lower score in physical domains ($t = 3.062$, $p = <.01$), environmental mastery (3.672 , $p = <.001$), personal growth (4.463 , $p = <.001$), positive relations with others ($t = 6.050$, $p = <.001$), purpose in life ($t = 7.737$, $p = <.001$), and self-acceptance (7.940 , $p = <.001$) in disabled students as compared to normal students.

Table-4: Comparison of psychological well-being and quality of life between male and female disabled students (N=50).

Domains of psychological well-being	Male (N=25)	Female (N=25)	t (df=48)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Autonomy	27.96 ± 4.98	26.44 ± 4.88	1.089	.282
Environmental mastery	27.48 ± 4.62	28.56 ± 3.70	.910	.367
Personal growth	30.76 ± 6.66	25.56 ± 5.76	2.955**	.005
Positive relations with others	28.40 ± 5.66	28.44 ± 4.90	.027	.979
Purpose in life	29.76 ± 5.98	28.56 ± 5.06	.765	.448
Self-acceptance	28.92 ± 6.71	27.40 ± 5.18	.898	.375
Domains of QOL	Male (N=25)	Female (N=25)	t (df=48)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Physical	25.26 ± 4.69	24.64 ± 3.55	.611	.544
Psychological	21.40 ± 4.70	21.44 ± 5.05	.029	.977
Relationship with others	9.96 ± 2.89	9.92 ± 2.75	.050	.960
Environment	26.12 ± 5.06	27.92 ± 5.70	1.18	.244
Overall QOL and General health	8.00 ± 1.38	7.76 ± 2.10	.476	.636

**p<.01 level (2-tailed)

Table-4: shows a comparison of psychological well-being and quality of life between male and female disabled students. Female students had a significantly lower score in personal growth ($t = 2.995$, $p = <.01$) as compared to male students. There were no significant differences found between male and female students in any other dimensions of psychological well-being. When the quality of life was compared between male and female disabled students, it was found that there was no significant difference in any dimensions of quality of life between male and female disabled students.

Table-5: Comparison of psychological well-being and quality of life between visually and orthopedically disabled students (N=50).

Domains of psychological well-being	Visual (N=25)	Orthopedic (N=25)	t (df=48)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Autonomy	28.20 ± 5.56	26.20 ± 4.11	1.446	.155
Environmental mastery	29.60 ± 3.93	26.44 ± 3.88	2.857	.006
Personal growth	30.20 ± 7.54	26.12 ± 5.10	2.239*	.030
Positive relations with others	29.64 ± 5.21	27.20 ± 5.08	1.675	.101
Purpose in life	30.56 ± 6.24	27.76 ± 4.38	1.835	.073
Self-acceptance	29.88 ± 6.71	26.44 ± 4.57	2.102*	.041
Domains of QOL	Visual (N=25)	Orthopedic (N=25)	t (df=48)	p
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Physical	25.72 ± 4.22	24.28 ± 4.00	1.236	.222
Psychological	22.32 ± 4.87	20.52 ± 4.72	1.326	.191
Relationship with others	10.68 ± 2.28	9.20 ± 3.09	1.923	.060
Environment	27.92 ± 4.41	26.12 ± 6.22	1.180	.244
Overall QOL and General health	7.68 ± 1.97	8.08 ± 1.55	.797	.430

*p<.05 level (2-tailed)

Table-5: Shows the comparison of psychological well-being and quality of life between visually and orthopaedically handicapped students. There was a significantly lower score in personal growth ($t = 2.239$, $p = <.05$) and self-acceptance dimensions of psychological well-being ($t = 2.102$, $p = <.05$) in orthopaedically handicapped students as compared to visually impaired students. There were no significant differences found between visually and orthopaedically handicapped students in any other dimensions of quality of life. When quality of life was compared between visually impaired and orthopaedically handicapped students, it was found that there was no

significant difference in any dimensions of quality of life between visually impaired and orthopaedically handicapped students.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to examine the psychological well-being and quality of life of disabled students and compare them with those of normal students. The group of disabled students had an average age of 24.24 years with a standard deviation of 3.18 years, and normal students had an average age of 23.10 years with a standard deviation of 1.98 years. This study's findings are consistent with other research conducted by Jani et al. (2022), Cheng, and Sin (2020).

When comparing the quality of life and psychological well-being, it was found that disabled students had poor quality of life in all domains of quality of life (i.e., physical, psychological, relationships with others, and environment) except overall quality of life and general health as compared to normal students. Almost similar findings were reported by Murtaza et al. (2022). They found that disabled students had a poor quality of life as compared to normal students.

In this study, it was found that disabled students had poor psychological well-being in all the dimensions of the psychological well-being scale (i.e., autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) as compared to normal students. Murtaza et al. (2022) found almost similar findings. Civico et al. (2021); Samsari and Soulis (2019) conducted research on disabled students and non-disabled students and found that the psychological well-being of students with disabilities was worse than that of students without disabilities. Mpofu et al. (2017) found that students with physical disabilities had a high level of psychological well-being.

When comparing the psychological well-being

and quality of life among male and female disabled students, Findings of the present study indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female disabled students on all the dimensions of psychological well-being except personal growth. Findings showed that male students had higher personal growth as compared to female disabled students. Emerson et al. (2020) did research and found that female students with disabilities had poor psychological well-being as compared to male students. Findings of the current research revealed that there was no significant difference in all domains of quality of life among male and female disabled students. This showed that male and female disabled students had a similar quality of life. This finding was not supported by previous research done by Murtaza et al. (2022). They found that female disabled students had a poor quality of life.

In the current study, visually impaired students had higher scores on personal growth and self-acceptance as compared to orthopaedically handicapped students. This demonstrated that visually impaired students were more receptive to new experiences, felt more like they were living up to their potential, could see their own progress, and were able to recognise and value their own accomplishments. They were also able to feel good about themselves despite being aware of their own limitations, accept both their positive and negative traits, and place a high value on their past.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the current study indicated that students with disability had poor quality of life and psychological well-being as compared to normal students. No significant difference was found between male and female students on psychological well-being and quality of life. Visually impaired students had higher score on personal growth and self-acceptance as

compared to orthopaedically handicapped student. Two main drawbacks of the study were the cross-sectional research design and the small sample size. This research suggests that providing qualified experts with counselling services is necessary to improve the psychological health and quality of life for students with disabilities.

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- Conflict of interest:** None
- Role of funding source:** None