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SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: A REVIEW STUDY

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Abstract

This review study aims to explore the relationship between social intelligence and life skills among students with visual impairments. Visual impairment poses unique challenges for individuals, particularly in the areas of social interaction and the development of essential life skills. Understanding how these students acquire and apply social intelligence and life skills is crucial for designing effective interventions and support systems to enhance their overall well-being and quality of life. The study systematically examines existing literature from reputable databases, peer-reviewed journals, and research publications from the past decade. Key themes explored includes the definition and measurement of social intelligence and life skills, the impact of visual impairment on their development, and the interventions employed to foster social intelligence and life skills among student with visual impairment. Results from the reviewed studies suggest that social intelligence and life skills development among students with visual impairments are influenced by a range of factors, including the severity and early onset of the impairment, family support, educational settings, and access to assistive technologies. Additionally, it highlights the importance of incorporating specialised training programmes and inclusive educational practises to promote the holistic development of these students.

Keywords: Social Intelligence, Life Skills, Visual Impairment.

INTRODUCTION

In an ever-evolving society, the promotion of inclusivity and equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their abilities, stands as a paramount goal. Among those individuals who may encounter unique challenges, students with visual impairments deserve special attention and support. Visual impairment refers to a significant loss of vision that cannot be fully corrected by glasses, contact lenses, or medical treatment, making it imperative for educators and care givers to focus on fostering social intelligence and life skills among these students.

Social intelligence encompasses a set of crucial abilities that enable individuals to understand and navigate social interactions successfully. It involves emotional intelligence, empathy, communication, and relationship-building skills, which play pivotal roles in building meaningful connections with others. For students with visual impairments, who may often face barriers in social interactions due to their limited or absent vision, developing these skills becomes even more critical. Likewise, life skills are fundamental abilities that allow individuals to cope with the challenges of daily life, make informed decisions, and adapt to various situations effectively. For students with visual impairment, acquiring life skills goes beyond their academic performance; it empowers them to lead independent, confident, and fulfilling lives. In this context, the significance of addressing social intelligence and life skills among students with visual impairments cannot be understated. Education systems and institutions must strive to create an inclusive environment that promotes their holistic development, recognising that their potential reaches far beyond their visual limitations.

This study aims to investigate the many facets of fostering social intelligence and life skills in students with visual impairment. This study aims to highlight the best practises, strategies, and support systems that can promote their personal growth and integration into mainstream society by exploring the difficulties they may encounter and the distinctive strengths they possess. These students can be given the tools they need to reach their full potential through targeted interventions



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from educators, parents, and communities like adaptive technologies, specialised training, and sensitivity programmes. In addition, promoting an inclusive mindset within a larger society is crucial for dispelling myths and prejudices about visual impairment, ultimately paving the way for a more accepting and accommodating world.

Promoting social intelligence and life skills in students with visual impairment is a crucial first step in implementing the inclusivity and equity tenets. Studies can ensure that students with visual impairment thrive academically, emotionally, and socially, contributing meaningfully to society and enhancing the lives of those around them by recognising and nurturing their unique talents, equipping them with the necessary tools, and fostering an environment that embraces diversity.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The importance of social intelligence and the development of life skills among students with visual impairment is examined in this review study. While academic achievement is the primary focus of traditional education, meeting the special needs of students with visual impairment is essential for their overall development and a successful transition into society. The study looks at how social intelligence and life skills training can improve people's capacity for social interaction, emotional stability, and independent living.

Students with visual impairment face significant challenges that have an impact on their academic performance as well as their social and personal growth. It is crucial to attend to the unique needs of students with visual impairment in order to ensure their holistic development and successful integration into society. This review study aims to shed light on the benefits of such interventions for these students and emphasise the significance of social intelligence and life skills training.

Social Intelligence and its Significance

Social intelligence refers to the ability to comprehend and navigate social interactions effectively. For students with visual impairment, social interactions can be particularly challenging due to their limited access to visual cues. However, developing social intelligence is vital for building meaningful relationships, fostering empathy, and enhancing emotional well-being. Socially intelligent individuals can better understand social dynamics, express themselves confidently, and demonstrate higher levels of empathy and understanding towards others.

Importance of Life Skills Development

A variety of skills required for independent living and self-sufficiency are referred to as life skills. These abilities are crucial for students with visual impairment to develop in order to overcome daily obstacles and gain self-assurance in managing their lives. The development of life skills includes instruction in orientation and mobility, as well as skills in self-care, communication, time management, organisation, and problem-solving. By enhancing these abilities, students with visual impairment are better equipped to live happy lives, take an active role in their communities, and pursue higher learning or employment opportunities.

Impact of Social Intelligence and Life Skills Training

Several research studies have demonstrated the positive impact of social intelligence and life skills training among students with visual impairments. These interventions not only improve their social interactions but also foster a sense of independence and self-confidence. When students with visual impairment acquire strong life skills, they are better equipped to navigate the challenges of daily life, enhancing their overall quality of life.



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Social integration is another significant benefit of these interventions. As socially intelligent individuals with well-developed life skills, students with visual impairment can participate more actively in group activities, contribute meaningfully to discussions, and form genuine connections with their peers. This social integration reduces feelings of isolation and fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance within their communities.

REVIEW FOR THE STUDIES

Aylin Isikhan and HaticeUysal (2012) studied social skills and loneliness in Adolescent Students with visual impairment. Adolescent students with visual impairment are compared to sighted students to examine their levels of social competence and loneliness. It examines how visual impairment affects social abilities and interactions in academic settings.

Karen and Carla (2011) examined social competence of college Students with Visual Impairments. A Qualitative study focuses on the perceptions of the students themselves and their sighted peers to examine social competence among college students with visual impairments. It explores the difficulties and benefits of social interactions among visually impaired college students.

Developing Social Skills of Students with Visual Impairments through Cooperative Learning, was conducted by Ervin & Heine, 2008. This study explores how cooperative learning strategies can improve the social skills of students with visual impairment. It emphasises how crucial collaborative learning settings are for encouraging social interactions.

Tiffany Wild (2017), done a systematic review of related literature about the development of social skills of Students with Visual Impairments. This review of the literature scanned various studies and interventions that aimed to help students with visual impairment to develop their social skills. It offers information on practical tactics and difficulties in this field.

Enhancing Life Skills and Social Support among Visually Impaired Adolescents was done by Prathyusha & Sabata (2019). This pilot study investigates how a life skills training programme affects adolescents who are visually impaired, highlighting the importance of social support and self-efficacy in improving life skills.

Investigating the Life Skills of Students with visual impairment in Regular and Special Education Schools by CaglarTasdan (2016) examined the impact of educational environments on the development of life skills. This study compares the life skills of students with visual impairment in regular education schools and special education schools.

A study on the social interactions and friendships of adolescents with vision impairments by Beteinaki (2019) emphasised the need for developing interventions that concentrate on addressing current challenges because social interactions and friendships which are so crucial to adolescents' learning, development, and enjoyment. There were many barriers and facilitators found, necessitating more investigation and the creation of interventions in this area. Teens who are visually impaired must be included and actively involved in the design of any interventions if their interests, preferences, and points of view are to be given priority.

A study on the evaluation of social skills among students with visual impairment was conducted by Salleh et al. (2011). According to the study's findings, students with visual impairment performed worse on social skills tests than sighted students. The body language skills area and the domain of fundamental social behaviour showed the lowest levels. The average rating for fundamental social behaviour was 3.63, while the average rating for understanding body language was even lower, at 3.41. This study draws attention to the lower levels of social skills, particularly in relation to basic social behaviour and body language, among students with visual impairment. The results highlighted the need for interventions and support systems to address these issues and enhance students with visual impairment' social skill acquisition.



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Kordestani et al. (2014) have explored the study of the comparison of quality of life and social skills between students with visual problems (blind and partially blind) and normal students. The findings indicated that normal students had a better quality of life compared to students with visual impairment. However, when comparing the partially blind group with both blind and normal students, no significant difference was found in the quality of life. Concerning social behaviour, normal students demonstrated better social skills than both partially blind and blind students. There was no significant difference between the positive social behaviour of partially blind and blind students. However, normal students exhibited weaker negative social behaviour compared to both partially blind and blind students. Additionally, partially blind individuals demonstrated weaker negative social behaviour than blind students. This comparative study sheds light on the quality of life and social skills of students with visual impairment compared to their normal peers. The findings emphasise the need for targeted interventions to improve the well-being and social behaviour of students with visual impairment in educational settings. By fostering inclusive environments and providing tailored support, educators and policymakers can create a more supportive and enriching learning experience for students with visual impairment, promoting a higher quality of life and better social skill development.

Al-Khateeb et al. (2020) have conducted a study on Emotional Intelligence Levels among Hearing-Impaired and Students with visual impairment in Jordan. The study's findings have important implications for researchers, educational authorities, psychologists, and media officials, emphasising the need for increased attention and support for individuals with auditory and visual disabilities. The recommendation to give individuals with disabilities similar importance in terms of rights, facilities, values, and positive attitudes is crucial for fostering an inclusive and supportive society. This study highlights the differences in emotional intelligence levels between hearing-impaired and students with visual impairment in Jordan. The findings indicate that students with visual impairment display higher emotional intelligence compared to their hearing-impaired counterparts. Acknowledging and addressing these differences can lead to more targeted interventions and support for students with auditory and visual disabilities, fostering an inclusive and empowering educational environment. The study's recommendations underscore the importance of promoting equal opportunities and positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities in Jordanian society.

Lewis et al. (2014) have conducted a study on Three areas of the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairment: Research priorities for independent living skills, self-determination, and social interaction skills. The study effectively states the purpose of the study: to identify intervention research in three areas of the expanded core curriculum (ECC) for students with visual impairments: independent living skills, self-determination skills, and social interaction skills. The study mentions that an extensive review of existing literature was conducted, which indicates that the study is built upon a solid foundation of previous research. The study highlights the specific inclusion criteria for the chapter, stating that 23 intervention studies on school-age children with visual impairments were included. This clarity helps readers understand the scope of the research. The study provides a concise summary of the results based on the ECC area, with the number of studies for each area mentioned, making it easy for readers to grasp the distribution of research efforts.

George and Joseph (2017) conducted a study on the life skills competence of School Students in Relation to Social Intelligence. The idea that increased self-confidence can positively impact an individual's chances of success in life is a common belief and has been explored in various studies. While self-confidence can play a role in achieving success, it is essential to remember that success is a complex and multi-faceted outcome influenced by numerous factors. The idea that life skills, self-confidence, and social intelligence are essential for leading a meaningful life is widely acknowledged in psychology and education. These skills contribute to an individual's ability to navigate social interactions, build healthy relationships, and cope with life's challenges.

A study on developing life skills for emotional and social intelligence competencies was done by Boyatzis, R. E. (2011). The results show that emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence skills significantly predict success in managerial and leadership positions across a variety of societal sectors. The study also emphasises the possibility of adults acquiring these competencies. This study primarily lays the groundwork for subsequent research, but given its introductory nature, it also



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acknowledges some research limitations and implications. The study has significant practical ramifications because it sheds light on how to develop the competencies needed for effectiveness. The study also emphasises the originality and importance of this research because there aren't many published studies examining the empirical relationship between competencies and performance, despite the fact that competencies are frequently used in managerial and leadership contexts. Furthermore, there isn't much evidence in the literature to support the potential for competencies to develop. By filling in these gaps, the special issue of JMD is anticipated to make a significant contribution to both literatures.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature search was performed using databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, eric.in, IEEE, Web of Science, OvidSP, EBSCOhost, Sage Journals, and web sources.

DISCUSSION

The studies reviewed provided valuable insights into the social intelligence and life skills of students with visual impairment across different educational settings and age groups. Social intelligence and life skills development among students with visual impairments are influenced by a range of factors, including the severity and early onset of the impairment, family support, educational settings, and access to assistive technologies. It is evident that students with visual impairment face unique challenges in their social interactions compared to their sighted peers. These challenges manifest in lower social skills, difficulties in body language comprehension, and sometimes diminished quality of life when compared to students without visual impairments.

The educational setting, the type of disability, and personal coping mechanisms all seem to have an impact on how social skills are developed when there is a visual impairment. While some studies show that students with visual impairment have higher emotional intelligence, there is general agreement that social skills require targeted interventions and support. Cooperative learning environments and life skills training programmes have been found to be effective in enhancing the social skills of students with visual impairment. Inclusive educational practices that prioritise the interests and preferences of adolescents with visual impairment are essential for fostering positive social interactions and friendships. Furthermore, the role of self-determination and social intelligence in developing meaningful life skills is emphasised, underscoring the need for tailored approaches to address the challenges faced by these students.

It is evident from the reviewed studies that the inclusion of students with visual impairment in regular education schools might positively impact their life skill development. Such inclusive environments provide opportunities for students to interact with their sighted peers and foster a sense of belonging and social support. While these studies provide valuable insights, they also acknowledge certain limitations, including small sample sizes, diverse research methodologies, and the need for further research. More comprehensive and standardised assessment tools are required to accurately measure the life skills and social intelligence of students with visual impairment across different contexts and cultures.

CONCLUSION

The combined findings of the review studies emphasise how critical it is to focus on the social skill and life skill development of students with visual impairment. A supportive environment can be created for students with visual impairment to succeed socially and daily life oriented activities by implementing inclusive educational practices, cooperative learning strategies, and targeted life skills training programmes. Additionally, promoting favourable attitudes and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in society can help them adjust socially and generally improve their general well-being. Research initiatives and interventions that enable students with visual impairment to overcome social barriers and lead fulfilling lives must be kept up moving forward.



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