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The Impact of Emotional Development on Academic Achievement of Students with Visual Impairments: A Comparative Study of Segregated and Inclusive School Settings

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Abstract

A research investigation was conducted to assess the variations in emotional growth between visually impaired students enrolled in inclusive schools and those in segregated schools. The research sample consisted of 90 visually impaired students from various elementary schools in Lahore. Researchers developed the Emotional Development Scale (EDS) to gather data. The findings revealed a notable distinction in emotional development between visually impaired students in inclusive schools and those in segregated schools, both overall and across all dimensions of the emotional development scale. Moreover, the study indicated that visually impaired students attending inclusive schools exhibited higher levels of emotional maturity compared to their counterparts in segregated schools.

Keywords: Socio-emotional development, Academic achievement, Visual impairment, Emotional resilience, Elementary schools in Lahore.



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Introduction

Students with segregated needs demand unique educational approaches and auxiliary services, regardless of their educational environment (White, 2024). Effective educational programs aim to foster comprehensive growth in students, encompassing physical, mental, social, emotional, and linguistic development (Khodabakhshi-Koolaei & Malekitabar, 2024). The educational setting is particularly vital in achieving this goal for all children, especially those with segregated needs. Supportive learning environments enable individuals with disabilities to recognize their challenges, appreciate their inherent value, and maximize their potential. As a result, both inclusive and segregated school settings exert a considerable influence on the many facets of a young person's developmental journey (Manitsa et al., 2024).

People with disabilities have to contend with numerous challenges; they are socially disadvantaged, economically impoverished, and psychologically isolated. These challenges are not by chance. They result from centuries of making people with disabilities live in a world designed for and by people without disabilities (Hana & Bakhirb, 2024). These individuals frequently develop in distinctive domestic settings, where their latent abilities need encouragement and development (Watermeyer et al., 2024). As a result, it is essential to put children with special, and particularly visual, needs in appropriate learning environments where they can grow and blossom in all ways they certainly can. This includes them growing and blooming emotionally, a part of their educational experience (Kamran et al., 2024).

People with disabilities have to deal with social, economic, and psychological problems that are multiplied because of their disability. They are socially disadvantaged. They are often economically impoverished. And they suffer from a kind of psychological isolation that depresses their spirits and very often their intelligence. Yet these people have abilities—often unrealized because of the unique social environments in which they grow up that cry out for educational stimulation, which is, in too many instances, not provided.

The overall educational development of visually impaired students has a critical component that is emotional growth. There are human behaviors of a significant kind that are guided by emotions, and these are present in. Activities of that sort are influenced by various sorts of actually affective experiences that are supposed to get them up and moving (or get someone else moving), and we have private or public experiences of that type all day long. Some (or many) of these private or public experiences are not supposed to lead to any sort of action (which is why we are often advised to keep a "poker face" in public, for example). But some of these experiences are supposed to lead to action, and our private or public experiences of affective kinds are supposed to guide humans toward better physical or mental health, more effective social interactions, and upstanding personal character.

A child's emotional development is heavily swayed by how well they can express themselves and interact socially (Mayer et al., 2008). Communication and social interaction form the basis of relationships and emotional health. But for children with visual impairments, these two essential pathways are frequently blocked. The result is a not-so-equal opportunity to experience and enjoy the many facets of communication and social interaction that can lead to emotional well-being (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

Studies indicate that students with visual impairments who are in inclusive educational settings behave in a more age-appropriate manner than those in segregated educational settings (Oliveira et al., 2018). However, the social and psychological growth of students with segregated needs tends to be less advanced (Cain et al., 2024). Various elements influence these developmental

aspects in students with segregated needs, including their personality, support from family, the school and societal atmosphere, and the severity of their impairment.

Studies in the social sciences have consistently demonstrated that having a network of people to rely on—be it friends, family, or romantic partners—allows individuals to weather life's storms in much better health, both physical and mental. Stress can be harmful in several ways, leading to poor health outcomes. But when we are under stress, having people around us who can offer support can counteract some of the negative health consequences (Khare et al., 2024). These findings indicate that schools that serve only visually impaired students are not ideal for fostering the kinds of emotional and academic growth that students need. The reason is that students don't just need an education. They also need to interact with a diverse set of peers who can serve as role models. When it comes to students who can't see, the role models are no doubt their sighted peers (Zhang et al., 2024). This study aimed to examine the emotional development of visually impaired students enrolled in both inclusive and segregated educational settings.

Literature Review

The emotional development of students with visual impairments has drawn increasing attention from educators and researchers. These professionals have long known that the lack of a visual sense does not prevent human beings from experiencing the full range of emotions—that impairment can cut both ways. But the recent studies spotlight the emotional development of visually impaired children as an area that deserves special attention.

Evidence suggests that children with visual impairments may lag in not only understanding but also expressing emotions. Compared to sighted children, they often have a difficult time learning the subtler points of emotional communication. This problem, in part, has to do with the visuals that are lost when a child is born with or develops a condition that leads to impaired vision. Without a model to go by, it is very difficult to learn any kind of communication that is better or even as good as the type of communication that is modeled (Roch-Levecq, 2006). Consequently, these students may struggle with acknowledging and reacting to the emotions of other people. This, in turn, could negatively impact their emotional health and social relationships.

Difficulties notwithstanding, research also indicates that students with visual impairments can devise various strategies for coming to grips with the emotional aspect of matters. For instance, they may rely to a greater extent than most on auditory signals and verbal descriptions to inform them of the nature of another's—or their own—emotional state (Dyck et al., 2004). This adaptation underscores the value of specific, targeted efforts and initiatives to ensure the emotional development of this population.

Various investigations have underscored the essential role that mothers, fathers, and educators play in nurturing the emotional growth of visually impaired students. They suggest several potent strategies such as; provide rich, abundant, and thoughtful verbal descriptions of emotional situations; encourage and promote the child's exploration of the world through the hands and senses, fostering and promoting social interactions (Tadić, 2024).

Research has demonstrated that emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills can have a positive effect when inclusive educational settings are established that promote interactions between peers. Additionally, current studies have explored how assistive technologies can support the emotional development of students with visual impairments. Innovations that are emerging, like haptic devices and audio-based emotion recognition systems, show promise in helping these students interpret emotional contexts better and engage with them. These emerging innovations, such as haptic devices and audio-based emotion recognition systems, have potential to help these students

interpret emotional contexts better and assist them in engaging with them (Cebollero-Salinas et al., 2022).

While progress has been made in understanding the emotional maturation of children with visual impairments, there remains a vital need for continued research that follows the emotional development of these children over longer periods and judges the lasting effectiveness of various intervention techniques.

The research arena probing the connection between visual impairment and emotional intelligence is thinly populated. Establishing this area could serve as a springboard to many future investigations in this field.

In existing research, the obstacles and possible adjustments in emotional growth for students with visual impairments take center stage. Even today, too many programs are not tailored well for the students they serve. Some settings could use a warm, welcoming atmosphere. And even the most creative of methods would not be sufficient if this group were not the focus of ongoing investigations that seek to find more efficient ways to help its members heal emotionally.

1. Method and Design

This research employed a descriptive survey methodology. The study involved 90 visually impaired students from various schools in Lahore. The sample comprised 45 students from inclusive schools and 45 from segregated schools, selected using purposive sampling. Researchers developed the Emotional Development Scale (EDS) to assess emotional development among visually impaired participants. Data analysis was conducted using statistical methods including mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

Table 1: *Significance of difference between the mean emotional development scores of the visually impaired children studying in inclusive and segregated schools*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D	S.Ed	t ratio	Level of Significance
ED	Segregated	45	110.53	22.01	3.33	3.96	Significant**
	Inclusive	45	132.61	20.02			

ED: Emotional Development

Table 1 reveals that Visually Impaired children in inclusive schools have a mean emotional development score of 110.53 (S.D. 22.01), while those in segregated schools score 132.61 (S.D. 20.02). The calculated t-value of 3.96 is significant at the .01 level, indicating a substantial difference in emotional development between the two groups. Notably, Visually Impaired children attending inclusive schools exhibit higher mean emotional development scores compared to their counterparts in segregated schools. However, according to the scale used, lower scores signify greater emotional maturity. Thus, the data suggests that Visually Impaired children in segregated schools demonstrate more advanced emotional development than those in segregated schools.

Table 2: Significance of difference between the mean emotional development (dimension wise) scores of the visually impaired children studying in inclusive and special schools

Variables	Segregated Schools N=45		Inclusive Schools N=45		t-ratio
	M	S.D	Me	S.D	
EI	20.01	11.21	24.86	12.84	1.13
ER	20.12	10.63	24.98	11.98	1.07
SM	20.10	11.18	25.01	11.63	1.10
PD	21.11	09.37	24.91	09.24	0.92
LI	21.20	11.24	24.87	12.72	0.58

p=.05 EI: Emotional instability ER: Emotional regression SM: Social Maladjustment PD: Personality disintegration LI: Lack of Independence

Table-2 reveals that Visually Impaired students in inclusive schools have a mean 'Emotional Instability' score of 20.01, while those in segregated schools score 24.86, with standard deviations of 11.21 and 12.84 respectively. The calculated t-value of 1.13 is statistically significant at the .05 level, indicating a substantial difference in emotional instability between the two groups. Notably, Visually Impaired children attending inclusive schools exhibit higher mean scores compared to their counterparts in segregated schools.

This suggests that children enrolled in inclusive schools exhibit greater emotional maturity compared to their counterparts. Table-2 illustrates that visually impaired students in segregated schools score an average of 20.12 on the 'Emotional Regression' scale, while those in inclusive school's average 24.98, with standard deviations of 10.63 and 11.98 respectively. The calculated t-value of 1.07 is statistically significant at the .05 level, indicating a notable difference in Emotional Regression between the two groups. Students in segregated schools demonstrate higher mean scores on this measure than those in inclusive schools.

The findings suggest that children enrolled in inclusive schools exhibit greater emotional maturity (as indicated by lower scores) compared to their counterparts in other educational settings. Table-2 reveals that visually impaired students in segregated schools scored an average of 20.10 on the 'Social Maladjustment' scale, with a standard deviation of 11.18. In contrast, those attending inclusive schools averaged 25.01 on the same scale, with a standard deviation of 11.63. This data indicates a notable difference in emotional development between the two groups.

The statistical analysis reveals a t-value of 1.10, which is considered statistically significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a substantial difference between the two groups in terms of Social Maladjustment. Visually impaired students enrolled in inclusive schools exhibit a higher mean score compared to those in inclusive schools. Consequently, children attending inclusive schools demonstrate greater emotional development, as lower scores on this measure indicate higher emotional maturity.

Table-2 further demonstrates that visually impaired children in segregated schools scored an average of 21.11 on the 'Personality Disintegration' measure of emotional development, while those in inclusive schools averaged 24.91. The standard deviations were 09.37 and 09.24, respectively. The calculated t-value of 0.92 was not statistically significant at any level. This

indicates that there was no substantial difference between the two groups regarding Personality Disintegration.

Additionally, the average score of visually impaired students enrolled in segregated schools exceeds that of those in inclusive schools. This suggests that children in inclusive schools have achieved greater emotional maturity, as lower scores indicate higher emotional development. Moreover, Table-2 reveals that the mean emotional development scores for visually impaired students in integrated schools regarding 'Lack of Independence' is 21.20, while for those in inclusive schools, it is 24.87, with standard deviations of 11.24 and 12.72 respectively.

The calculated t-value of 0.58 does not reach statistical significance at any level. This indicates that there was no substantial difference between the two groups regarding Lack of Independence. Although children with visual impairments studying in segregated schools scored higher on this dimension, the difference was not statistically meaningful. Consequently, students in inclusive schools demonstrated greater emotional maturity, as lower scores on this measure indicate higher emotional development.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research indicates that visually impaired students who attend inclusive schools demonstrate better emotional development compared to those in special schools. As a result, parents of children with visual impairments are advised to enroll their children in inclusive educational settings to promote enhanced emotional growth. In special schools, educators should strive to create a supportive social environment within the classroom, ensuring that each visually impaired student feels integrated into the broader community of their typically-sighted peers.

The influence of emotional development on academic success for students with visual impairments (VI) is felt in both segregated and inclusive school settings, which have unique advantages and challenges. Students with VI in inclusive settings often have emotional difficulties and social relationship challenges (Manitsa & Doikou, 2022). Yet, because students with VI are often integrated with their sighted peers, they receive more social interaction, which in turn makes them more academically engaged.

Even within inclusive settings, students with VI may still find it challenging to form relationships with peers. And frustration and disengagement are tossed into the mix when teachers do not deliver effectively—that is, when inadequate preservice preparation and/or inservice professional development result in below-par teaching (Elias et al., 2025). A curious finding that is in no way contradictory to the previous discussion emerges from a 2021 meta-analysis. The analysis found a small to medium positive effect on cognitive outcomes for students with considerable learning difficulties when they are in inclusive settings relative to when they are in self-contained or segregated settings. But no such effect, and indeed no effect of any size, was found for the psychosocial domain (Krämer & Zimmermann, 2022).

Contradictory findings emerge when comparing segregated and inclusive settings. Even though non-exclusive environments may provide academic advantages, non-integrated settings often afford social advantages (Gurp, 2001). Students in residential schools for the blind expressed a stronger sense of belonging and normalcy in comparison to their reported experiences in public or community schools. They felt more included in the residential setting than they did in the other educational environments (Haegele et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, bullying can take place in inclusive and segregated settings. This underscores the necessity of awareness and intervention across the entire educational landscape.

To sum up, there are authentic merits for the emotional and academic development of students with visual impairments, whether they find themselves in a segregated or an inclusive environment. The difference must not be allowed to become a disadvantage, no matter what visual path it takes. Igniting the spark of motivation must be a goal in any setting. And students with visual impairments must never be allowed to become a cognitive or emotional understudy.

This involves putting in place social skills interventions, providing exacting trainings for teachers that focus on specific disabilities, and guaranteeing ample educational materials and supportive provisions (Hayes & Proulx, 2023; Lamichhane, 2016). In the end, the decision regarding classes for students with disabilities should hinge on the distinctive requirements of the students involved and the availability of resources that can help those students thrive. The federal government's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was signed into law in 1975, requires that student progress not be inhibited by the kinds of cognitive constraints that these students face.

Studies show that students in segregated schools displayed much more emotional instability, social maladjustment, personal exclusivity, and dependence than their peers in inclusive educational settings. This is a problem that must be confronted head-on, and the means to do so have already been identified: acting and the performing arts, like poetry, as well as sports and other activities where the body's physical intelligence can be expressed. Teachers in segregated schools are urged to understand and assess the self-esteem of every child. They are to instill the belief in children that they can achieve their academic goals. In addition, it could be advantageous to assign projects that are geared toward developing emotional competence for these students.

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