

Impact of Teachers' Emotional Support on Psychological Wellbeing of Visually Impaired Students: A case study of AKAB School, Mirpur AJ&K

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of teachers' emotional support on the psychological well-being of visually impaired students at AKAB School in Mirpur, Azad Jammu, and Kashmir (AJ&K). The primary aim of the research was to examine the extent to which teachers' emotional support influences the mental health and emotional stability of visually impaired students, focusing on key factors such as encouragement, empathy, understanding, and active listening. The research adopts a quantitative methodology, employing structured questionnaires to gather data from visually impaired students of AKAB school. The study's objectives include assessing the level of emotional support provided by teachers, determining the psychological well-being of visually impaired students, and analyzing the relationship between these two variables. All students of AKAB school were the population of the study. Hundred respondents were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Data about teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students was collected through braille questionnaires. Data was analyzed through mean, standard deviation, and correlation tests. Results from the data analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the emotional support provided by teachers and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. The findings underscore the critical role of teachers in fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment that promotes mental health and self-confidence among visually impaired students. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of emotional support in enhancing the educational experiences of visually impaired students and offers recommendations for educators and policymakers to develop strategies that address the unique needs of these students. This research contributes to the broader understanding of the role of emotional support in special education and highlights the need for continued focus on teacher-student relationships in promoting psychological well-being.

Keywords: Psychological, Well-being, Emotional, Support, Visually, Impaired, Education

Introduction

The psychological well-being of students, particularly those with disabilities, is a critical aspect of their overall development and academic success (Taylor et al., 2023). Among these students, those with visual impairments face unique challenges that can significantly influence their mental health and emotional stability (Sharma et al., 2023). Teachers play a pivotal role in providing the necessary emotional support to enhance visually impaired students' psychological well-being (Khan et al., 2023). This case study focuses on AKAB School in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), exploring how teachers' emotional support impacts the psychological well-being of visually impaired students.

Emotional support from teachers involves creating a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters students' self-esteem, resilience, and overall emotional health (Duckworth & Yeager, 2022). For visually impaired students, who often encounter barriers in both academic and social settings, this support is particularly essential. According to research, the presence of a supportive teacher can mitigate the negative effects of stress and anxiety, promoting a more positive outlook and

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better mental health outcomes for these students (Ahmadi et al., 2023). At AKAB School, where many students have visual impairments, understanding the impact of teachers' emotional support on their psychological well-being is essential for developing effective educational strategies.

Furthermore, a study found that when teachers display positive emotions such as warmth, enthusiasm, and encouragement, students report higher levels of well-being and engagement in the classroom (Jones et al., 2023). Conversely, negative emotions expressed by teachers, such as anger or frustration, can contribute to students' feelings of stress and anxiety (Taylor et al., 2023). Moreover, the concept of "emotional warmth" is linked to decreased levels of anxiety and improved academic performance in visually impaired students (Sharma et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of teachers' emotional regulation and the need for them to cultivate a positive emotional climate in the classroom. Furthermore, continuous study and assessment are crucial for comprehending the efficacy of programs designed to enhance the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. Educators and policymakers can identify best practices and areas for improvement by conducting a thorough evaluation of teacher training programs, school-wide initiatives, and policy changes.

Problem Statement

The visually impaired students face numerous challenges in Mirpur, AJ&K. These challenges can significantly impact their mental health and psychological well-being. Teachers, as strong advocates, can play an important role in ensuring the provision of sufficient resources and support to facilitate the academic and social development of visually impaired students (Riaz & Haider, 2021). Specifically, this research seeks to explore how teachers' feelings and attitudes toward visually impaired students affect their mental well-being. By examining the experiences and perceptions of visually impaired students, this study will identify the key factors (encouragement, empathy, understanding, and active listening) provided by their teachers that contribute to the psychological well-being of visually impaired students at AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the teachers' emotional support received by visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K.
2. To determine the psychological well-being status of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K.
3. To examine the relationship between teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K.

Research Questions

1. What is the teacher's emotional support received by the visually impaired students of AKAB School, Mirpur AJ&K?
2. What is the psychological well-being status of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K?
3. What is the relationship between the teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K?

Literature Review

The emotional well-being of students with disabilities is significantly influenced by various factors, with one crucial determinant being the level of emotional support their teachers provide (Khan et al., 2023). Teachers' assistance encompasses emotional support and acts that facilitate a student's emotional growth. This assistance is highly significant in fostering the pupils' self-worth, self-confidence, and overall well-being (Graham, 2021). Ongoing research consistently demonstrates the influence of teachers' positive motivation on the psychological well-being of pupils with visual impairments (Sharma et al., 2024). The primary focal point that arose from the research is the significance of the teacher-student interaction. According to research, these interactions can mitigate stress and anxiety while fostering feelings of stability and belonging (Manitsa & Doikou, 2022).

Teachers who promote harmony, tolerance, and respect establish a secure atmosphere in which students feel comfortable expressing their challenges and emotions (Sharma et al., 2024). When educators provide a nurturing and empathetic environment, students demonstrate enhanced abilities to effectively manage stress and navigate challenging circumstances (Zebehazy, 2018). Facilitating a platform for students to articulate their worries and ideas enhances their emotional intelligence and self-confidence (Augestad, 2017). Teachers can boost a child's self-confidence by providing encouragement, offering positive praise, and demonstrating affection (Khan et al., 2023).

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Adopting a positive lifestyle and accepting one's visual impairment as an integral part of their identity might enhance self-esteem and well-being (Miyuchi, 2020). When students experience affection and encouragement in the school environment, they are more inclined to acquire positive social competencies (Sharma et al., 2024). This facilitates their ability to navigate social settings more effectively in the future (Graham, 2021). Teachers can provide a supportive school climate that promotes positive peer interactions and alleviates social isolation (Zebehazy, 2018). Effective emotional support enhances mental well-being. It provides resilience against the psychological strain associated with living with a disability (Miyuchi, 2020). Experiencing a sense of worth and receiving assistance from teachers might reduce feelings of seclusion and incompetence, thereby enhancing one's mental well-being (Sharma et al., 2024). When students with impairments see that their teachers have confidence in their skills, they are more inclined to assert themselves in various circumstances (Graham, 2021). Ultimately, the provision of emotional support by teachers is crucial to ensuring the well-being and contentment of students with impairments (Sharma et al., 2024). By instructing pupils in effective emotional regulation, fostering positive self-esteem, enhancing academic achievement, and facilitating the development of supportive peer relationships, teachers have a crucial role in promoting mental well-being and general development in children. Assessing the extent of emotional support teachers provide is crucial. Creating optimal methods and support structures is crucial to enhancing the quality of life for students with impairments (Khan et al., 2023). Multiple factors impact the complex matter of the psychological well-being of students with impairments, including those who are visually impaired. Out of all these criteria, the importance of teachers' emotional support stands out as a crucial determining factor (Sharma et al., 2024). In the field of education, teachers have the responsibility of not only providing knowledge but also establishing a supportive environment that promotes the general well-being of students with disabilities (Graham, 2021).

Methodology

The study investigates the relationship between teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students at AKAB School, Mirpur AJ&K. It uses a descriptive survey research design and a quantitative approach, using a cross-sectional correlating method. The quantitative approach collects numerical data through surveys, allowing for generalizations and comparisons, filling a gap in the literature on the topic.

Population	The students of AKAB School (Azad Kashmir Association of Blind) were the study's target demographic. The participants were chosen using a purposive selection approach. There were 160 pupils in all; 77 of them were male, and 83 of them were female.
Sample Size	Purposive sampling was used to choose 100 students as a sample from the entire population. A total of sixty students were disqualified (35 pupils below grade 5 who were unable to understand the questionnaire and 25 for pilot testing).
Pilot-Testing	To verify the questionnaire's validity and reliability, a pilot study involving 25 students was carried out. The tool was improved based on feedback.
Validity	Expert examination by MUST University faculty members and special education specialists verified the validity of the questionnaire. Changes were made in response to advice from experts.
Reliability	Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, obtaining findings of high internal consistency indicated by scores of .892 for psychological well-being and .912 for teachers' emotional support.

Reliability of Teachers' Emotional Support

Reliability	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Teachers' Emotional Support	15	.912
Psychological Well-being Scale	18	.892

The study aimed to evaluate students' psychological well-being using self-administered questionnaires and the Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS). The questionnaire was translated into

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Urdu and Braille for accessibility. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires at AKAB School, ensuring students understood the purpose. The response rate was 100%, with 47% male and 53% female. Data was analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics and correlation analysis used to identify relationships between emotional support and students' mental health. The study highlights the importance of emotional support in promoting students' psychological well-being.

1. What is the teacher's emotional support received by the visually impaired students of AKAB School, Mirpur AJ&K?

To find out how teachers at AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K, treat visually impaired students emotionally, a questionnaire was created. Four factors made up the questionnaire: empathy, understanding, encouragement, and active listening. Students were asked to score each statement on a scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" in each section. This aided in evaluating the degree of emotional support that teachers provide.

FACTORS	Teachers' Emotional Support	Number of Items	Mean (SD)
Factor 01	Empathy	03	3.56 (1.28)
Factor 02	Understanding	03	3.58 (1.32)
Factor 03	Encouragement	04	3.47 (1.36)
Factor 04	Active Listening	04	3.42 (1.26)

2. What is the psychological well-being status of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K?

A standardised scale was used to assess the psychological well-being status of visually challenged students at AKAB School in Mirpur, Jammu and Kashmir. The measure examined six major dimensions: autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, life purpose, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others. This helps to assess the students' general psychological well-being and suggest areas for assistance.

Six dimensions of psychological well-being are included, which are the following:

DIMENSIONS	Psychological well-being of Visually Impaired Students	Number of Items	Mean (SD)
Dimension 01	Autonomy	03	3.28 (1.42)
Dimension 02	Personal Growth	03	3.40 (1.32)
Dimension 03	Self-Acceptance	03	3.30 (1.43)
Dimension 04	Positive Relationships with others	03	2.85 (1.36)
Dimension 05	Purpose in Life	03	3.04 (1.26)
Dimension 06	Environmental Mastery	03	3.20 (1.32)

3. What is the relationship between the teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students of AKAB School in Mirpur, AJ&K?

To investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. Pearson Correlation was used to investigate the association between emotional support from instructors and the psychological well-being of visually impaired pupils. SPSS software was used to analyse the data. Teachers' emotional support was the independent variable, while psychological well-being was the dependent variable. The findings demonstrated a substantial positive association between the two variables, suggesting that teachers' emotional support is linked to the psychological well-being of visually impaired children.

Hypothesis Test

Correlations

Relationship between Teachers' Emotional Support and the Psychological Well-Being of Visually Impaired Students of AKAB School

	Empathy	Encouragement	Understanding	Active listening	Emotional Support
Psychological well being	.972**	.991**	.982**	.989**	.991**
Autonomy	.959**	.972**	.979**	.980**	.979**
Self-Acceptance	.969**	.972**	.980**	.984**	.983**
Personal growth	.964**	.980**	.986**	.984**	.986**
Environmental Mastery	.956**	.971**	.986**	.973**	.979**
Positive relation	.969**	.967**	.986**	.987**	.984**
Purpose in life	.966**	.982**	.978**	.976**	.982**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional support and the psychological well-being of visually impaired students at AKAB School. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, revealing a strong positive correlation between emotional support and psychological well-being. The data showed a significant positive correlation between teachers' emotional support and psychological well-being, with a significance value of 0.000. Specifically, emotional support ($r = 0.991^{**}$), empathy ($r = 0.972^{**}$), encouragement ($r = 0.991^{**}$), understanding ($r = 0.982^{**}$), and active listening ($r = 0.989^{**}$) are all significantly correlated with the levels of psychological well-being among visually impaired students. These findings suggest that teachers who exhibit these behaviors can positively impact the mental health of their students. In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of emotional support in promoting the psychological well-being of visually impaired students at AKAB School.

Findings of Teachers' Emotional Support

1- Empathy

The study reveals that 58-60% of students believe teachers show empathy, respect, and patience, while 10-20% remain neutral. A minority (20-31%) disagrees, indicating a need for improvement in teacher-student relationships.

2- Understanding

The study reveals that 59-65% of students feel included and supported by their teachers, while 10-23% are neutral and 23-31% disagree, indicating a need for improvement in the teacher-student relationship, emphasizing the importance of understanding and supporting students' needs.

3- Encouragement

The study reveals that 50-60% of students believe their teachers encourage honest emotional expression, celebrate successes, motivate goals, and value contributions. However, 10-40% disagree, suggesting improvement. The results suggest a need for a supportive classroom environment that values students' contributions.

4- Active listening

The study found that 43-60% of students feel their teachers actively listen to their concerns, provide emotional support, and are available outside class. However, 16-31% disagree, indicating a need for improvement. The remaining 16-27% are neutral, indicating mixed experiences or uncertainty.

Findings of Psychological Well-being

1- Autonomy

The study reveals that 46-50% of students feel confident in their autonomy, self-expression, and seeking help. However, 13-21% are neutral, and 23-41% disagree, which shows Low levels of self-confidence and autonomy. The findings underscore the need for promoting these aspects in

educational settings. Educators should encourage autonomy, create a comfortable environment, and provide supportive teaching to foster growth mindsets.

2- Personal Growth

The study reveals that 45-55% of students believe they are constantly learning and open to new experiences, with a significant portion believing they can achieve their goals. However, 8-26% are neutral, and 10-36% disagree, suggesting a lack of confidence in their abilities. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting a growth mindset and self-confidence in educational settings.

3- Self-Acceptance

The study reveals that 45-50% of students are proud of themselves despite their disability, accepting their strengths and weaknesses. However, 10-28% are neutral, and 17-32% disagree, which shows their difficulty in accepting visual impairment and recognizing strengths and weaknesses. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting self-acceptance, self-confidence, and resilience in students with disabilities. Educators should foster inclusive environments, develop problem-solving skills, and focus on strengths.

4- Positive Relationship with others

The study reveals that 44-54% of students believe they have strong, positive relationships, feel loved, accepted, and can trust others. However, 17-28% are neutral, and 16-21% disagree, suggesting a struggle with maintaining positive relationships. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting positive relationships and social skills in educational settings.

5- Purpose in Life

The study reveals that 45-50% of students agree they have future goals and can make a positive impact, but only 29% feel their life has a meaningful purpose. However, 15-30% are neutral, and 13-36% disagree, suggesting a struggle with finding purpose and setting goals. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting purpose, goal-setting, and social responsibility in education.

6- Environmental Mastery

The study reveals that 49-57% of students feel comfortable using technology, can adjust to new environments, and move independently. However, 18-27% are neutral, and 14-19% disagree, suggesting visual challenges may hinder environmental mastery. The findings emphasize the need for educators to provide training, make physical environments accessible, and encourage problem-solving skills in students with visual challenges.

Recommendations

For Emotional Support

- It is recommended that teachers develop positive relationships with VI students. Develop personalized support plans to address the unique needs and strengths of each VI student.
- It is recommended to school administrators and teachers to create motivational and supportive groups for teachers and students to share experiences and coping strategies. By establishing partnerships with community organizations, it could be beneficial to provide them additional support.
- It is recommended to school administrators that teachers should be provided with professional development opportunities to enhance teaching practices. This will equip them with the necessary skills to create a nurturing and supportive classroom environment that caters to the unique needs of these students.
- It is recommended that educators and administrators leverage special students with assistive technology to enhance accessibility and independence by providing training on technology use to students and teachers.

For Psychological Well-Being

- It is recommended to policy makers to develop training programs for teachers on emotional support, disability awareness, understanding the diverse needs of visually impaired students, and effective communication skills.
- It is recommended to school counselors and administrators to establish counselling services for students to address psychological well-being. Psychologists or counsellors should work effectively with visually impaired students.
- It is recommended that the official government should promote an inclusive school environment that values diversity and acceptance. It should also provide accessible facilities and resources for visually impaired students to equip their education in a more effective way.

Conclusion

The study on the "Impact of Teachers' Emotional Support on Psychological Well-Being of Visually Impaired Students: A Case Study of AKAB School Mirpur AJ&K" provides significant insights into the critical role of teachers' emotional support in fostering the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. The findings affirm that teachers' emotional support, characterized by empathy, understanding, active listening, and encouragement, is pivotal in enhancing students' self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

The quality of teacher-student relationships emerged as a vital determinant of psychological well-being, underscoring the importance of fostering supportive, caring, and respectful interactions in educational settings. Positive teacher-student relationships were associated with higher levels of well-being and lower levels of stress and emotional distress among visually impaired students, highlighting the necessity for teachers to be well-equipped with the skills to provide such support.

Specialized training for teachers, focusing on emotional intelligence and inclusive practices, is essential. Teachers with higher emotional intelligence are better able to recognize and respond to the emotional needs of their students, creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom. Therefore, investing in teacher training programs that enhance emotional intelligence and inclusive practices is crucial for improving the psychological well-being of visually impaired students.

The study also emphasizes the influence of cultural perspectives and societal attitudes towards disability on the experiences and mental health outcomes of visually impaired students. Negative cultural stereotypes and beliefs can exacerbate feelings of isolation and low self-worth, making it imperative for educators and policymakers to adopt culturally responsive approaches that consider the diverse cultural contexts of visually impaired students.

While the study provides valuable insights, it also acknowledges its limitations, including the focus on a single school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of teachers' emotional support on the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. Exploring the intersectionality of cultural identities and the specific support needs of visually impaired students from different cultural backgrounds would also be beneficial.

This study highlights the crucial role of teachers' emotional support in enhancing the psychological well-being of visually impaired students. By fostering supportive and caring relationships, providing specialized training for teachers, and adopting culturally responsive approaches, educational institutions can create inclusive environments that promote the overall well-being of visually impaired students. These efforts are essential for ensuring that visually impaired students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, thereby contributing to their overall development and success.

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