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Comparing self-esteem and self-concept of handicapped and normal students

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Abstract

This research was conducted in order to comparing self-esteem and self-concept of handicapped and Normal Students. Statistical society of this research comprised all the handicapped boy and girl students as well as the normal society included all the sighted students aged 10-20, who were studying at Ardabil province high-schools in 85-86 school-years. 20 handicapped students (10 girl handicapped and 10 boy handicapped) were selected randomly as a study group and 20 sighted students (10 girl handicapped and 10 boy handicapped) as a comparison group. They were tested individually by two subtests of Coppersmith's self-esteem and self-concept 'beak & stiller scale at their schools. The results of multivariate variance (MANOVA) showed that there was different mean score between handicapped and Normal Students. At all the results proved that the function of the sighted group individuals in self-esteem subtests was better than the handicapped. But the function of the handicapped individuals in self-concept subtests was better than the handicapped

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Keywords: Self-esteem; self-concept; handicapped.

1. Introduction

Self-esteem is a personal judgment about worth and accepting or rejecting of self that appears in one's attitude. Self-esteem has a prominent role in the mental health and personality balance. Low self-esteem unsettles human's balance and vitality and negatively influences the efficacy, efficiency learning and creativity of physically disabled humans. Self-esteem is a production of social life and life values. This is the life and society that make the person efficient and give him/his a kind of accepting the self (Rozenberg, 1985). One of the most disastrous outcomes of defected inefficient self-esteem is the slowed personal function and person's reduced efficiency. This defected self-esteem deprive person of using complete mental and intellectual power. There are several surveys showing that self-concept is as basis of all evoked behaviour. This is the self-concept that includes all possible 'selves' in each individual's personality and recognizes them. These possible "selves" can create motivation necessary for induction of required behaviours and through this way self-concept is correlated with self-esteem. Persons, who have a high level of self-esteem, have a highly-distinct self-concept. The survey of Stikland and Angimary (2004) on self-esteem

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and body image of physically disabled persons shows that physical health has a positive significant relationship with self-esteem and assessment of self. Level of self-esteem will decrease in the existence of physical disability. "Self-congruence" and "self-stability", two concepts of Rogers' theory have been considerably paid attention by many scientists. Self-congruence, namely homogeneity and stability of self, is the lack of conflict between perception of self and life's real experiences. Peoples like to treat in accordance with their self image. Otherwise, these experiences and emotions will be threatening. The more this incongruence is the more the gap between self and reality is deeper. Rogers speaks about "ideal self" and interpret it as self-concept that the individual would most like to possess. Rogers insists on consistency and homogeneity of self. He notifies that human have to act in a way that maintains the congruence between the self as perceived and the actual experience. Based on Rogers' theory, if there is incongruence between self and actual experiences, the person will meet the incongruence. For example, if a person believes that he is destitute of hate but he feels the hate, he will be in the state of incongruence. Kink and et al. (1993) by surveying the adolescents with physical disability, found out that disabled women had lower level of social acceptance perception, sport competence and dream imagination compared with physically normal samples. According to previous studies following hypotheses are being propounded:

1. Scores' mean of disabled students is lower than normal ones, in the self-esteem test.
2. There is significant difference between scores' mean of disabled and normal students in the "self concept test".
3. There is relationship between self-esteem and self-concept of physically disabled students.

2. Method

Statistical population comprises male and female students (15-18 years old) of Ardabil city at 2005. Regarding the objectives and study method the sample size was 40. 20 of normal and 20 of physically disabled persons were selected by simple random sampling, matched for age, educational level and family status. Coopersmith's self-esteem questionnaire and Beck's questionnaire of self concept were used for data collection.

Self-esteem questionnaire: This questionnaire includes 58 questions. 50 of items measure the self-esteem and 8 items is related to lie detector or validity of this test. These 50 items measure the self-esteem in social, interpersonal, familial, academic and general situations. Scoring is in the zero-one form. Re-test coefficient of this test has been reported 0.88. Surveys performed in Iran, have reported satisfactory validity and reliability coefficients for this questionnaire. In Biabangard's opinion (1992) Coopersmith's self-esteem questionnaire has a good validity and reliability. In the survey of Rajabi (2005) different reliability coefficients of this test obtained by dissection, Cronbach's alpha and Gutman methods were 0.85, 0.87 and 0.80, respectively.

Self-concept questionnaire: 25-questions self concept test is a tool for measuring the negative attitudes towards self. Beck's self concept test differs from other self concept and self-esteem test in this respect that it asks the subject (responder) to compare her/his self with other rather than using unspecific criteria. Scoring is performed reversely for questions number 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 21, 23 and directly for other questions. In this causal-comparative study, data collection was done in one stage using self-esteem and self concept questionnaires, individually and in the education place of students. To assess the relationship between self-esteem and concept of self Pearson's Correlation coefficient was used. MANOVA was applied to compare the mean of self-esteem and self concept between disabled and normal students.

3. Results

Table-1 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between survey's variables.

Table-1: Correlation coefficient between self-concept Self-esteem in Disabled students

Variable	disabled person Self-esteem	disabled person self-concept
Disabled person Self-esteem	---	-.22
Disabled person Self-concept	.34	-----

Table2. Mean, standard deviation and MANOVA results of scores of two groups (handicapped and Normal) in the Self-esteem and self-concept

Variables	groups	mean	SD	mean of squares	F	P
Self-esteem	handicapped	28.92	2.50	74080.19	8217.96	.000
	Normal	31.93	2.66			
Self-concept	handicapped	69.63	3.58	384048.2	15766.29	.000
	Normal	68.94	4.33			

Table3. Mean, standard deviation and MANOVA results of scores of two groups (boys and girls) in the Self-esteem and self-concept

Variables	groups	mean	SD	mean of squares	F	P
Self-esteem	girls	27.47	2.45	16730.88	2673.04	.000
	boys	29.36	2.59			
Self-concept	girls	70.26	3.33	96971.13	7538.02	.000
	boys	70.69	3.89			

According to data of Table-2, obtained by MANOVA, there is significant difference between two groups of subjects in the self-esteem and self-concept. Scores' mean of disabled students were lower in the self-esteem and higher in the self-concept, compared to normal students. According to findings presented in Table-3 obtained by MANOVA, there is significant difference between male and female disabled persons in the self-esteem and self-concept. Scores' mean of female students were lower in the self-esteem and self-concept than male students.

4. Discussion

Results of survey showed significant difference of scores' mean of self-esteem and self concept between normal and disabled student. Normal students of both genders obtained higher score in the self-esteem than disabled students. This finding can be explained by notifying that defect and injury of the body's limbs is a major determining factor in human's personality structure, so that scientists know the self-depreciation as a consequence of physical or personality defects and disorders. Then, on the basis of Adler's psychology principles, each factor that divests person of vanity and self-esteem can be a major important factor causing insane emotions. This factor can change the person to a mentally ill and insane one. These results are showing that self-esteem and self concept are lower among disabled persons. This finding accords with surveys of Eslami Nasab (1993), King and et al. (1993), Chapman (1988) and Silverman (1983). Self-concept of disabled persons is more than normal ones. This is explicable that important factors like social supports made by society and family members and proper attitudes of family and society increase the self-concept of these peoples. This is in accordance with findings of Dason (1989), Ferir (1984), Guyton (1984), Stevens Burk (1987) and Gumble and McHall (1987). There was significant negative correlation between self-concept and self-esteem of disabled students. As the self-esteem, that is the difference between ideal and actual selves, increases the self-concept decreases. This, accords with Rogers' theory. It says that the more the difference between actual self and ideal self is, the more is the gap between self of person and reality. Consequently,

person perceives their wishes and ideals more than reality. Previous findings showed the difference of means of self-esteem and self-concept between two genders. MANOVA that was done for comparison between means, showed a significant F in the self-esteem and self-concept of disabled students. This, accords with survey of Jack (1960) on the mental image of disabled persons about their body.

Survey of Limb (2004), under the title of self-esteem of physically disabled male and female adolescents, showed that self-esteem of disabled boys is higher than disabled girls. This is due to the role that is delivered by society and family to them. So that boys feels them more independent than girls. This independency of boys increases their self-esteem.

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