

Analysis of the Levels of Self-Concept of People with Blindness in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

This study was on the exploration of the self-concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. This was premised on the understanding that, people with blindness have a wide range of self-concepts just like sighted people. However, their experiences may impact their self-concept in unique ways. Some people with blindness may have a strong sense of identity and pride in their blindness while others may struggle with feelings of inadequacy or social isolation. The main objective of this study was to analyze the levels of self-concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. The study embraced a mixed approach specifically an explanatory sequential design was used and it was grounded on Social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura. The study targeted people with visual impairment in Harare Metropolitan province in Zimbabwe. The researcher used Yamane formula obtain the sample size of 384 participants. Quantitative data was collected using a Robson Self-Concept questionnaire. An interview guide was also used to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. The findings of the study indicated that, there were some attributes of the levels of self-concepts among people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan that were positive and highly rated, while others were moderately rated and a few were rated low. The study also made some conclusions and proposed some recommendations like Promoting Supportive Environments and Mentorship Programs, encouraging personal growth and skill development, be enhanced and this can be achieved through embracing the importance of accessibility and resources. to adopt individualized Support and Recognition of Diversity. Wasosa, H., Dr. Mutisya, S. & Dr. Munywoki, V. (2004) Exploration of the Self-Concept of People with Blindness in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

World Health Organization reported that at least 2.2 billion people worldwide suffered from blindness, myopia and long sight. A person is regarded as visually impaired when they are unable to see because of injury, disease or congenital condition, or lacking a sense of sight (WHO, 2002). This can range from partial vision loss to complete blindness. Sense of sight is important to human beings. According to Dehghan, Kaboudi, Alizadeh, and Heidarishara (2020) learning, education, communication and emotion are greatly associated with the sense of sight and as such in the event that someone has visual impairment it creates an undeniable effect on the psychological and social state of the individual. Blindness leaves humans in a state of physical, psychological and economic dependency.

Psychologists find self-concept as a useful construct in understanding people's development and behavior. Self – concept can be seen as an idea of the self -constructed from the beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses of others. It can also be defined as the picture that one has of himself/herself (Habeeb 2017). Self-concept plays a significant role in the growth and development of a person. Abadali, Asatsa and Ntaragwe (2021) express that self- concept includes our knowledge of how we behave, our individual characteristics and our capabilities. Self-concept infer to a person's attitude and feelings about himself and a number of psychological processes that govern behavior and adjustment (Saikia, 2020).

Loss of sight affects the individual's behaviors and ways of adaptation to the surrounding environment, where anxiety and depression affect them emotionally (Zed & Ibrahim, 2022). Salimi, Mohammadi & Sadeghi, (2016), express that Visual impairment is not only blindness but is also accompanied by many problems, such as lack of basic skills. Ackerman (2019) echoes that self-concept is not only influenced by biological and environmental factors, but social interaction plays a major role as well. Self-concept is influenced by significant others, praise, or criticism, as well as attributes of one's behavior (Harris & Orth, 2020).

In Australia, Jessup, Bundy, Broom and Hancock (2017) mentioned that adolescents with visual impairments have smaller social networks and participate less frequently in highly social activities (such as going out with friends) and more frequently in home-based activities and typically developing peers. People with visual impairment have a challenge to adapt in the society. Visual impairment can have a profound impact on an individual's daily life, affecting their ability to perform tasks, navigate their environment, and engage in social activities. Augestad (2017) discloses that young adults with Visual Impairment have more emotional problems than those who are sighted.

Visually impaired persons report lower health related quality of life than peers without visual impairment (Justin, Haegele, & Zhu, 2019). Visual impairments can make adaptation in the society a little complicated. Visual impairment has a significant impact on adolescents' mental development (Yuan, Xie, Dong & Yang, 2022). People with visual impairment are treated differently by other people with normal vision, they may face maladjustment in society which can further lead to confusion about one's self-concept and self-esteem (Augusta, 2017). Blind individuals may experience lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy compared to sighted individuals due in part to societal prejudices and stereotypes. Sensory impairments affect functioning ability in all life domains and, as suggested by recent research evidence, vision impairments are related to social isolation and reduced quality of life (Nollett et al., 2019).

In the Netherlands, research highlights the importance of social networks, access to education, and vocational training in enhancing the self-concept and social adaptability of people with blindness (Vervloed et al., 2015). The Netherlands has implemented inclusive policies to ensure equal opportunities for individuals with blindness (Van Pamelan, 2018).

Research from Namibia explores the challenges faced by people with blindness due to limited access to education, employment, and healthcare (Cloete et al., 2019). Lack of inclusive policies and societal stigma impact self-concept and social adaptability among individuals with blindness (Faul et al., 2017).

In Rwanda, research emphasizes the positive impact of inclusive education and vocational training on self-concept and social adaptability of people with blindness (Musabe & Mushyimiimana, 2019). The government has made efforts to improve accessibility and provide support services for individuals with blindness (Nsengumuremyi et al., 2018).

In Kenya, limited access to education, employment, and healthcare significantly affects the self-concept and social adaptability of people with blindness (Komba et al., 2015). Advocacy groups and NGOs play a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and enhancing social integration (Wainaina & McDermott, 2020).

In Zimbabwe, research emphasizes the role of family support, education, and vocational training in improving self-concept and social adaptability of individuals with blindness (Moyo, 2019). Challenges include limited access to resources, discriminatory attitudes, and stigma (Sibanda, 2017).

The World Health Organization (1990) pointed out that an individual can be called a completely healthy individual only if they are sound in four aspects: physical health, mental health, good social adaptability and morality (Chirico, 2016). The self-concept of people with blindness may be influenced by their own perceptions of their blindness and how they perceive others attitudes towards blindness. Some blind people may view their blindness as an integral part of their identity while other may focus more on their abilities and strengths. In relation to mental health certain challenges faced by blind people such as the potential on their self-concept can contribute to mental health concerns. These concerns may make it a challenge for them to

adapt in the society. This backdrop builds the foundation upon which this study aims to establish the relationship between the self-concept and social adaptability of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals with blindness face unique challenges in developing their self-concept and adapting to social environments. These challenges are rooted in societal attitudes, limited access to resources, and the need for specialized support. People with blindness may encounter stereotypes and stigmatization in society. These negative perceptions can affect their self-concept by eroding self-esteem and self-efficacy. The social outcry lies in the perpetuation of these stereotypes and the resulting barriers to social inclusion and acceptance. Accessibility issues persist in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, and public spaces. This lack of accessibility can limit opportunities for people with blindness, hindering their social adaptability. The outcry stems from the continued presence of physical and digital barriers that impede their full participation in society.

The availability of psychosocial support systems for individuals with blindness is inadequate. The social outcry is evident in the limited access to counseling, mentoring, and peer support programs, which are crucial for the development of a positive self-concept and social adaptability. The educational system may not adequately address the unique needs of students with blindness, leading to lower educational attainment and diminished self-concept. The outcry centers on the disparities in educational opportunities and the lack of inclusive practices. Despite the existing social outcry surrounding these issues, there is a significant research gap in understanding the nuanced aspects of self-concept and social adaptability among people with blindness. While considerable progress has been made in advocating for the rights of people with blindness, many studies tend to focus on specific aspects, such as employment or education. A comprehensive understanding of the self-concept and social adaptability of individuals with blindness is lacking. Harare Metropolitan province, being the capital city, has a unique socio-cultural factor that may influence self-concept and social adaptability among individuals with visual impairment. This study was an attempt to explore these factors and provide insights into the intersection of cultural norms, societal attitudes, and the experiences of individuals with blindness.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to explore self-concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe so as to establish the way this target population perceived themselves and how they were perceived by others in the context of the support systems, such as family, friends, educational institutions, and assistive technologies, playing a role in shaping both self-concept among individuals with blindness.

Research Objective.

The research was guided by the following objective:

- i. To analyze the levels of self-concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe.

Research Question

This research sought to address the following research question:

- i. What are the levels of self-concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was carried out within the context of Social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to

successfully execute specific tasks. In the context of people with blindness, self-efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in shaping their self-concept.

The theory suggests that individuals learn from observing others. For people with blindness, this could mean learning adaptive behaviors and social strategies by observing peers who are successful in managing social situations. Research could investigate how observing role models impacts their social adaptability and self-concept. Social Cognitive Theory proposes that individuals imitate behaviors they observe in others. In the context of individuals with blindness, this could involve imitating effective communication strategies, problem-solving approaches, and coping mechanisms demonstrated by others. Research could examine how imitation influences their social adaptability. The theory suggests that individuals learn from observing the consequences of others' actions. Research could explore how individuals with blindness observe the outcomes of adaptive social behaviors in others, leading to increased self-efficacy and positive adjustments in their self-concept and social interactions.

Justification and Significance of the study

The study may provide valuable insights into self-concept and social adaptability of people with visual impairment. Understanding how blindness affects self-concept and social adaptability can lead to the development of tailored interventions and support systems that empower individuals to lead fulfilling lives and participate actively in society, promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities.

This research can also provide insights into the emotional and psychological challenges faced by people with blindness, leading to the creation of targeted mental health resources and strategies that enhance their overall well-being. By uncovering the barriers and facilitators of social adaptability, the study can contribute to designing environments and social interactions that are more accommodating and welcoming for individuals with blindness, fostering their integration into various social settings.

In addition, the research findings can empower individuals with blindness by increasing their self-awareness and fostering a positive self-concept. This, in turn, can enhance their self-efficacy and belief in their abilities to navigate social situations effectively. Insights from this research can guide educators and educational institutions in developing more effective teaching methods and curricula that consider the unique needs of the visually impaired students, fostering their confidence and success in academic settings.

Review of Related Literature

The study conducted a scholarly theoretical review as well as a scholarly critique of empirical studies that have been conducted the area of self-concept of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe.

Theoretical Review

The study reviewed the Self-Esteem Theory developed by Rosenberg and the psychological empowerment theories whose summary is provided in this section.

Self - Esteem theory

Self-Esteem Theory was propounded by Morris Rosenberg in 1965. This theory centers around the concept of self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their own worth and value. According to Rosenberg, self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Rosenberg's theory suggests that self-esteem is primarily developed through social interactions and experiences. During early life, interactions with parents, peers, and other significant figures contribute to the formation of one's self-esteem.

Positive feedback and support from these interactions tend to boost self-esteem, while negative experiences might lead to lower self-esteem. Furthermore, Rosenberg posits that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to have a more positive self-concept. They perceive themselves as capable and worthy, which in turn influences their attitudes and behaviors. They are more likely to set and pursue ambitious goals, engage in healthy relationships, and exhibit resilience in the face of challenges. Conversely, individuals with lower self-esteem might struggle with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. This can result in behaviors that are driven by a desire to protect their self-esteem, such as avoiding challenges or seeking validation from others. Additionally, lower self-esteem individuals might be more susceptible to mental health issues and negative coping mechanisms.

This theory focuses on self-esteem as a key component of self-concept. Individuals with blindness might experience fluctuations in self-esteem due to the challenges and successes they encounter. The theory helps analyze how self-esteem impacts their overall self-concept and well-being. The self-esteem theory could be used to understand how people with blindness perceive themselves. This theory suggests that individuals develop their self-esteem based on their self-perception and how they believe others view them. For people with blindness, their self-concept might be influenced by factors such as societal attitudes, personal achievements, and interactions with others.

The self-esteem theory has been highly credited because it can provide a comprehensive framework to analyze various aspects of self-concept among people with blindness. The theory can help you examine how factors like social interactions, self-worth, and identity formation intersect within the context of blindness. By applying this theory, you can compare the self-concept of people with blindness to that of the sighted population, highlighting unique challenges and strengths.

However, the theory has been discredited because, it might not capture the full complexity of the experiences of individuals with blindness, as it is mainly focused on visual cues and societal validation. Self-esteem can be influenced by cultural and contextual factors, which might require additional frameworks to fully understand. The theory might not address the specific challenges and experiences unique to various degrees of blindness, such as congenital blindness versus acquired blindness.

Psychological empowerment theory

The Psychological Empowerment Theory was proposed by Zimmerman (1990). According to the theory, empowering directs attention towards health adaptation, competence and natural helping setting. An individual who has psychological empowerment is able to change his/her mindset compounded with positive thinking and his/her own ability to have control of his/her potential in addressing challenges either at individual or societal level. Empowerment process attempts to gain control, obtain needed resources and critically understand one's social environment. It also helps to develop skills so individuals can become independent problem solvers and decision makers. According to Zimmerman, (1990) Psychological empowerment has the potential of upholding self-efficacy in terms of perceptions of competence, personal control and positive self-image.

In this study, a person with visual impairment who is psychological empowered, is proficient in making wise decision, have self-control and create opportunities to learn, practice, and increase skills. Zimmerman (1990) express that psychological empowerment has three components. The first component is the intrapersonal component that describes how people think about themselves and includes domain-specific perceived control and self-efficacy, motivation to control, perceived competence, and mastery. The second component is the interactional component that describes the understanding people have about their community and related sociopolitical issues. The third component is the behavioral component that involves actions taken to directly influence outcomes (Zimmerman, 1990). The behavioral component may also involve actions geared towards managing anger or coping with change. It emphasizes the importance of individuals feeling a sense of control, competence, and autonomy in their lives.

Review of Empirical Studies and Related Literature

Tołczy and Pisula (2019) carried out a study with the aim of this study was to compare self-esteem and coping styles in youths with and without visual impairments and to explore relationships between self-esteem and coping styles. The participants were students of secondary schools in Poland: 50 with visual impairments (23 females) and 50 typically sighted (21 females). Self-esteem and coping styles were measured with the following questionnaires: Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory, by O'Brien and Epstein, in Polish adaptation by Fecenec and Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, by Endler and Parker, in Polish adaptation by Strelau, Jaworowska, Wrześniewski, and Szczepaniak. Findings revealed that there were no group differences in global self-esteem nor in the majority of self-esteem domains excepting moral self-approval, in which the group with visual impairments scored higher than did their sighted peers. Females with visual impairments reported lower self-esteem related to body appearance than control females and males with visual impairments.

Miklyaeva and Gorkovaya (2019) carried out a study to discuss the problem of visually impaired adolescents' hardiness and its predictors. 173 adolescents aged 13-16 took part in the study (average age 14, 02; SD=0, 69). 61 of them were adolescents with visual impairments (40 boys and 21 girls). This sample was divided into two groups, according to the severity of visual impairments: group 1 – adolescents with low vision (n=39), group 2 – blind adolescents with residual vision less than 0, 05% (n=22). The control group included 112 conditionally healthy adolescents with typical development (53 boys and 59 girls). Data were collected individually during the conversation with adolescents. The research design implied the comparative study of self-esteem as a factor of hardiness in groups of visually impaired and conditionally healthy adolescents. At first, each group of visually impaired adolescents was compared to a control group, then they were cross-compared to each other to identify relations between hardiness, self-esteem and severity of visual impairments (Mann-Whitney U-test). Secondly, these relations were refined by correlation analysis (Spearman coefficient) and regression analysis. Empirical data were processed with Statistical 12.0. The results show that adolescents with visual impairments do not differ from "healthy" peers in terms of hardiness, however, their self-esteem is different from adolescents with normal vision. Predictors of hardiness are: idealized representations of one's own health and well-being for blind adolescents; actual self-esteem of happiness and perspective self-esteem for adolescents with low vision; actual self-esteem of happiness and mirrored self-esteem for "healthy" adolescents.

Robertson et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional and/or quantitative study utilizing self-report instruments which compare children with and without VI in the United Kingdom. The study conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of 17 young people with VI, aged 16–19 years. An age-sensitive, empirically-based topic guide encouraged retrospective reflections on participants' experiences of growing up with VI, including age-normative and vision-specific challenges. Differences in manifestation of VI influenced how young people made sense of their experiences and their sense of self.

In China, Kong (2021) carried out a study with the aim of explaining the current situation of loneliness among visually impaired college students as well as its influencing factors and exploring the intermediary role of self-acceptance between self-stigma and loneliness. Seventy-eight college students with visual impairment completed a series of self-report questionnaires, including the Self-Stigma of Disabled Scale (SSDS), the Self-Acceptance Questionnaire (SAQ), and the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale. Mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS in SPSS. The participants' mean loneliness score was 44.97 ± 9.35 . Two survey factors were significantly associated with loneliness: visual impairment status and relationship with parents ($p < 0.05$). When controlling for extent of visual damage and relationship with parents, self-stigma showed a significant predictive effect on loneliness ($B = 0.37$, $t = 4.1023$, $p < 0.01$). It was concluded that visually impaired students suffer from a high level of loneliness, and self-acceptance plays a central role in connecting their self-stigma and loneliness.

Fatima, Ashraf and Jahan (2022) carried out a study on identifying factors impacting the self-concept and self-esteem of visually impaired persons. The objective of the study was to identify the factors that influence the self-concept (SC) and self-esteem (SE) of individuals with visual impairment. The study employed a factorial research design to investigate this issue. The research sample consisted of 75 visually impaired individuals

selected from both public and private special schools in Lahore. The assessment tools used for measuring SC and SE were the Robson SCQ and Rosenberg SES, respectively. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 21. The study's results indicated that there were no discernible differences based on gender or the type of disability among the participants. However, the study did find statistically significant differences in the SC and SE of visually impaired individuals based on factors such as age, academic grade, residential area, and the level of support and affection provided by their families. The results of the regression analysis indicated that all demographic variables could predict the SC and SE of visually impaired individuals. Age, family support, residential area, and academic grade were identified as the primary factors influencing the SC and SE of individuals with visual challenges. As a recommendation, the study suggests conducting qualitative research on the studied variables to delve into the underlying reasons for the impact of these factors and to uncover additional factors that may affect the SC and SE of individuals with visual impairment.

Palomino (2017) carried out a study on an analysis of self-concept in students with compensatory education needs for developing a mindfulness-based psychoeducational program. The study adopted a descriptive-correlational design and focused on examining the self-concept perceptions of primary school-level students with compensatory education needs, with a total of 26 participants. The "Multidimensional Self-Concept scale" was employed as the assessment tool. The findings from the study indicated that the respondents displayed positive self-concept levels in various aspects, including peer relations, physical appearance, physical ability, and academic self-concept in mathematics.

In Pakistan, Kapinga and Aloni (2021) carried out a quantitative study analyzing the self-concept the students with visual impairment in Lahore. A modified self-description questionnaire used by Jayne E. Stake (1992) was used to assess the six subscales (Likability, Task accomplishment, Morality, Power, Giftedness and Vulnerability) of the self-concept of the students with Visual impairment and normal sight. The findings revealed there was no significant difference of self-concept between the students with visual impairment and students with normal sight. Students who were sighted had more positive self-concept about morality than students with visual impairment.

In a similar study in Pakistan, Jabeen and Akhter (2018) carried out a quantitative study with the aim of analyzing the self-concept of the students with visual impairment in Lahore (Pakistan). A modified self-description questionnaire used by Jayne E. Stake (1992) was used to assess the six subscales (Likability, Task accomplishment, Morality, Power, Giftedness and Vulnerability) of the self-concept of the students with VI (visual impairment) and normal sight. The questionnaire was translated into Urdu to collect data from randomly selected 60 students with visual impairment from the special education schools (30 males and 30 females), and 60 students without visual impairment (30 males and 30 females) from public schools. No significant difference of self-concept was found between the students with visual impairment and students with normal sight. Only sighted students' self-concept about morality was more positive than the students with visual impairment.

Herrera, Al-Lal and Mohamed (2020) conducted a study to analyze the academic achievement, as well as the self-concept, personality and emotional intelligence, according to gender and cultural origin of the participants who were European and Amazigh. A sample consisting of 407 students were sampled for the study. Findings revealed differences in self-concept, personality, and emotional intelligence according to gender.

Saleem et al. (2022) explored the differences in the levels of self-esteem and social Intelligent in visually and non-visually impaired adolescents in a cross-sectional place in special education center private and government school of city Lahore, Pakistan. The study samples 122 participants who included 56 visually impaired volunteers and 66 non-visually impaired persons. Boys and girls aged 14 to 19 from private and public special education schools took part in the study. Two scales were used; Self-esteem Scale for Children (SESC), and Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) used along with a demographic Performa Results. According to this study, if a person has any handicap throughout the teenage stage, it affects their degree of self-esteem and social intelligence.

Luca and Liliana (2020) investigated the level of self-esteem in visually impaired children in order to determine, together with investigations on other levels (health, psychomotor ability, physical development), the level of their quality of life compared to children of the same age without impairments. The study adapted the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to assess the self-esteem level on a sample of 30 participants from the Special Secondary School for visually impaired students in Bucharest, Romania, who had an average age of 11 years. It was worth noting that the level of self-esteem of the visually impaired was higher, on average, than that of the average population of Romanian students without visual impairments.

Luca and Mihăilescu (2021) conducted a study with the purpose to investigate the level of self-esteem in visually impaired children in order to determine, together with investigations on other levels (health, psychomotor ability, physical development), the level of their quality of life compared to children of the same age without impairments. The self-esteem level was investigated using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory on a sample of 30 participants from the Special Secondary School for Visually Impaired Students in Bucharest, with an average age of 11 years. The applied test represents a modern psychometric instrument, which has been validated in a variety of research programs. It helps to better understand the students evaluated regarding their self-esteem by measuring the evaluative attitudes of the self in various planes of their existence. The standard form for students contains five subscales: general perception of self, social self-peers, home-parents, school-academic experience and distortion scale. Following the application of the test, it has been noted that the level of self-esteem of the visually impaired is higher, on average, than that of the average population of Romanian students without visual impairments.

Hosseini, Allahi, and Kahrazahi (2022) conducted an experimental and quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test design on determining the impact of art work on the Self Esteem of visually challenged students. The focus population were all blind and partially sighted female students in Yazd province, Iran in the academic year 1397-98 who were enrolled in special schools for visually impaired students. The study revealed that there was a believe that visually impaired people have low self-esteem which could be enhanced by many factors out of which the artistic skills were used in the mentioned study and a significant increase was found in the SE of visually impaired people.

In Kosovo, Duraku and Hoxha (2018) assessed the self-esteem, study skills, self-concept, social support, psychological distress, and coping mechanism effects on test anxiety and academic performance among university and high school students. The study sampled 284 Kosovar students. It was revealed that better study skills, self-concept, and psychological distress were indicative of higher test anxiety.

In Turkey, Akbayrak (2023) evaluated the perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment in Turkey in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) areas. The study made use of, an ECC screening tool developed by the Iowa Department of Education was adapted into a five-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to examine how youths with visual impairment perceive their self-competence within the nine ECC areas. Participants were 118 high school students with visual impairment across Turkey. Statistical analysis procedures included descriptive and nonparametric methods. The descriptive statistics were used to determine how participants perceive their competences in the nine ECC areas. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the differences between the mean ranks of self-competence levels within the independent groups. Gender, grade level, and socio-economic level were the variables that evidenced significant differences ($p < .05$) among the participants' self-competence levels in the ECC areas of independent living, career education, orientation and mobility (O&M), recreational and leisure skills. The findings demonstrated that some demographic variables may be considered as possible factors contributing to perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment. As one of the earliest studies relating to ECC skills of youth with vision impairment in Turkey, practitioners may find value in the construct of Likert-type scale to measure the perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment in the ECC areas.

In another study, Mulligan, Hith and Strand (2019) conducted a qualitative study self-evaluation of people with blindness. The findings highlighted the importance of individual agency and the role of social support in shaping the self-perception of individuals with blindness. Participants described the influence of external validators, such as professional, friends and family in shaping their self-evaluation.

Conceptual Framework

This study developed a conceptual framework to diagrammatically show the relationship between self-concept of people with visual disability as depicted in Figure 1.

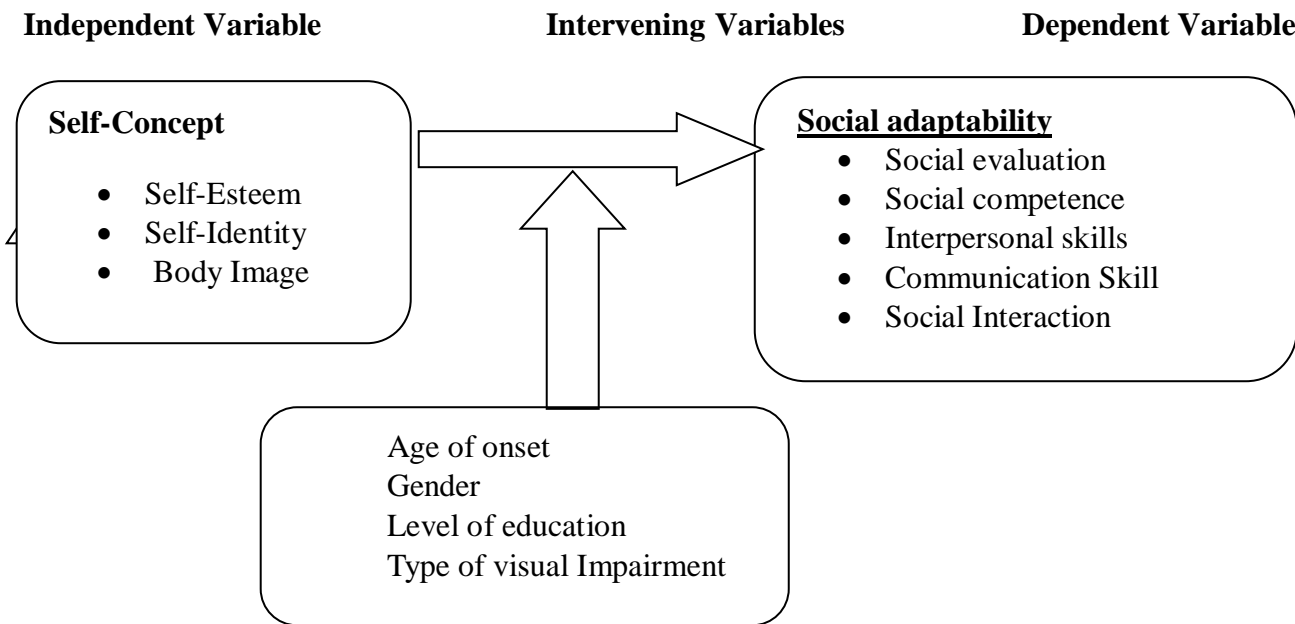


Figure 1. Relationship between self-concept and social adaptability of people with visual impairment

From the Independent Variables, Self-Esteem is a variable represents individuals' perceptions of their own worth and value. Higher levels of self-esteem may contribute to positive self-concept and enhance social adaptability among people with blindness. Individuals with higher self-esteem may feel more confident in social situations, leading to better social interaction and communication skills. Self-identity refers to the way individuals perceive themselves in terms of their characteristics, roles, and relationships. A strong sense of self-identity may positively influence self-concept and social adaptability by providing individuals with a clear understanding of who they are and how they relate to others. For individuals with blindness, a positive self-identity can mitigate the impact of societal stereotypes and facilitate social integration. Body image encompasses individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards their physical appearance and abilities. In the context of blindness, body image may be influenced by factors such as acceptance of one's visual impairment and adaptation to alternative modes of perception. Positive body image can enhance self-concept and social adaptability by fostering self-acceptance and reducing self-consciousness in social interactions.

On the dependent Variables, the social evaluation refers to individuals' perceptions of how they are judged or evaluated by others in social situations. It reflects the extent to which individuals feel accepted, respected, and valued by their peers. Higher levels of social evaluation may indicate positive social adaptability, characterized by successful social integration and acceptance within social networks. Social competence encompasses individuals' ability to effectively navigate social interactions and relationships. It includes skills such as empathy, cooperation, conflict resolution, and assertiveness. Individuals with higher social competence demonstrate adaptive social behaviors and are better equipped to establish and maintain positive relationships, leading to enhanced social adaptability. Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to communicate and interact with others in a respectful and effective manner. These skills are essential for building and maintaining relationships, resolving conflicts, and collaborating with others.

On the intervening Variables, The age at which individuals experience blindness can influence their development of self-concept and social adaptability. Those who have been blind since birth (congenital blindness) may have different experiences and coping mechanisms compared to those who acquire blindness later in life (acquired blindness), impacting their self-concept and social adaptability. Gender plays a role in

shaping individuals' experiences, perceptions, and social roles. It may influence the development of self-concept and social adaptability differently for males and females with blindness. Gender norms and expectations may impact how individuals navigate social interactions and relationships, affecting their social adaptability. Education level can impact individuals' self-concept and social adaptability by shaping their cognitive abilities, knowledge, and social skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method approach research approach and specifically used a convergent parallel mixed methods research design. The quantitative and qualitative data collection was done separately and then converged at analysis, interpretation and presentation followed by comparing and integrating the results. This methodology is grounded in the idea of utilizing the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The convergent parallel mixed methods research design was used because, the primary purpose of this research design is to explain why phenomena occur and to predict future occurrences.

A convergent parallel mixed methods research design study is an approach to inquiry that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods prioritizing both methods almost equally. It is characterized by research hypotheses that specify the nature and direction of the relationships between or among variables being studied. Probability sampling is normally a requirement in explanatory research because the goal is often to generalize the results to the population from which the sample is selected. The data are quantitative and almost always require the use of a statistical test to establish the validity of the relationships. Accordingly, this study emphasized on the quantitative phase, and was followed by the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2011). A convergent parallel mixed method design is a type of mixed methods research approach that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data collection in two distinct phases. It was aimed at explaining or providing deeper meaning to the findings from the quantitative phase through the use of qualitative methods. By adapting this method, the researcher was able to attain research objectives and give more comprehensive evidence in both qualitative and quantitative inquiries.

Target Population

The study target population for research was the people with blindness who comprised of the individuals who were blind or visually impaired. This population included people of varying ages, backgrounds, and experiences. The current total population of persons with blindness in the disability according to Zimbabwe 2022 population and housing census report Harare province is shown is displayed in table 1.

Table 1 2022 population and housing census report of Harare province

Location	Male	Female	Total
Harare Urban	5,075	6,580	11,655
Chitungwiza	1,260	1,796	3,056
Epworth	677	751	1,428
Provincial Total	7,012	9,127	16,139

Sample Techniques and Sampling Size

This study used a combination of sampling techniques which included multistage, stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques which led to the drawing of the final sample size for the study. Multistage sampling was used to arrive at the three districts of Harare metropolitan province which included Harare urban, Chitungwiza and Epworth. For the calculation of the sample, the researcher employed Yamane formula which has a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Purposive sampling was used to select the key informant participants who were perceived to be information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest

(Palinkas, et al., 2015). According to (2020) “Taro Yamane's (1967) formula has been simplified. The formula facilitates calculation of the sample size with consistence. The sample size was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

In this formula: n = Sample size; N = the population; e = margin of error.

This is the detailed presentation of how the Researcher will arrive at the sample size:

N (Population size) = 16,139 (Total from the population table)

e (Margin of error) = Let's assume a desired margin of error of 5% (you can adjust this value)

Formula: $n = N / (1 + (e^2) / N)$

$$n = 16,139 / (1 + (0.05^2) / 16,139) \approx 384$$

After determining the sample size, a stratified sampling method was applied. The rationale for the choice of a stratified sampling method at this level will be the number of people with blindness varied from one district to another. The stratified sampling method helped in allocating proportionately the number of participants according to the size of their district.

Stratified Sampling = Total Sample Size X Population of Subgroups

Entire Population

$$\text{Harare Urban} = 11,655 \times 384 = 277$$

$$16,139$$

$$\text{Chitungwiza} = 3,056 \times 384 = 73$$

$$16,139$$

$$\text{Epworth} = 1,428 \times 384 = 34$$

$$16,139$$

$$\text{Thus, } 277 + 73 + 34 = 384$$

For the qualitative phase, the researcher Creswell (2014) recommends that same individuals, used for first phase be used for follow up. A sample size should be neither too large nor too small, for sake of research cost, manageability, and generality (Creswell, 2012).

Accordingly the study purposively selected 6 people based on high levels of social adaptability so as to obtain qualitative data. Participants who have been diagnosed with blindness, either congenital or acquired, who were/must be over the age of 18, were selected for the study.

Data Collection tools.

The researcher used a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data on the levels of self-concept. Section A of the questionnaire consisted questions on demographic profile of the participants. Section B made use of the Robson Self-Concept Questionnaire. It consisted of 30 items in which the participants were asked to

indicate how much they agree or disagree with each statement, according to how they typically felt. The answers were scored on a scale of 0-5. A high score represents high self-esteem and *visé vasa*. The SCQ has been proven to have good reliability (Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89). Qualitative data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide whereby the interviews were conducted to gather in-depth qualitative data. These interviews allowed participants to share their personal experiences and perceptions in a more detailed and nuanced manner.

Data Analysis

Both Quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used to carry out the data analysis. The study being a convergent mixed methods research design, the data analysis procedure was a systematic approach that will involves separately analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, followed by comparing and integrating the results. This methodology is grounded in the idea of utilizing the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

For the quantitative component, statistical techniques are employed to analyze numerical data. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and correlation analyses were used to examine patterns and relationships within the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). SPSS version 25 assisted in this analysis process. On the other hand, the qualitative component involves analyzing textual or narrative data to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. Thematic analysis will be applied to extract key insights from the qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

In this study, the acquired all the necessary licenses and permissions to carry out the study. The researcher visited the participants and provided them with a description of the study in advance to obtain their informed consent from those who voluntarily wished to participate. The researcher also assured participants of confidentiality and privacy and warranted that the research would not elicit psychological issues, offering psychological debriefing after data collection. This was realized by dedicating more time at the end of data collection to help participants return to normalcy and prevent harm. All recorded research data and filled questionnaires were held back in safe custody and will later be destroyed at the appropriate time once the dissertation was approved by the University. Additionally, throughout the process, participants' privacy and confidentiality were protected, and a supportive and comfortable environment was created for them during data collection. Finally, the researcher cited all work of other authors and carried out plagiarism checks to avoid any instances of academic misconduct.

Findings of the Study

Levels of self- concept of people with blindness

This study focused on the levels of self- concept of people with blindness in Harare metropolitan province in Zimbabwe. The data was collected using a Robson self-concept questionnaire Likert scale, to establish the levels of self- concept of people with blindness amongst te target population. The data that was obtained was analyzed and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Levels of self- concept of people with blindness

No	Statement	Completely Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Completely Agree		Mean	TOTAL
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
1	I have control over my own life.	112	32.2	43	12.4	133	38.1	58	16.7	3.11	346(100)
2	I’m easy to like.	212	60.9	29	8.3	13	3.8	92	26.4	1.97	346(100)

3	I never feel down in the dumps for very long	76	21.8	33	9.5	6	1.7	231	66.4	3.13	346(100)
4	I can never seem to achieve anything worthwhile.	51	14.7	32	9.2	30	8.6	233	67.0	3.29	346(100)
5	There are lots of things I'd change about myself	64	18.4	39	11.2	11	3.2	232	66.7	3.19	346(100)
6	I'm not embarrassed to let people know my opinions	47	13.5	35	10.1	25	7.2	239	68.7	3.32	346(100)
7	I don't care what happens to me.	87	25.0	100	28.7	39	11.2	120	34.5	2.55	346(100)
8	I seem to be very unlucky.	143	41.1	33	9.5	53	15.2	117	33.6	2.45	346(100)
9	Most people find me reasonably attractive.	85	24.4	83	23.9	59	17.0	119	34.2	2.61	346(100)
10	I'm glad I'm who I am.	111	31.9	85	24.4	38	10.9	112	32.2	2.44	346(100)
11	Most people would take advantage of me if they could.	22	6.3	69	19.8	8	2.3	247	71.0	3.39	346(100)
12	I am a reliable person.	31	8.9	23	6.6	35	10.1	257	73.9	3.50	346(100)
13	It would be boring if I talked about myself.	119	34.2	78	22.4	149	42.8	-	-	2.09	346(100)
14	When I'm successful, there's usually a lot of luck involved.	144	41.4	59	17.0	143	41.1	-	-	2.01	346(100)
15	I have a pleasant <u>personality</u> .	143	41.1	58	16.7	144	41.4	1	0.3	2.02	346(100)
16	If a task is difficult, that just makes me all the more determined.	136	39.1	59	17.0	149	42.8	2	0.6	2.08	346(100)
17	I often feel humiliated.	49	14.1	35	10.1	17	4.6	245	70.4	3.39	346(100)
18	I can usually make up my <u>mind</u> and stick to it.	31	8.9	49	14.1	35	10.1	231	66.4	3.36	346(100)
19	Everyone else seems much more confident and contented than me.	29	8.3	35	10.1	7	2.0	275	79.0	3.54	346(100)

20	Even when I quite enjoy myself, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all	30	8.6	32	9.2	8	2.3	276	79.3	3.54	346(100)
21	I often worry about what other people are thinking about me.	27	7.8	37	10.6	7	2.0	275	79.0	3.53	346(100)
22	There's a lot of truth in the saying "What will be, will be"	35	10.1	29	8.3	6	1.7	276	79.3	3.54	346(100)
23	I look awful these days	2	0.6	24	6.9	39	11.2	281	80.7	3.51	346(100)
24	If I really try, I can overcome most of my problems.	1	0.3	34	9.8	27	7.7	284	81.6	3.73	346(100)
25	It's pretty tough to be me.	15	4.3	15	4.3	71	20.4	82	23.6	3.74	346(100)
26	I feel emotionally mature.	8	2.3	77	22.1	83	23.9	178	51.1	3.73	346(100)
27	When people criticize me, I often feel helpless and 2 nd Rate	26	7.5	77	22.1	65	18.7	178	51.1	3.76	346(100)
28	When progress is difficult, I just not worth the effort	26	7.5	77	22.1	65	18.7	65	18.7	3.66	346(100)
29	I can like myself even when others don't	10	2.9	91	26.1	67	19.3	178	51.1	3.71	346(100)
30	Those who know me well are fond of me.	28	8.0	61	17.5	74	21.3	183	52.5	3.71	346(100)

Data in Table 2 shows that using a Robson self-concept questionnaire Likert scale, to establish the levels of self- concept of people with blindness, 38.1% of the participants agreed that, they have control over their own life, while 32.2% completely disagreed on this statement, 16.7% completely agreed, and 12.4% disagreed. These findings had an overall mean of 3.11. It implies that, a slightly higher percentage of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, agreed that they have control over their own life. However, there is a significant percentage (32.2%) of the population which had no control over their life. Probably this group could be those with severe visual impairment. These findings deviate from the work of Tołczy and Pisula (2019) who carried out a study with the aim of this study was to compare self-esteem and coping styles in youths with and without visual impairments and to explore relationships between self-esteem and coping styles in Poland. The findings revealed that there were no group differences in global self-esteem nor in the majority of self-esteem domains excepting moral self-approval, in which the group with visual impairments scored higher than did their sighted peers. Females with visual impairments reported lower self-esteem related to body appearance than control females and males with visual impairments.

Table 2 also shows that 60.9% of the participants completely disagreed that, they are easy to like, while 26.4% indicated that they were easy to like. A few, (8.3%) disagreed to this statement, and 3.8% agreed. This presented a mean of 1.97 which was small an indication that, majority of the population were not easy to like.

It is also notable that a high percentage (60.9%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were not easy to like. The study concurs with Datta and Talukdar (2015) who conducted a study in Australia that focused on examining how vision impairment affects the self-concept of students. The study's findings revealed that while the majority of students with vision impairment scored low across all dimensions of self-concept, including physical, moral, personal, family, social, and academic aspects, there were some students who achieved normal scores in the domains of family and academic self-concepts.

Table 2 also shows that, 66.4% of the participants completely agree that, they never feel down in the dumps for very long, while 21.8% of them completely disagreed and 9.5% of them disagreed. Only a very small percentage of 1.7% agreed that they never feel down in the dumps for very long. The findings imply that majority of the participants were positive about their situation when they are down and that they are able to pick themselves up when they are low and down. The mean for these responses was 3.13 percent which is significant implying that majority of the participants don't feel down when in the dumps for long. These findings concur with Miklyaeva and Gorkovaya (2019) who carried out a study to discuss the problem of visually impaired adolescents' hardiness and its predictors. The results of this study had shown that adolescents with visual impairments do not differ from "healthy" peers in terms of hardiness, however, their self-esteem is different from adolescents with normal vision. Predictors of hardiness are: idealized representations of one's own health and well-being for blind adolescents; actual self-esteem of happiness and perspective self-esteem for adolescents with low vision; actual self-esteem of happiness and mirrored self-esteem for "healthy" adolescents. However, these finding deviates from Robertson et al. (2021) who conducted a cross-sectional and/or quantitative study utilizing self-report instruments which compare children with and without VI in the United Kingdom. The study conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of 17 young people with VI, aged 16–19 years. An age-sensitive, empirically-based topic guide encouraged retrospective reflections on participants' experiences of growing up with VI, including age-normative and vision-specific challenges. Differences in manifestation of VI influenced how young people made sense of their experiences and their sense of self.

It is clear from Table 2 that, 67.0% of the participants completely agreed that they can never seem to achieve anything worthwhile, 14.7% completely disagreed on this while 9.2% disagreed and only 8.6% agreed. The findings imply that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, were in complete agreement that they can never achieve anything worthwhile which is a very negative situation. The mean was 3.29 which is significant. These finding further, were in alignment with the study carried out in China, by Kong (2021) who carried out a study with the aim of explaining the current situation of loneliness among visually impaired college students as well as its influencing factors and exploring the intermediary role of self-acceptance between self-stigma and loneliness. The finding of these study indicated that, two survey factors were significantly associated with loneliness: visual impairment status and relationship with parents. When controlling for extent of visual damage and relationship with parents, self-stigma showed a significant predictive effect on loneliness. It was concluded that visually impaired students suffer from a high level of loneliness, and self-acceptance plays a central role in connecting their self-stigma and loneliness.

Further, Table 2 indicates that, 66.7% of the participants in this study completely agreed that, there are lots of things they could change about themselves while 18.4% completely disagreed to this view and 11.2% disagreed on this with only 3.2% of them who agreed that there are lots of things, they could like to change about themselves. It implies that majority of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, were in complete agreement that they had a lot of things that they could like to change in their lives. This means that they don't like their current state. The mean for these responses was 3.32 which was quite significant an indication that the participants were in agreement to the statement that, there are lots of things they could change about themselves. These findings are in line with Fatima, Ashraf and Jahan (2022) who carried out a study on identifying factors impacting the self-concept and self-esteem of visually impaired persons. The results of the regression analysis indicated that all demographic variables could predict the SC and SE of visually impaired individuals. Age, family support, residential area, and academic grade were identified as the primary factors influencing the SC and SE of individuals with visual challenges. As a recommendation, the study suggests conducting qualitative research on the studied variables to delve into the

underlying reasons for the impact of these factors and to uncover additional factors that may affect the SC and SE of individuals with visual impairment.

Data in Table 2 shows that, in terms of whether the participants are embarrassed when people know their opinion, 68.7% completely agreed that, they are not embarrassed to let people know their opinions, 13.5% completely disagreed on this while 10.1% disagreed to this view and 7.2% agreed that they not embarrassed to let people know their opinions. These findings imply that, a significant population of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, were in complete agreement that they are not embarrassed to let people know their opinion. The mean for these responses was 3.32 which was equally high implying that, the majority of the participants were in agreement that, they are not embarrassed to let people know their opinion.

These findings align well with Palomino (2017) who carried out a study on an analysis of self-concept in students with compensatory education needs for developing a mindfulness-based psychoeducational program. The study adopted a descriptive-correlational design and focused on examining the self-concept perceptions of primary school-level students with compensatory education needs, with a total of 26 participants. The "Multidimensional Self-Concept scale" was employed as the assessment tool. The findings from the study indicated that the respondents displayed positive self-concept levels in various aspects, including peer relations, physical appearance, physical ability, and academic self-concept in mathematics.

Table 2 also shows that, there is an evenly distribution of the response in regard as to whether, the participants care about what happens to them. The data shows that, 34.5% completely agreed that, they don't care what happens to them, 28.7% disagreed to this statement, while 25.0% completely disagreed and 11.2% agreed. These findings show that almost half (50%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, were either in agreement or in disagreement that they care about what happens to them. Meaning that half of the participants are strong in their spirit to fight on while half have low spirits. The mean for this was 2.55 which concurs with the response. The findings deviate from the study carried in Pakistan, by Kapinga and Aloni (2021) who carried out a quantitative study analyzing the self-concept the students with visual impairment in Lahore. The findings revealed there was no significant difference of self-concept between the students with visual impairment and students with normal sight. Students who were sighted had more positive self-concept about morality than students with visual impairment.

In a similar study in Pakistan, Jabeen and Akhter (2018) carried out a quantitative study with the aim of analyzing the self-concept of the students with visual impairment in Lahore (Pakistan). No significant difference of self-concept was found between the students with visual impairment and students with normal sight. Only sighted students' self-concept about morality was more positive than the students with visual impairment.

Data in Table 2 further shows that, 41.1% of the participants, completely disagreed that they seem to be very unlucky, 33.6% completely agreed that they were unlucky while 15.2% of them agreed to the statement and only 9.5% disagreed. The findings show an even distribution and almost half (50%) split opinion among the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, regarding whether they were unlucky or not. The mean was 2.61 also demonstrating a concurrence with the participant's views. The finding deviated from Herrera, Al-Lal and Mohamed (2020) who conducted a study to analyze the academic achievement, as well as the self-concept, personality and emotional intelligence, according to gender and cultural origin of the participants who were European and Amazigh. Findings revealed differences in self-concept, personality, and emotional intelligence according to gender. The study also concurred with Saleem et al. (2022) explored the differences in the levels of self-esteem and social Intelligent in visually and non-visually impaired adolescents in a cross-sectional place in special education center private and government school of city Lahore, Pakistan. This study, noted that, if a person has any handicap throughout the teenage stage, it affects their degree of self-esteem and social intelligence.

However, these findings concurred with Luca and Liliana (2020) who investigated the level of self-esteem in visually impaired children in order to determine, together with investigations on other levels (health, psychomotor ability, physical development), the level of their quality of life compared to children of the same

age without impairments. It was worth noting that the level of self-esteem of the visually impaired was higher, on average, than that of the average population of Romanian students without visual impairments.

It is also notable that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, were either in agreement or in disagreement that they care about whether, most people find them reasonably attractive. Table 2 shows that 34.2% completely agreed to the statement as to whether most people find them reasonably attractive, 24.4% completely disagreed, while 23.9% disagreed and 17.0% agreed. These findings show an almost half (50%) split which implies that there was an almost equal opinion among the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe and in regard to whether most people find them reasonably attractive. The data presented a mean of 2.44 which is a reflection of the balance in the responses as presented by the participants.

These findings are aligned with Luca and Mihăilescu (2021) who conducted a study with the purpose to investigate the level of self-esteem in visually impaired children in order to determine, together with investigations on other levels (health, psychomotor ability, physical development), the level of their quality of life compared to children of the same age without impairments. The self-esteem level was investigated using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory on a sample of 30 participants from the Special Secondary School for Visually Impaired Students in Bucharest, with an average age of 11 years. The applied test represents a modern psychometric instrument, which has been validated in a variety of research programs. It helps to better understand the students evaluated regarding their self-esteem by measuring the evaluative attitudes of the self in various planes of their existence. The standard form for students contains five subscales: general perception of self, social self-peers, home-parents, school-academic experience and distortion scale. Following the application of the test, it has been noted that the level of self-esteem of the visually impaired was higher, on average, than that of the average population of Romanian students without visual impairments.

The Table also presents data on whether the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were glad on whom they are. It is evident from the table that, 32.2% completely agreed on the statement that they are glad on whom they are, while an almost equal percentage of 31.9% completely disagreed and 24.4% disagreed with only 10.9% who agreed. The mean for this data responses was 2.44 which also show a balanced distribution of the responses in regard to the presented statement. The findings, agree with a study in Kosovo, Duraku and Hoxha (2018) who assessed the self-esteem, study skills, self-concept, social support, psychological distress, and coping mechanism effects on test anxiety and academic performance among university and high school students. It was revealed that better study skills, self-concept, and psychological distress were indicative of higher test anxiety.

Table 2 further indicate that, a high percentage of 71.0% completely agreed that, most people would take advantage of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe if they could while 19.8% disagreed and only 6.3% completely disagreed with just a few (2.3%) who agreed. The mean was 3.39 which was high and a clear indication of the way the responses were presented. Most importantly, the findings imply that the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe can be taken advantage of if a chance presented itself for that to happen which renders them high vulnerability. The findings concur with a study conducted in Turkey, by Akbayrak (2023) who evaluated the perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment in Turkey in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) areas. In this study, gender, grade level, and socio-economic level were the variables that evidenced significant differences among the participants' self-competence levels in the ECC areas of independent living, career education, orientation and mobility (O&M), recreational and leisure skills. The findings demonstrated that some demographic variables may be considered as possible factors contributing to perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment. As one of the earliest studies relating to ECC skills of youth with vision impairment in Turkey, practitioners may find value in the construct of Likert-type scale to measure the perceived self-competence of youths with visual impairment in the ECC areas.

On whether, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe considered themselves reliable, Table 2 shows that, 73.9% of the participants completely agreed to the statement that they were reliable, 10.1% also agreed while only 8.9% completely disagreed and just a few 6.6% disagreed. The mean

for these responses was 3.50. This is a very positive outcome which shows that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were very reliable persons. These findings agreed with the study, by Mulligan, Hith and Strand (2019) conducted a qualitative study self-evaluation of people with blindness. The findings highlighted the importance of individual agency and the role of social support in shaping the self-perception of individuals with blindness. Participants described the influence of external validators, such as professional, friends and family in shaping their self-evaluation.

It is also clear from Table 2 that, 42% of the participants agreed that, it could be boring if they talked about themselves while, 34.2% of the completely disagreed to the same, 22.4% disagreed and none of the completely agreed. The mean for the responses was 2.09 which depicts the average response of the participants. The implication of these findings is that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe could not mind talking about themselves although a significant percentage (42%) of them had reservations on the same.

The study also sought data on whether the participants were luck when they were successful in their achievement as opposed to their effort. Table 2 shows that, an almost equal percentage of 41.4% completely disagreed that, when they are successful, there's usually a lot of luck involved, while 41.1% agreed on the same and 17.0% disagreed to the statement. The mean for these responses was 2.01. The findings imply that, more than half (58.4%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe don't entirely depend on luck for their success although some significant percentage (41.1%) of them do. On whether they have a pleasant personality, 41.4% agreed, while 41.1% completely disagreed, 16.7% disagreed that they have a pleasant personality and only 0.3% completely agreed. The average mean for this data was 2.02 which was not very high and concurs with the responses of the participants. These findings imply that, there was an even distribution of opinion of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe in regard to whether they have a pleasant personality.

Table 2 further shows that, 42.8% of the participants, agreed that, if a task is difficult, that just makes them all the more determined, 39.1% completely disagreed, while 17.0% disagreed and only 0.6% agreed to this statement. The mean was 2.08. The findings imply that, a slightly higher percentage (46.1%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe don't get more determined when a task is difficult instead, they get discouraged. However, a significant percentage (43.4%) were positive that they get more resilient when a task is difficult. The findings deviate from the work of Olaz, and Castejón (2017) who put focus on exploring the self-evaluation of quality of life and subjective well-being among adults with visual impairment. They point out social support, independence, coping strategies, and psychological factors as factors that influence individuals' self-perceptions of their quality of life and well-being.

The study further sought information on whether, the participants often feel humiliated and a high majority of 70.4% completely agreed to the statement while, 14.1% completely disagreed and 10.1% disagreed. Only a few 4.6% agreed that they often feel humiliated. The mean for these responses was 3.39 which was high and signifies the high agreement to the statement. It is therefore evident that a very high percentage (75%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe often feel humiliated about their state.

The other information that, this study sought was in regard to whether the participants can usually make up their mind and stick to it. Table 2 shows that, 66.4% of them completely agreed to that statement, 14.1% disagreed, while 10.1% agreed and only 8.9% completely disagreed. The mean was 3.36. The findings imply that, a high percentage (76.5%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe can usually make up their mind and stick to it.

Data from Table 2 shows that, 79.0% of the participants completely agreed that, everyone else seems much more confident and contented than them, while 10.1% disagreed, 8.3% completely disagreed and just 2.0% agreed to the statement. The mean was 3.54. These findings imply that, a very high percentage (81.0%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were discontented and less confident about themselves.

This study also sought data on whether the even when they quite enjoy themselves, there seem to be much purpose to it all. Table 2 shows that 79.3% of the participants agreed to that statement and only 9.2% disagreed, 8.6% completely agreed and just 2.3% agreed. The mean for these responses was 3.54 which was a high mean score. The findings imply that a high majority of 81.6% of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were in complete agreement that, even when they quite enjoy themselves, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all.

The other information that was sought in this study was on whether, the participants were often worried about what other people are thinking about them. In this regard, Table 2 shows that, 79.0% of the participants completely agreed to that statement, 10.6% disagreed, while 7.8% completely disagreed and only 2.0% agreed. The average of these responses was high at 3.54. The findings imply that, a very high percentage of 81.0% of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were often worried about what other people are thinking about them.

=It is also clear from Table 2 that, 42% of the participants agreed that, it could be boring if they talked about themselves while, 34.2% of the completely disagreed to the same, 22.4% disagreed and none of the completely agreed. The mean for the responses was 2.09 which depicts the average response of the participants. The implication of these findings is that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe could not mind talking about themselves although a significant percentage (42%) of them had reservations on the same.

The study also sought data on whether the participants were luck when they were successful in their achievement as opposed to their effort. Table 2 shows that, an almost equal percentage of 41.4% completely disagreed that, when they are successful, there's usually a lot of luck involved, while 41.1% agreed on the same and 17.0% disagreed to the statement. The mean for these responses was 2.01. The findings imply that, more than half (58.4%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe don't entirely depend on luck for their success although some significant percentage (41.1%) of them do. On whether they have a pleasant personality, 41.4% agreed, while 41.1% completely disagreed, 16.7% disagreed that they have a pleasant personality and only 0.3% completely agreed. The average mean for this data was 2.02 which was not very high and concurs with the responses of the participants. These findings imply that, there was an even distribution of opinion of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe in regard to whether they have a pleasant personality.

Table 2 further shows that, 42.8% of the participants, agreed that, if a task is difficult, that just makes them all the more determined, 39.1% completely disagreed, while 17.0% disagreed and only 0.6% agreed to this statement. The mean was 2.08. The findings imply that, a slightly higher percentage (46.1%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe don't get more determined when a task is difficult instead, they get discouraged. However, a significant percentage (43.4%) were positive that they get more resilient when a task in difficult.

The study further sought information on whether, the participants often feel humiliated and a high majority of 70.4% completely agreed to the statement while, 14.1% completely disagreed and 10.1% disagreed. Only a few 4.6% agreed that they often feel humiliated. The mean for these responses was 3.39 which was high and signifies the high agreement to the statement. It is therefore evident that a very high percentage (75%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe often feel humiliated about their state.

The other information that, this study sought was in regard to whether the participants can usually make up their mind and stick to it. Table 2 shows that, 66.4% of them completely agreed to that statement, 14.1% disagreed, while 10.1% agreed and only 8.9% completely disagreed. The mean was 3.36. The findings imply that, a high percentage (76.5%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe can usually make up their mind and stick to it.

Data from Table 2 shows that, 79.0% of the participants completely agreed that, everyone else seems much more confident and contented than them, while 10.1% disagreed, 8.3% completely disagreed and just 2.0%

agreed to the statement. The mean was 3.54. These findings imply that, a very high percentage (81.0%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were discontented and less confident about themselves.

This study also sought data on whether the even when they quite enjoy themselves, there seem to be much purpose to it all. Table 2 shows that 79.3% of the participants agreed to that statement and only 9.2% disagreed, 8.6% completely agreed and just 2.3% agreed. The mean for these responses was 3.54 which was a high mean score. The findings imply that a high majority of 81.6% of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were in complete agreement that, even when they quite enjoy themselves, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all.

The other information that was sought in this study was on whether, the participants were often worried about what other people are thinking about them. In this regard, Table 2 shows that, 79.0% of the participants completely agreed to that statement, 10.6% disagreed, while 7.8% completely disagreed and only 2.0% agreed. The average of these responses was high at 3.54. The findings imply that, a very high percentage of 81.0% of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were often worried about what other people are thinking about them.

Table 2 also presents data regarding the statement on "there is a lot of truth in the saying what will be, will be" and from the findings, 79.3% completely agreed to the statement, 10.1% completely disagreed, 8.3% disagreed and only 1.7% agreed. The mean was 3.54. These findings imply that a high percentage (81.0%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were in agreement that, there is a lot of truth in the saying that what will be, will be.

The study further sought information on how the participants viewed themselves in regard to whether they look awful or not. Table 2 shows that 80.7% completely agreed to the statement, while 11.2% also agreed, and 6.9% disagreed with a very small percentage of 0.6% who completely disagreed. The mean for these findings was high at 3.73. The findings imply that the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were very resentful of their state.

Table 2 also shows that, a high percentage (80.7%) of the participants completely agreed that they really try and can overcome most of their problems, while 9.8% disagreed, 7.7% agreed and just only 0.3% completely disagreed. The mean was 3.73. The findings imply that majority of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe make great effort in trying to overcome the challenges they face.

From Table 2 it is also clear that, 73.6% of the participants while 20.4% while an equal percentage of 4.3% completely disagreed and agreed respectively. The mean for these responses was 3.74. The findings imply that, the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were finding it pretty tough for themselves in dealing with their state. On whether they feel emotionally mature, 51.1% of the participants completely agreed to that statement, while, 23.9% agreed, 22.1% disagreed and only 2.3% completely disagreed. The average for these responses was high at 3.6. These findings imply that a higher percentage (75%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, felt emotionally mature.

From Table 2, it is also clear that, 51.1% of the participants completely agreed that, when people criticize them, they often feel helpless and second rated. It is also clear that, 22.1% disagreed to this statement while, 18.7% agreed and only 7.5% completely disagreed. The mean was 3.76. The findings imply that, a higher percentage of 69.8% of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe felt helpless and second-rate citizens when people criticize them.

Table 2 presents data on how the participants felt when progress was difficult, and if it was worth the effort or not. Table 2 shows that 22.1% of the participants agreed while an equal percentage of 18.7% agreed and completely agreed respectively and only 7.5% of them completely disagreed. The mean was 3.66. The findings show that the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe the views of those who agreed and those who disagreed was evenly balanced regarding whether they felt it worth the effort when

progress was difficult. The other item that the study sought was on whether the participants liked themselves even when others didn't like them and from the data obtained, 51.1% of the participants completely agreed and 26.1% disagreed, 19.3% of them agreed and only 2.9% completely disagreed. The average of these responses was high at 3.71. The findings implied that majority (70.4%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, were positive and in agreement that they liked themselves even when other don't which is a very positive trend.

Finally, Table 2 shows that, 52.5% of the participants completely agreed that those who know them well are fond of them while 21.3% agreed to the statement and 17.5% disagreed with very few 8.0% who completely disagreed. The mean was 3.71. The implication of these findings is that, a higher percentage (83.8%) of the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe were in complete agreement that, those who know them well are fond of them.

Hypothesis Testing

The study sought to test a hypothesis which was formulated as both the null and the research hypothesis. This section presents the results of the hypotheses that were tested for the study. The hypothesis that this study tested was to determine whether there was a relationship between gender and the level of control of life amongst people with blindness. The hypothesis was stated as follows:

H₀: There is no relationship between the gender and the level of control of life for people with blindness.

H₁: There is a relationship between the gender and the level of control of life for people with blindness.

Table 3 Correlation between gender and control of own life

Correlations			
		Gender	I have control over my own life.
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	346	346
I have control over my own life.	Pearson Correlation	-.362**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	346	346

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 3 and using a two - tailed Pearson correlation test of hypothesis and at a 0.05 significance level to test the relationship between gender and the level of control of life for people with blindness, the results yielded a p-value of 0.000 implying that the relationship was positive and significant (p-value = 0.000 < significance level = 0.05) at 5% confidence level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no relationship between gender and the level of control of life for people with blindness is rejected.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This purpose of this section is to present the summary of the study. This summary is derived from the data analysis in chapter four of this study. Thus, summary on the levels of self- concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe.

From the finding it is clear that the levels of self-concept among people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe, is variedly distributed as opposed to homogeneously distributed. According to the

findings the levels of self-concept among people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, can be placed in three categories namely, those with high levels of self-concept, moderate and those with low self-concept. This is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Levels of self- concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe

High Self-Concept Levels (Above 55%)	Moderate/Significant Self-Concept Levels (40-55%)	Low Self-Concept Levels (Below 40%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have control over their own life ✓ Can never achieve anything worthwhile ✓ Had a lot of things that they could like to change in their lives ✓ Don't get more determined when a task is difficult instead ✓ They get discouraged ✓ Can be taken advantage of if a chance presented itself for that to happen which renders them high vulnerability ✓ Often feel humiliated about their state, ✓ They were often worried about what other people are thinking about them ✓ There doesn't seem much purpose to it all, ✓ They felt helpless and second-rate citizens when people criticize them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ They care about what happens to them, ✓ Most people find them reasonably attractive ✓ People could not mind talking about themselves ✓ They don't entirely depend on luck for their success although some significant percentage of them do ✓ Have a pleasant personality ✓ They can usually make up their mind and stick to ✓ There is a lot of truth in the saying that what will be, will be, ✓ They felt it worth the effort when progress was difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rejection sensitivity ✓ Interest in experiencing difficulties in coping with resources ✓ Resentful of their state. ✓ When progress was difficult

Conclusions

The research question that this study sort to address was the levels of self- concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. The following attributes indicated a higher rating percentage of agreement. That they have control over their own life; they can never achieve anything worthwhile, they had a lot of things that they could like to change in their lives, they don't get more determined when a task is difficult instead, they get discouraged, can be taken advantage of if a chance presented itself for that to happen which renders them high vulnerability, often feel humiliated about their state, they were often worried about what other people are thinking about them, even when they quite enjoy themselves, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all, they felt helpless and second-rate citizens when people criticize them among attributes.

The findings further indicated that, the following attribute, the responses were half or almost half split at 50%. They included; that they care about what happens to them, most people find them reasonably attractive, they could not mind talking about themselves, they don't entirely depend on luck for their success although some significant percentage of them do, they have a pleasant personality, they can usually make up their mind and stick to it and that, there is a lot of truth in the saying that what will be, will be, they felt it worth the effort when progress was difficult.

For those levels, that were low, it is also evident that people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province had minimal interest in rejection sensitivity. People with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province had minimal interest in the experiencing difficulties in coping with resources. They also indicated that they had no resentful of their state or when progress was difficult

Recommendations

Thus, far the study has proposed some of the recommendations that can be put in place in order to mitigate and resolve the issue of blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. The recommendations are tailored to correspond with the study objective and the research question. The recommendations are in line with the objective which was to establish the levels of self- concept of people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe. The study suggested that, one of the ways to help the people with blindness in Harare Metropolitan province, Zimbabwe is by promoting supportive environments and mentorship programs. This can be achieved through:

Building Strong Support Networks: The study highlights the crucial role of social support systems in shaping self-concept. Programs that connect individuals with blindness to mentors, peers, and support groups can foster a sense of belonging, acceptance, and shared experiences. These connections can provide encouragement, guidance, and positive role models, contributing to a stronger sense of self-worth and emotional well-being.

Family Engagement: The research emphasizes the importance of family support in promoting social adaptability. Programs and resources should be designed to equip families with the knowledge and skills to effectively support their blind loved ones. Workshops and training sessions can address communication strategies, fostering independence, and building confidence in social settings.

More attention should be paid to the areas where the people with blindness showed high level of self-concept so that they are strengthened and sustained. Areas where the people with blindness indicated that they have high self-concept should be strengthened further and not ignored. These attributes include, Have control over their own life, can never achieve anything worthwhile, and have a lot of things that they could like to change in their lives, they don't get more determined when a task is difficult instead, they get discouraged, and often feel humiliated about their state, they were often worried about what other people are thinking about them as well as that, there doesn't seem much purpose to it all. The society and the stakeholder systems should be strengthen so that there is no room for complacency or comfort zone attitude. Instead, there should be regular periodical assessments to ensure that there is no decline in such areas.

It is also recommended that, more efforts should be directed towards improving the self-concept of the attributes where the people were modest and average such as, they care about what happens to them, most people find them reasonably attractive, people could not mind talking about themselves and they don't entirely depend on luck for their success although some significant percentage of them do as well as where they have a pleasant personality and that they can usually make up their mind and stick to. More effort and resources should also be directed towards the areas with the low levels of self-concept which include; Rejection sensitivity, interest in experiencing difficulties in coping with resources, resentful of their state and when progress was difficult. The Government through its different agencies including in the department of disability, the health, finance department and the social welfare department should all collaborate and build capacity on issues of self-concept among the people with blindness disability in Harare metropolitan province.

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