

An Analysis of Mild And Severe Vision Impairment on Children's Self-Worth and Self-Esteem In Uganda: A Case Study of Blind Students at Hornby High School, Kabale District.

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ABSTRACT

Visual impairment (VI) among children remains a major global public health and educational concern, with profound implications for psychological well-being, social participation, and academic achievement. Globally, more than 19 million children under the age of 15 are estimated to live with visual impairment, including approximately 1.4 million who are blind and 17.5 million with low vision, the majority residing in low-income settings (WHO, 2023). Despite the growing burden, limited empirical attention has been given to the relationship between the severity of visual impairment and children's self-esteem and self-worth, particularly within the Ugandan context. This study examined differences in self-esteem among children with moderate and severe visual impairment at Hornby High School for the Blind in Kabale District, Uganda. A mixed-methods case study design was employed involving 45 learners, comprising 27 pupils with moderate visual impairment and 18 pupils with severe visual impairment or blindness. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected to explore psychosocial experiences and factors influencing self-worth. Findings revealed that learners with severe visual impairment exhibited comparatively lower levels of self-esteem and self-worth than their counterparts with moderate impairment. The study further identified social stigma, barriers to participation, limited adaptive learning support, and inadequate psychosocial interventions as key contributors to diminished self-perception among severely impaired learners. The study concludes that the degree of visual impairment significantly shapes learners' psychological well-being and social confidence. It recommends the strengthening of inclusive educational practices, provision of adaptive learning resources, and implementation of targeted psychosocial support programmes aimed at enhancing resilience, self-esteem, and social inclusion among visually impaired children in Uganda.

Keywords: VisualImpairment,Self-Esteem,Self-Worth

INTRODUCTION

Vision impairment (VI) has long been recognized as a critical public health concern affecting millions worldwide. In the past, social and psychological ramifications of vision impairments were largely ignored in favor of clinical treatment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), cataracts and uncorrected refractive errors are the main causes of the approximately 188.5 million persons with mild vision impairment and over 36 million blind people worldwide. Over 20 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa have moderate to severe VI, and over 5 million people are blind, underscoring the ongoing regional burden (GBD Meta-analysis, 2020). With an estimated 400,000 blind persons and over a million suffering from some kind of vision impairment, mostly from cataracts and untreated refractive errors, Uganda reflects this regional and worldwide trend (GAF Eye Health Foundation, 2022).

The knowledge of VI and its psychological effects on children is supported by a number of academic frameworks. According to the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 2020), social and environmental constraints that restrict participation and inclusion also contribute to disability. Adolescence is a crucial time for identity formation, self-worth, and self-esteem, according to Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (Erikson, 2021). Studying self-esteem and self-worth is important in this context because children with VI may have difficulties that prevent them from successfully resolving psychosocial phases, especially those pertaining to competence, confidence, and social belonging (Habaasa, 2024).

Children with VI in Uganda encounter particular social and educational difficulties. Peer relationships and engagement chances are limited in schools due to a lack of appropriate inclusive practices and assistive technologies (Alrasheed et al., 2024). Due to poverty, a lack of healthcare options, and social stigma, rural areas like Kabale District provide additional challenges (Kozala et al., 2024; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025). Few research has experimentally investigated the relationship between the degree of visual impairment and psychosocial results in Ugandan secondary school settings, despite the fact that these conditions may negatively impact self-esteem, self-worth, and social identity.

The relationship between VI and psychosocial development is highlighted in recent research. For example, compared to children with mild visual impairment, children with severe visual impairment reported decreased levels of self-esteem and perceived social support (Magakwe et al., 2025). According to UNESCO (2023), inclusive teaching methods and the use of assistive technology can mitigate these psychological difficulties by fostering resilience, competence, and engagement. According to Mokgethi et al. (2023), peer interactions, teacher support, and participation possibilities are all strongly associated with self-worth among adolescents with VI, which highlights the need for context-specific research in Ugandan schools.

This study sought to comprehensively examine the relationship between the degree of visual impairment and self-esteem among visually impaired children in Kabale District. Specifically, the study aimed to analyze variations in self-esteem across different categories of visual impairment severity, identify the psychosocial and environmental factors influencing children's self-worth, and develop evidence-based strategies for enhancing the psychosocial well-being of visually impaired learners. Through this investigation, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interaction between disability and psychological development, while providing practical insights for educators, policymakers, caregivers, and other stakeholders involved in promoting inclusive education and child welfare. Overall, vision impairment has a significant impact on the sensory and psychosocial domains; however, there is still little data on how the severity of the impairment affects self-worth and self-esteem in low-resource African contexts. By examining the connection between the severity of VI and psychosocial outcomes among Ugandan secondary school students, this study aims to close that gap.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a convergent mixed methods research strategy, which involved the simultaneous collection, independent analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data during interpretation. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2023), mixed methods research is an approach that purposefully combines quantitative and qualitative perspectives to offer a more thorough knowledge of complex events than either methodology alone. When examining psychological notions like self-worth and self-esteem, which have both quantifiable characteristics and highly subjective experiential dimensions, this design is very suitable.

While the qualitative component offered contextualized insights into learners lived experiences, perceptions of inclusion, stigma, and support systems, the quantitative component allowed for a systematic comparison of self-esteem levels across students with mild and severe vision impairment. When analysing psychosocial outcomes among children with disabilities, mixed methods designs are recommended by recent disability and education research because they enable triangulation and enhanced validity (Magakwe et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2023). As a result, the convergent design proved appropriate for capturing both statistical differences and subtle meaning associated with the degree of visual impairment.

The study was carried out at Homby High School for the Blind, which is situated in southwest Uganda's Kabale District. Because it serves students with a range of vision impairments, including mild, severe, and total

blindness, the school was purposefully chosen as a specialist secondary institution.

Kabale District's primarily rural location, where children with disabilities frequently face compounded educational and psychosocial challenges linked to poverty, a lack of assistive resources, and sociocultural stigma, provides a pertinent context for this study (Alrasheed et al., 2024). Homby High School is a suitable and informative location since research in low-resource African contexts shows that the school environment is crucial in influencing psychosocial outcomes for visually impaired learners (Kozala et al., 2024; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025).

Table 3.5.1: Sample Size

Category of participant	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
Students with mild visual impairment	27	17	Purposive sampling
Students with severe visual impairment	18	18	Purposive Sampling
Total	45	45	Purposive Sampling

Source: Sample Total on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) and modified in 2026

All visually impaired pupils enrolled at Homby High School in the 2024–2025 school year made up the study population. While the group was very small and specialized, a total population of 45 students was taken into consideration. To guarantee sufficient representation and depth of data, all 45 students were chosen to take part in the study using a purposive sampling technique.

27 children with mild visual impairment and 18 students with severe visual impairment or blindness made up the sample, which was stratified based on the degree of visual impairment. While retaining enough depth for qualitative insights, this stratification allowed for meaningful cross-category comparison.

Given that it enables the researcher to specifically choose individuals with particular traits pertinent to the study's goals, especially in specialized populations like students with visual impairments, purposeful sampling was judged suitable (Guest et al., 2020). Furthermore, the participants' ages ranged from 12 to 20, which corresponds with adolescence, a crucial developmental time for identity construction and self-esteem (Sawyer et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Objective One: Comparison of Self-Esteem Levels Between Students with Mild and Severe Visual Impairment

Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Results

The purpose of the study was to compare the self-esteem levels of pupils with minor and severe visual impairments. To determine the mean differences between the two groups, descriptive statistics were first calculated.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Self-Esteem

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Mild VI	27	3.42	0.51	0.098
Severe VI	18	2.61	0.64	0.151

The findings show that students with severe visual impairment had a lower mean self-esteem score ($M = 2.61$) than students with mild visual impairment ($M = 3.42$). This implies that the two groups' perceptions of their own value differ significantly. While the severe group's higher standard deviation shows variety in experiences,

probably as a result of disparities in coping strategies and support networks, the moderate group's comparatively lower standard deviation shows more consistency in reactions.

An independent samples t-test was used to ascertain whether this difference was statistically significant.

Table 4.2: Independent Samples t-Test

Test	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% CI
Equal variances assumed	4.63	43	0.000	0.81	0.46–1.16

The findings indicate that the two groups' levels of self-esteem differ statistically significantly ($t(43) = 4.63, p < 0.001$). This suggests that it is unlikely that the observed variation in mean scores happened by accident. The significance and dependability of the difference are further supported by the confidence interval. According to the results, kids' self-esteem is greatly impacted by the severity of their visual impairment.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data allowed for a deeper understanding of how severity impacts self-esteem. Students with mild vision impairments reported being more independent and socially engaged. *"I can read large print and move around alone, so I feel like I am normal,"* a student stated. *"I participate in class discussions, and teachers recognize me,"* he added. According to these responses, limited vision facilitates participation, which in turn enhances positive self-perception.

Conversely, students with severe visual impairments reported feeling dependent and socially isolated. *"I always need someone to guide me, and sometimes I feel like a burden,"* one responder stated. *"I don't like speaking in class because I fear making mistakes,"* he added. These comments reveal a lack of confidence and a fear of being judged, two crucial indicators of low self-esteem.

These results were corroborated by key informants. *"Students who are completely blind struggle more with confidence compared to those with low vision,"* the special needs teacher clarified. *"My child depends on others for almost everything, and this affects how he sees himself,"* another parent said. These viewpoints stress the importance of freedom in forming self-esteem and the psychosocial effects of harshness (Erikson, 2021; Magakwe et al., 2025; Chiracu & Buñ-Belciu, 2023).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results unequivocally show that self-esteem is significantly influenced by the degree of visual impairment. Residual vision helps students with minor visual impairment participate more actively in social and academic activities. A sense of competence and belonging, two essential elements of self-esteem, are fostered by this involvement. However, pupils with significant visual impairments have more difficulty participating, moving about, and communicating, which can result in feelings of social isolation and inadequacy.

These results are in line with the biopsychosocial paradigm, which postulates that biological constraints (such the degree of visual loss) interact with psychological and environmental variables to affect results. Additionally, they are consistent with Erikson's psychosocial theory, which highlights the significance of identity formation and competence during adolescence. According to earlier research, people with severe visual impairment had lower self-esteem than people with mild impairment (Kozaala et al., 2024; Magakwe et al., 2025; Mokgethi et al., 2023).

Nonetheless, supportive surroundings can lessen the detrimental impacts of severe impairment, according to the qualitative findings. When teachers and peers provided them with substantial support, several kids with severe vision impairments reported feeling good about themselves. This implies that outcomes are influenced by social and environmental factors rather than severity alone. By highlighting the significance of context in influencing psychosocial outcomes, this research adds to the body of previous work.

Objective Two: Factors Influencing Self-Worth with Mild and Severe Visual Impairment

Quantitative Findings

Table 4.3: Factors Influencing Self-Worth

Factor	Mean	Std	Interpretation
Family Support	4.12	0.62	Very strong
Family Relationship	3.98	0.71	Strong
School Environment	3.76	0.68	Strong
Copying Skills	3.54	0.74	Moderate
Socio-Economic Status	4.05	0.66	Strong

The findings show that the most significant determinants of self-worth are socioeconomic level and familial support. Coping skills have a moderate impact, but peer interactions and the educational environment also play important roles. These results underscore the complexity of self-worth and the significance of both structural and social elements.

Qualitative Findings

One student said, *"My parents encourage me and tell me I can succeed,"* highlighting the value of family support. *"I feel strong when my family supports me,"* said another student. One parent stated, *"If we don't support them, they lose confidence,"* acknowledging their responsibility as well.

Peer relationships were also very important. *"Friends who include me make me feel important,"* said a youngster. However, stigma was mentioned; one person said, *"Some students laugh at us, and it hurts."* *"We lack enough resources to support these learners effectively,"* teachers said, highlighting institutional constraints.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results verify that an assortment of institutional, social, and familial variables affect one's sense of self-worth. Peer ties contribute to a sense of belonging, while family support offers emotional stability. Academic confidence is influenced by the school atmosphere and resources, while access to assistive technologies is influenced by socioeconomic position. These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the value of inclusive education and social support (Daramusseng et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

Objective Three: Strategies for Psychosocial Well-Being Strategies for Psychosocial Well-Being of Visually Impaired Students

Quantitative Findings

Table 4.4: Strategies to Improve Psychosocial Well-Being

Strategy	Mean	Interpretation
Counselling	4.25	Highly Effective
Assistive Devices	4.18	Highly Effective
Pear Support	4.10	Highly Effective
Parental Involvement	4.05	Highly Effective
Teacher Training	3.95	Effective

The quantitative results show that respondents ranked all of the suggested solutions highly, with mean scores above 3.90, indicating strong agreement on their significance in enhancing psychological well-being. Counselling services were the most highly rated of them (Mean = 4.25), suggesting that students view

psychological help as a vital necessity. This emphasizes how crucial structured counselling programs are for assisting adolescents in overcoming emotional difficulties, developing resilience, and cultivating a good self-concept.

Additionally, the availability of assistive technology received a high rating (Mean = 4.18), indicating the importance of functional independence in boosting self-esteem. Students who have access to resources like screen readers, mobility aids, and Braille materials can engage more fully in social and academic activities, which strengthens their sense of independence and competence. Peer support programs were also shown to be crucial (Mean = 4.10), suggesting that kids' self-worth is greatly influenced by social inclusion and constructive peer relationships.

Parental participation (Mean = 4.05) was also identified as a significant factor, highlighting the significance of family encouragement and emotional support. Despite having a somewhat lower ranking (Mean = 3.95), teacher training still scored highly, indicating that increasing teacher capacity is essential for developing inclusive learning environments. Overall, the quantitative results show that multifaceted approaches that address both structural and psychological dimensions of well-being are necessary for effective strategies (Cheng et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2023; Worley et al., 2023).

Qualitative Findings

Deeper understanding of how these tactics affect the psychosocial wellbeing of visually impaired learners was made possible by the qualitative data. Students frequently stressed the value of counselling services in assisting them in overcoming emotional obstacles and boosting their self-esteem. *"Counselling helps me express my feelings and understand that I am not alone,"* said one learner. Another said, *"I feel relieved and more confident to face others when I talk to the Counsellor."* These answers show how important counselling is for dealing with internal issues like loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Teachers also emphasized the value of counselling, pointing out that many visually impaired pupils struggle emotionally, which has an impact on their academic achievement. *"Some students are very quiet because they lack confidence, and counselling helps them open up and participate,"* the Teacher clarified. *"We need more trained counsellors/Social Workers who understand the needs of visually impaired learners,"* the Headteacher added, highlighting the need to improve counselling inside the school. These viewpoints emphasize how crucial it is for educational institutions to incorporate counselling services.

Regarding assistive devices, learners stated that having access to educational resources and mobility aids greatly increased their self-reliance and self-assurance. *"I can study on my own when I use Braille books, and it makes me feel capable,"* said one learner. *"I depend on others without these materials, and it lowers my confidence,"* said another. These results show that by increasing autonomy, assistive devices are important contributors to psychological well-being in addition to being educational aids. However, there weren't many helpful gadgets. The observation and the teacher's statement, *"As a school, we have very few assistive devices and this has always sabotaged teaching and learning of our special needs children,"* served as proof of this.

Another important issue that surfaced was peer support. Students reported feeling more confident and like they belonged when they had good interactions with their peers. *"My friends help me and include me in activities, and that makes me feel important,"* said one respondent. There is a need for organized peer support programs, nevertheless, as some students also reported feeling excluded. *"Sometimes others ignore us, and it makes us feel different,"* a student responded. This emphasizes how peers may be sources of both support and exclusion.

Parents stressed how important it is to support their children's mental health. *"We encourage our child to believe in himself, and this helps him feel confident,"* said one parent. *"People in the community should stop seeing disability as a curse because it affects how children see themselves,"* said another parent, highlighting the significance of community perceptions. These answers highlight how crucial family and community settings are in determining one's sense of value.

In order to properly serve visually impaired children, teachers also stressed the importance of professional training. "We need more skills and training to handle these learners properly, especially in inclusive classrooms," a teacher clarified. "Without proper training, teachers may not fully support these students, which affects their confidence," the headteacher continued. "We don't have enough special needs teachers to teach our special needs learners" a teacher added. These results emphasize how crucial it is for teachers to develop their capacity and increase their numbers in order to establish supportive learning environments (Alrasheed et al., 2024; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025; Magakwe et al., 2025).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study show that enhancing the psychosocial wellbeing of visually impaired students necessitates an all-encompassing strategy that takes into account various aspects of their lives. The high evaluation of counselling services attests to the crucial role that psychological support plays in assisting students in overcoming emotional difficulties and cultivating healthy self-concepts. This is consistent with research that shows counselling is a useful intervention for lowering anxiety, depression, and internalized stigma in students with visual impairments (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

The significance of assistive technology highlights the connection between psychological health and functional freedom. Students gain a sense of competence and autonomy—two essential elements of self-esteem—when they are able to complete activities on their own. This result aligns with the biopsychosocial paradigm, which highlights the relationship between psychological outcomes and physical functioning. Additionally, it is consistent with research demonstrating that visually impaired people who have access to assistive technologies have better educational and psychological results (Magakwe et al., 2025; Nombakuse et al., 2025; Peter & Tumwesigye, 2025).

A further significant component affecting psychosocial well-being was found to be peer support. Good peer relationships boost a sense of belonging, encourage social inclusion, and offer emotional support. The existence of stigma and exclusion, however, emphasizes the necessity of organized interventions to support inclusive peer environments. These results are in line with studies that highlight how peer relationships influence teenagers' emotional health and self-esteem (Worley et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2025; Alrasheed et al., 2024).

Findings also indicated that Self-esteem is also greatly influenced by parental involvement. Positive self-concept and emotional stability are facilitated by supportive parenting techniques, such as acceptance and encouragement. On the other hand, stigma and unfavourable attitudes within the family might damage one's self-esteem. These results are consistent with research showing how family circumstances affect children with disabilities' psychosocial outcomes (Daramusseng et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025).

Finally, the necessity of teacher training emphasizes how crucial institutional capacity is to helping visually impaired pupils. Students' academic experiences and self-perceptions are greatly influenced by their teachers. Teachers might not be able to offer the assistance required to promote engagement and confidence if they are not properly trained. Calls for more funding for inclusive education methods and teacher training are supported by this finding (UNESCO, 2023; Kozaala et al., 2024; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025).

Overall, the results show that a complex interaction of psychological, social, and structural elements affects the psychosocial well-being of visually impaired pupils. Therefore, comprehensive therapies that target individual needs and foster supportive environments are essential. The findings support the applicability of the biopsychosocial model and emphasize how crucial it is for communities, families, and schools to work together to support visually impaired students' wellbeing.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study set out to examine the psychosocial wellbeing of visually impaired students at Hornby High School

in Kabale District, with a particular focus on comparing self-esteem levels between students with mild and severe visual impairment, identifying factors influencing self-worth, and proposing strategies for enhancing psychosocial outcomes. The findings were derived from a mixed-methods approach involving 45 students and key informants including teachers and parents. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of visually impaired learners within the school context.

Regarding Objective One, the study discovered that pupils with modest and severe vision impairment had significantly different levels of self-esteem. According to quantitative results, students with mild visual impairment had higher self-esteem (Mean = 3.42) than students with severe visual impairment (Mean = 2.61), and the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Qualitative research corroborated these conclusions, showing that adolescents with modest vision impairment were more independent, self-assured, and engaged in social and academic activities. Students with significant vision impairment, on the other hand, reported feeling less confident, dependent, and socially isolated. These findings support theoretical viewpoints that link functional ability to the formation of self-concept (Erikson, 2021; Magakwe et al., 2025; Kozaala et al., 2024) by confirming that the degree of visual impairment plays a crucial role in shaping self-esteem.

Nonetheless the study also showed that outcomes related to self-esteem are not entirely determined by severity alone. Some adolescents with significant visual impairments showed positive self-esteem when they were supported by supportive peer, family, and school contexts, according to qualitative data. This implies that the detrimental consequences of severe impairment may be mitigated by contextual circumstances. These results are consistent with research demonstrating the influence of social and environmental support on psychological outcomes, underscoring the significance of going beyond solely biological explanations of impairment (Chiracu & Buñ-Belciu, 2023; Smith & Mackie, 2022; UNESCO, 2023).

In relation to Objective Two, the study identified a number of important variables affecting visually impaired students' sense of self-worth. The strongest predictors of self-worth, according to quantitative results, were family support (Mean = 4.12) and socioeconomic status (Mean = 4.05), followed by peer relationships (Mean = 3.98) and the school environment (Mean = 3.76). Psychological coping skills had a moderate impact (Mean = 3.54). These results show that a variety of interpersonal, institutional, and structural influences influence one's sense of self-worth.

This understanding was further enhanced by qualitative data that showed how these elements function in real-world situations. Students who consistently received parental support reported more resilience and self-assurance, demonstrating the importance of family support as a source of emotional support and identity validation. On the other hand, poor self-worth was linked to stigma or a lack of support from family members. Peer relationships were also found to have a significant impact, with experiences of bullying or exclusion decreasing self-esteem and inclusive friendships boosting it. Students' academic self-concept and general well-being have been proven to be greatly impacted by the school environment, especially the attitudes of the teachers and the accessibility of educational materials. These results are in line with previous research that highlights the significance of inclusive education and social support networks in influencing psychological outcomes (Daramusseng et al., 2023; Worley et al., 2023; Tuliwangula & Tumwesigye, 2025).

The study also highlighted how self-worth is influenced by socioeconomic variables. Students from low-income families reported having less access to educational materials and assistive technology, which had an impact on their independence and involvement in class. Their self-esteem suffered as a result. These results are consistent with other research that found socioeconomic level to be a significant factor in determining opportunities and psychosocial well-being for people with disabilities (Nombakuse et al., 2025; Peter & Tumwesigye, 2025; UNESCO, 2023).

In relation to Objective Three, the study identified a number of methods for enhancing visually impaired students' psychosocial wellbeing. The most effective interventions, according to quantitative results, were the provision of assistive equipment (Mean = 4.18) and counselling services (Mean = 4.25). Peer support programs (Mean = 4.10), parental participation (Mean = 4.05), and teacher training (Mean = 3.95). These findings suggest that interventions need to take into account both the structural and psychological aspects of wellbeing.

These findings were corroborated by qualitative research, which emphasized the value of counselling in assisting students in overcoming emotional difficulties and boosting their self-esteem. According to students, counselling offered a secure setting for coping strategy development and emotional expression. Initiatives for peer assistance were also praised for fostering inclusivity and lowering stigma. While parents underlined the value of community knowledge in lowering negative attitudes about disabilities, teachers stressed the necessity of professional training in special needs education. These results align with research supporting comprehensive, multi-level treatments for visually impaired students (Cheng et al., 2025; Alrasheed et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

Overall, the study demonstrates that a complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors affects visually impaired pupils' sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Although the degree of impairment is a significant factor, the availability of resources and the caliber of support networks moderate its effects. This emphasizes how important the biopsychosocial model is for comprehending and meeting the needs of visually impaired students.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that the degree of visual impairment significantly influences the self-esteem of visually impaired learners. Students with mild visual impairment generally exhibited higher levels of self-esteem due to their relatively greater independence and participation in daily and social activities. In contrast, learners with severe visual impairment or blindness were more likely to experience lower self-esteem arising from increased dependency, limited participation, and social marginalization. These findings reinforce theoretical perspectives which suggest that functional capacity and social interaction play a critical role in shaping self-concept, identity formation, and psychological development among children with disabilities.

The study further concludes that self-worth among visually impaired students is not solely determined by the severity of impairment, but is also strongly shaped by psychosocial and environmental factors. Family support, peer relationships, school climate, and socioeconomic conditions emerged as critical determinants of learners' perceptions of their own value and competence. Supportive and inclusive environments were found to enhance confidence and resilience even among students with severe impairments, whereas negative social experiences, discrimination, and exclusion undermined self-esteem regardless of the level of disability. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic understanding of disability that recognizes the interaction between individual limitations and environmental influences.

In addition, the study established that targeted and coordinated interventions can substantially improve the psychosocial well-being of visually impaired learners. Strategies such as teacher training in inclusive education, counselling and psychosocial support services, peer mentorship programmes, and increased access to assistive technologies were identified as effective mechanisms for strengthening self-esteem and promoting social inclusion. The findings therefore highlight the need for integrated approaches that combine psychological support, educational inclusion, and structural resource provision in order to address the multidimensional challenges faced by visually impaired students.

Finally, the study emphasizes the urgent need for context-specific research and interventions within rural Ugandan settings. Although existing literature provides valuable insights into disability and psychosocial well-being, there remains limited empirical evidence focusing on the lived experiences of visually impaired learners in rural communities such as Kabale District. By generating locally grounded evidence, this study contributes to filling this gap and provides practical recommendations that can inform educational policy, inclusive practices, and future research aimed at improving the quality of life and educational experiences of visually impaired children in Uganda and similar contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Counselling services should be established and strengthened in schools to give visually impaired students continuous psychosocial support. Counselling units should be staffed by qualified individuals who are aware of

the particular difficulties these students confront. Additionally, schools should support inclusive education by implementing instructional practices that support all students' involvement and accommodate a range of learning requirements. To increase academic engagement and independence, schools should also make investments in assistive learning resources like screen readers, magnification devices, and Braille books.

To enhance their ability to assist visually impaired students, teachers should complete professional training in special needs education. The use of assistive technology, inclusive teaching methods, and techniques for creating a positive learning environment should be the main topics of training programs. In order to boost visually impaired students' confidence and involvement, educators should also have a positive attitude toward them and offer support and encouragement.

Parents should provide emotional and social support to their visually impaired children by encouraging independence and promoting positive self-image. They should avoid overprotection and instead create opportunities for their children to develop skills and confidence. Parents should also collaborate with schools to support their children's education and well-being.

The government ought to set aside funds for the provision of assistive technology and special education teacher training. Effective implementation and oversight of inclusive education policies are necessary to guarantee that visually impaired students receive sufficient assistance. To increase visually impaired students' access to resources and services, government organizations should collaborate with non-governmental organizations.

In order to lessen the stigma attached to vision impairment, non-governmental groups should aid schools by offering assistive technology, training courses, and awareness campaigns. Supporting families of children with visual impairments and encouraging inclusive attitudes should be the main goals of community-based programs.

Areas for Further Research

Numerous areas that need more research have been discovered by this study. The long-term psychosocial consequences of visually challenged pupils should be investigated in future research, especially through longitudinal investigations. Examining gender disparities in visually impaired students' self-worth and self-esteem is also necessary, as is the effect of boarding school environments on psychosocial development. Future research should also assess how well particular interventions, including peer support programs and counselling programs, improve psychological outcomes. In order to inform context-specific policies and practices, research on low-resource and rural environments is especially crucial.

In conclusion, this study shows that enhancing the psychosocial wellbeing of visually impaired students necessitates a thorough and all-encompassing strategy that takes into account both environmental and individual aspects. Although the degree of visual impairment affects self-esteem, supportive peer, family, and educational environments can lessen its effects. In order to establish environments that are enabling for visually impaired learners, effective treatments must integrate social inclusion, psychological support, and resource provision. It is feasible to improve resilience, boost self-esteem, and assist the general growth and achievement of visually impaired kids in Kabale District and elsewhere by addressing these aspects.

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