



Delving into the Psycho-Social Obstacles Encountered by Public University Students with Physical Disabilities in Pakistan: An In-Depth Exploration

Swaira Abid^{1*} and Ayesha Khalil¹

1. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences University of Central Punjab
54000 Lahore, Pakistan

Corresponding author: swairaabid2000@gmail.com (S.A)

ABSTRACT

A significant portion of the populace grapples with physical disabilities, which pose obstacles to their everyday activities. Students belonging to this demographic encounter numerous hurdles as a result of their physical impairments. This study aimed to investigate the psychosocial difficulties encountered by physically disabled students enrolled in Public-Sector Universities in Pakistan. A qualitative approach was utilized to delve into the subject under scrutiny. Data collection employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique, from Public-Sector Universities in Pakistan. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven participants who had physical motor disabilities and were in their 7th and 8th semesters of BS (Hons) programs. The interviews ranged in duration from 35 to 45 minutes. By using Thematic Analysis, eight themes emerged: (a) unsupportive class fellows, (b) unsupportive teachers, (c) discriminatory attitudes, (d) misperception of disability, (e) uncomfortable gaze, (f) unwanted feelings, (g) low self-esteem and (h) social anxiety. The findings both support and contribute to the knowledge of this kind of experience. The research highlights the importance of training teachers and conducting awareness campaigns to educate students about supporting physically handicapped individuals in class by discouraging discrimination. Additionally, organizing accessible outdoor activities for disabled individuals can enhance skills, foster confidence, and alleviate social anxiety. The research underscores unique themes. These themes underscore the potential impact of such perceptions on psychological well-being. Notably, the study identifies a distinct case wherein disability is regarded as a blessing. In this instance, the attention and affection garnered from nearby individuals elevate the participant to a central position in social situations, providing insight into diverse perspectives on disability. Future researchers should conduct one-on-one interviews and perform a comparative study between students with physical motor disabilities in public and private sector universities.

Keywords: Obstacles, Students with Physical Disabilities, University, Qualitative Inquiry, Thematic Analysis

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