

Using Joyful Learning Approach to Develop Social Skills and Achievement of Visually Impaired Students

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to find out the effect of joyful learning on the achievement in of elementary school students. To serve this objective a sample of 84 students from elementary classes were selected by purposive random sampling. An intervention program of 7 weeks on activity base joyful learning was given experimental group students whereas learning on traditional method was given to control group students. The achievement test was administered on the samples after the intervention programme. The findings revealed that the after receiving intervention program on activity base joyful learning, the students had achieved academically. The overall findings suggest that the activity base joyful learning has significant effect on the development of social skills and achievement of elementary school students. .

Keywords: Joyful learning, Social skills, Achievement, Visually Impaired students

Introduction

Today' educational system prepares students for their life in 21st century. So it is important to develop children holistically from very beginning of their school age to prepare for future. Children' age at school level is very crucial period for social development. This school period is a base for children to acquired social skills by interacting each other. But it is too difficult for the children with visual impairment to interact properly with sighted peers. The visually impaired children may have behavioural problems and lack of social skills than the normal children (Ozkubat & Ozdemir, 2015), which may result in social isolation (Huurre et al., 1999). Social skill development is an important aspect of school education and it is directly related to the learning process and achievement of students especially at elementary school level (Parua, 2012).

Teachers can identify the social skills of children which will enhance their academic achievement. Teachers approach to teaching and learning also promotes social skills and academic achievement (Kumar, 2012). Teacher's role is very significant to create effective, efficient and meaningful learning environment for joyful learning in the classroom, so that it can provide interest and motivation among the students at elementary level. Meaningful learning attracts students towards teaching learning process. Students give less attention to the conventional teacher with obsolete methods of teaching. Play way method of teaching is more effective for primary as well as elementary school students. It provides motivation to the students for better learning because it integrated fun with play and learning by using joyful leaning approach (Widyawulandri et al. 2018).

Joyful learning is the important approach of teaching learning process to make the children mentally healthy and socially active. Further, it leads to superior socialisation, academic outcomes and developed empathy in learners (Bodrora & Leong (2005). If it occurs early enough in children's education, it is said to establish better patterns of learning in later schooling (Coolahan et al, 2000). It leads to better learning in terms of student motivation, persistence and peer interaction (Shiple, 2008) and increases

concentration, curiosity and openness (SACSA, 2009). Joyful learning is thought to increase memory storage (Andreassen et al, 1999) and increase active learning (Singh, 2014).

UNICEF (2012) suggested that social skills are *life skills* and therefore crucial for children to acquire it. To learn social skills is depend upon the he context in which children develop it. School is the best platform to develop social skills among students. With the help of acquired social skills children can act and respond socially in appropriate manner and maintain healthy relationships with others (Ogden, 2015). School environment is appropriate to learn and exercise social skills for visually impaired children. Social skills can be developed by placing them in various groups during interactions with peers and with teachers. Despite evidenced relations to critical child outcomes, and in contrast to academic skills, social skills are seldom systematically promoted in schools (OECD, 2015). It is essential for a school and teachers to support their children and promote social skills among students. In this study, we examined the development of social skills and academic achievement through joyful learning approach among students studying in 6th to 8th classes.

Concept of Joyful learning

The joyful learning process make learner feels pleasure in learning due to its principles of learning by playing. Further, it involves multiple sensory organs of students during the learning process and students get maximum learning achievement. It makes students feel happy in the teaching learning process (Wei, 2011). This learning strategy is a meaningful and contextual learning (Vallori, 2002). Joyful learning is a practical approach of teaching by using game in a pleasant atmosphere with a relaxed and care free environment. The learning objectives can be achieved with this approach easily (Mandal, 2019). This joyful learning approach is very helpful holistic development of students (Purohit, 2013). Scanning of related literature indicates the effectiveness of joyful learning on the learning of students. Joyful learning enhances the motivation (Kirikkaya, Isera and Vurkaya, 2010) and academic achievement of learners (Sharma, 2012). The study carried out by Clark and Mayer (2008) revealed that joyful activity-based learning strategies promote the engagement of learners in the teaching learning process. Further activity base joyful learning method can enhance the academic achievement of the pupil and it is more effective approach of learning among children to promote skill and academic achievement (Aashfaq, 2020).

Joyfull learning process it is necessary to prepare an environment so that all students feel important, safe, and comfortable. It starts with a conducive physical environment that is enhanced by plants, art and music. The room must feel right for optimal learning activities (Bobbi De Porter, 2000). The principle of fun learning (Joyful Learning), is when students are happy and learn to know what they are learning for. So the factor for creating fun learning (Joyfull Learning) is the creation of a learning environment that is fun and stimulates children to learn. The atmosphere of the class that was created full of excitement will also bring excitement in learning (Samni, 2004)

Concept of social skills

Social development is deeply rooted in Indian culture. The social fabric is said to be very strong in India where the family is a strong cohesive social unit. The family plays a very significant role in shaping the personality of an individual. A child with special needs is dependent on his/her parents and significant others in the family, not only for food and shelter but also for protection, approval and affection. The acceptance or rejection of the child's disability as a condition and accepts its limitation provide opportunities for development in all areas, particularly social development (Rai Choudhary, 1992). Visually impaired students learned and behaved in a manner that is different from sighted children (Ferrell, 1996)

Merrill and Gimbel (1998) stressed three key points in defining social skills. These key points are peer acceptance, behavioural validity and social validity. Peer acceptance, the first key point, describes social skills as a popularity index. According to this viewpoint, if a person is popular among his/her peer group, he/she is competent in social skills. Behavioural validity, the second key point, underlies some behavioural processes such as reinforcements and punishments. The last key point, social validity stresses behavioural

outcomes of social skills in different social contexts. In a review study, Caldarella and Merrell (1997) examined twenty-one studies that examine social skills of children and adolescents. As a result of the study analysis, researchers addressed social skills with five dimensions. These five dimensions were peer relationships skills, self-control skills, academic skills, adaptive skills, and assertive skills. It is important to note that these dimensions of social skills cover social, developmental and cognitive domains.

Social skills deficits may depend on age, gender and SES. Another factor that may contribute to social skills deficits is having a disability (Ozdemir, 2010). Students with special needs have lacked of social skills due to their limited interaction in the society (Sucuoglu & Ozukcu, 2005). One of the special need populations that is at risk for social difficulties is children with visual impairments. Bandura (1986), a pioneer in the field, states that learning a new behaviour is a based on observing others, modelling and imitating observed behaviours. Students with visual impairments have limited observation skills (Raver, 1984), recognize less social reinforcements, and have limited imitation skills due to visual impairments. Students with visual impairment may display limited social skills as compare to their normal peers because of receiving limited visual cues in regard to a social context (Farkas, Sherick, Matson, & Loebig, 1981). Furthermore, these students have also lack of appropriate social skills (Harrell & Strauss, 1986). As a result, they may exposure to peer rejection and minimal peer support (McAlpine & Moore, 1995), exhibit verbal and non-verbal social skills deficits, need external support to interact with others (D'Allura, 2002), and display some isolated behaviour patterns (Buhrow,et.al.,1998)

Methodology

The present research work is conducted by taking groups of students, namely the experimental group which was treated using the joyful learning approach and the control group using the traditional learning model to determine the effect of joyful learning approach to develop social skills and achievement of elementary school visually impaired students. This research was conducted from November to December 2022. The research method used in this study is quasi-experimental design method.

In this study, the pre-test was given to the experiment class and control group. Then, the post-test as practised to the experiment students after they learn about arithmetic, different science concept and English language using a joyful learning approach. The researcher follows the joyful learning strategies like experiences, interaction, communication and reflection to teach the subject like mathematics, science and literature. The control group was given the conventional learning model. The population of this research was all preschool visually impaired students of School for the Blind, Mayurbhanj, Odisha. The sampling technique was purposive sampling technique. The primary variable of this study is the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is the joyful learning approach. The dependent variables in this study are social skills and achievement. Data collection techniques used in this study is in the form of social skills development scale for preschoolers and marks obtained in the test as achievement level of students. The scale was made with a Likert scale in the form of a checklist containing questions with closed answers about student learning motivation

Participant

The participants of this study were a total of 84 students of visual impairments The participants' ages ranged from 11 to 13 in both groups. All participants attended to elementary school schools in Baripada, the head quarters of district Mayurbhnaj Odisha. In this study, there were two research groups. The first research group consisted 42 students with visual impairments and the second research group consisted 42 students of same category. The distribution of the sample with respect o their age, gender, grade levels was shown on Table-1.

Table-1 Design of the sample

Demographic variable	Level	No of students	Percentage
Age	11	52	61.90
	12	32	38.09
Gender	Male	46	54.76
	Female	38	45.23
Grade	6th	32	38.09
	7 th	28	33.33
	8th	24	28.57

Tools

Keeping in view the nature of the problem, Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (MESSY) adapted by Sharma (2000) is used to measure the social skills of visually impaired students. An achievement test was developed by the researcher themselves and administered to measure the academic achievement of elementary school students. It contains 20 questions based on True/False, fill in the blanks, MCQ and one sentence answer of three subject Mathematics, Science and Literature.

Analysis and interpretation

Table- 1 Significance of difference in social skills between experimental and control group in pre-test

Groups	N	M	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Experimental	42	122.71	16.51	0.50	N.S.
Control	42	123.81	15.45		

Table-1 denoted that the mean scores of experimental and control group on achievement in pre-test are 122.71 and 123.66 with SDs 16.51 and 15.45. The t-ratio came out from above two groups is 0.50 which is not significant at any level of significance. That means both the groups did not differ significantly on the social skills. It implies that there is no significant difference exists between both the groups of students on social skills before the intervention program of joyful learning approach.

The mean scores of the elementary school students belonging to experimental and control group on social skills as depicted in the Table-1 is represented in the Bar Fig-1.

Figure- 1 Comparative bar graph showing mean social skills score of pre-test of Experimental and Control group students

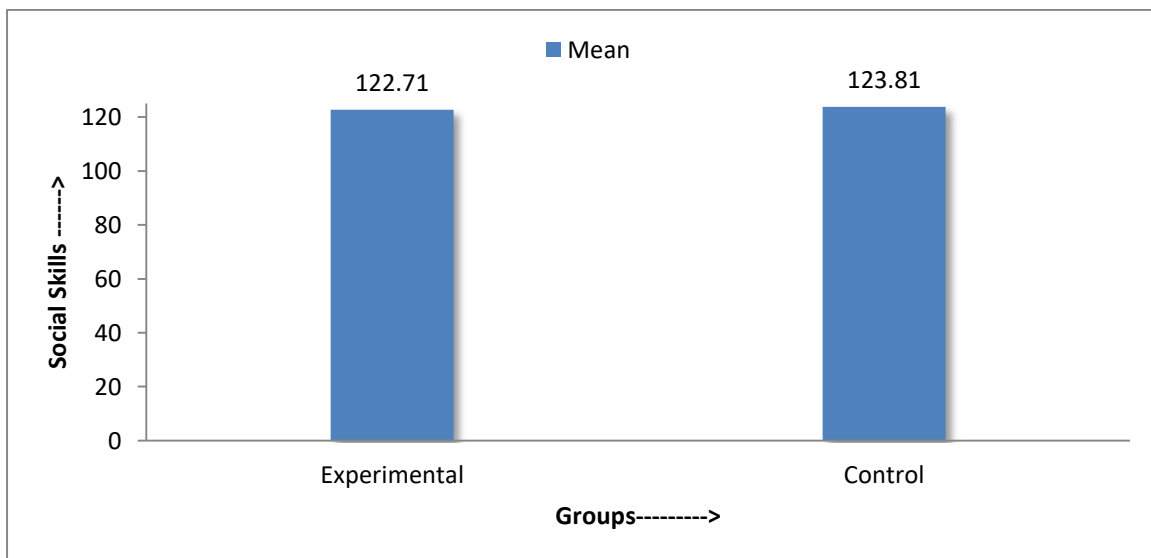
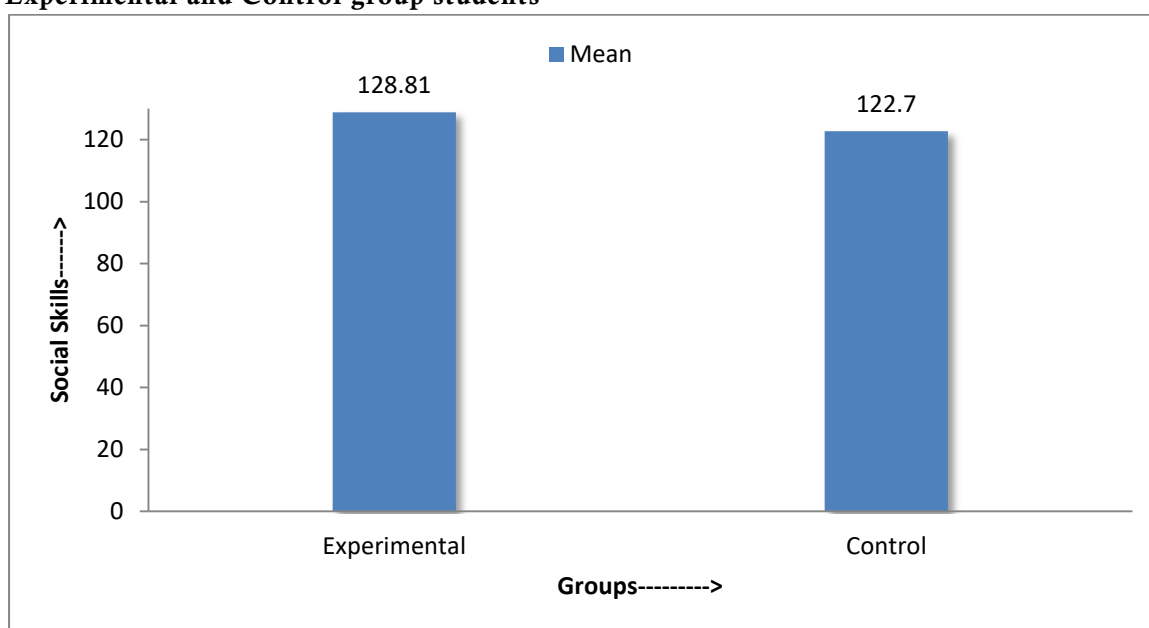


Table-2 Significance of difference in social skills between experimental and control group in post-test

Groups	N	M	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Experimental	42	128.81	16.02	2.16	.05
Control	42	122.70	15.45		

Table-2 denoted that the mean scores of experimental and control group on achievement in after treatment to experimental group are 128.81 and 122.70 with SDs 16.02 and 15.45. The t-ratio came out from above two groups is 2.16 which is significant at .05 level of significance. That means there is significant difference between experimental and control group students on achievement. The mean achievement score of Experimental group is higher than the students of control group. It shows that the students of experimental group have good social skills as compared to the students of control group. The mean scores of elementary school students of experimental and control group on achievement as depicted in the Table-2 is represented by the bar Fig.-4.

Figure-2 Comparative bar graph showing mean achievement score of post-test of Experimental and Control group students**Table-3 Significance of difference in social skills between experimental and control group in pre-test**

Groups	N	M	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Experimental	42	13.71	0.84	0.50	N.S.
Control	42	13.66	0.39		

It is revealed from the Table-3 that the students of experimental have mean score of 13.71 and students of control group have means score of 13.66 on pre-test. The t-ratio came out from above two groups is 0.52 which is not significant at any level of significance. That means both the groups did not differ significantly on the achievement. It implies that there is no significant difference exists between both the groups of students on achievement before the intervention program i.e activity base joyful learning of teaching.

The mean scores of the elementary school students belonging to experimental and control group on achievement as depicted in the Table-3 is represented in the Bar Fig-3.

Figure-3 Comparative bar graph showing mean achievement score of pre-test of Experimental and Control group students

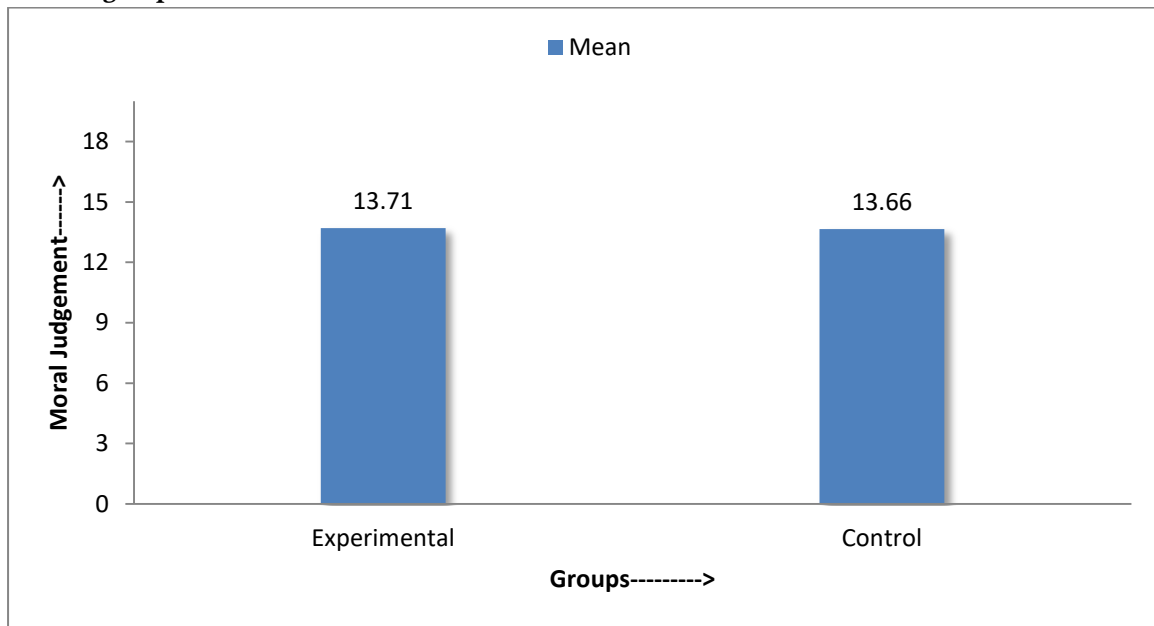


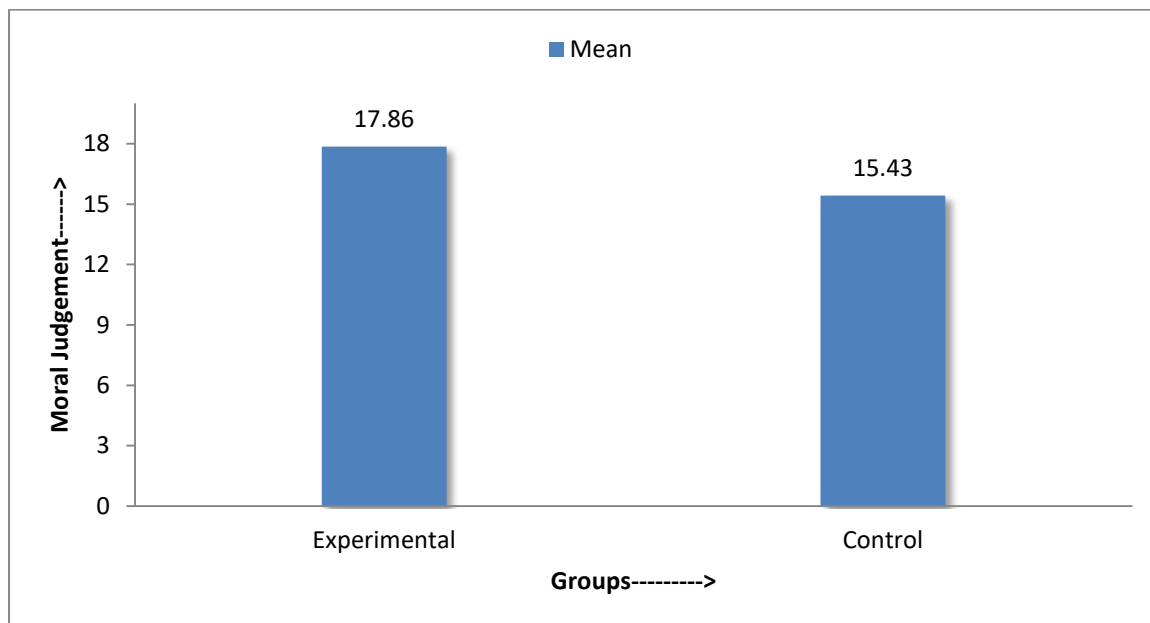
Table-4 Significance of difference in achievement between experimental and control group in post-test

Groups	N	M	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Experimental	32	17.86	1.72	2.16	.05
Control	32	15.43	1.51		

Table-4 denoted that the mean scores of experimental and control group on achievement in after treatment to experimental group are 17.86 and 15.43 with SDs 1.72 and 1.51 The t-ratio came out from above two groups is 2.16 which is significant at .05 level of significance. That means there is significant difference between experimental and control group students on achievement. The mean achievement score of Experimental group is higher than the students of control group. It shows that the students of experimental group have good achievement as compared to the students of control group. Thus, the hypothesis (H-1) that 'the activity base joyful learning of teaching has significant effect on the achievement among pre-school students' is retained.

The mean scores of elementary school students of experimental and control group on achievement as depicted in the Table-2 is represented by the bar Fig.-2.

Figure-4 Comparative bar graph showing mean achievement score of post-test of Experimental and Control group students



Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of joyful learning approach on the social skills and achievement of elementary school visually impaired students. Result of the study showed that after receiving intervention program on activity base joyful learning, the social skills and achievement developed among the students. The mean score of social skills and achievement of experimental group was statistically significantly differed from the control group. So it is suggested to the school teachers, school authority, and administrator that they should adopt good teaching strategies like activity base joyful learning to promote social skills and achievement visually impaired students. The curriculum should also be framed in such a way that it develops socially among students to fit in the society.

The teacher should perform activities like role play, stories, songs, dance, recitation, games, puzzles etc to create joyful learning in the classroom. Students should also perform the activities in front of the teachers and parents in the class to boost the confidence which promote academic achievement of visually impaired students.

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