



AN ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT OF HEARING IMPAIRED STUDENTS

Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the emotional adjustment of hearing impaired students and thus it is descriptive in nature. The universe of the study constitutes the students studying in standards X, XI, & XII, in higher secondary schools for deaf, in Tamil Nadu. A sample of 555 hearing impaired students from 8 higher secondary schools for deaf, in 6 cities of Tamil Nadu were collected and analyzed in the present study. The finding shows that of the total respondents (49.0%) of them are more emotionally adjusted and 51.0% of them are less emotionally adjusted. It was also found that age, gender, class, marital status, belief in mortality, group play preference, hobbies and interaction with teachers had a significant influence over the emotional adjustment of the school students.

KEYWORDS:

INTRODUCTION

As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, a "person with disability" means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others. The RPWD Act replaces the Persons with Disabilities ACT 1995, which was enacted 21 years back, and defines disability based on an evolving and dynamic concept. Hearing impairment is one of the 21 disabilities included in the ACT as opposed to seven in the previous ACT.

- (a) "deaf" means persons having 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;
- (b) "hard of hearing" means person having 60 DB to 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;

Due to diminished ability to hear sounds like other people do, deaf people tend to rely on visual modality to receive and communicate information. In most cases, it is the parents' choices for the communication option for deaf children, as parents prefer that their children "speak", be it with the help of hearing aids, or cochlear implant and extensive speech training, and get integrated into the society and not be excluded because of the hearing disability.

NEED FOR STUDY

A deaf child may have to attend a special school along with those who can't hear in order to develop social skills and receive proper education. Various communication methods are used in the education of deaf children, based on the severity of the hearing loss. The child's learning also varies: through the traditional auditory-oral approach, the child will be trained to use the hearing and develop expressive speech, through the auditory-verbal approach, the child is taught to listen with amplified residual hearing, process verbal language and speak. Total communication, being a philosophy, encourages a deaf child to use all modes of communication to both receive and convey messages. Sign language is the natural language of the deaf and clear communication can be possible as in any other language.

The critical period for language learning in children is 0-5 years, where a typically growing child will experience incidental learning combined with auditory and visual feedback, which is missed by a deaf child. 95% of deaf children are born into families with no history of deafness and therefore the parents do not know how to cope with this fact and are unaware of all communication options available. Therefore the deaf child experiences not just language deficiency, but other skills and knowledge acquisition as well, which affect educational goals and later the ability to lead a fulfilling life. Children with hearing impairment feel isolated and are disturbed emotionally as they receive much less input than a hearing child.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the Shaffer, L.S. "Adjustment is the process by which living organism maintain a balance between his needs and the circumstances that influence the satisfactions of these needs. In the words of Coleman, James C., "Adjustment is the outcome of the individual's attempts to deal with the stress and meet his needs: also his efforts to maintain harmonious relationships with the environment. Research by **Dilshad, Muhammad; Noreen, Zobia; Tanvir, Narjis**, aimed to measure social emotional adjustment of hearing impaired children from both primary and elementary levels in Bahawalpur Division, Pakistan. The findings revealed moderate level of social emotional adjustment among hearing impaired students. As a whole, there was no significant difference in social emotional adjustment of primary and elementary level children and in boys and girls. However, significant difference was observed in sub-scale "emotional adjustment" about male and female hearing impaired students. In their study, **L.R. Bowyer & J. Gillies**, 140 hearing impaired children were assessed for emotional adjustment by projective techniques and for social behaviour by teachers' ratings. No significant differences were found between the severely and the partially deaf. The coping of 40 partially deaf children in ordinary schools was studied in detail, with the conclusion that they were able to hold their own with hearing children when regular contact with specialist staff was maintained. **Christopher Murray and Mark T. Greenberg** (2001) studied about the relationships with teachers and bonds with school, social emotional adjustment correlates for children with and without disabilities. In their investigation, fifth- and sixth-grade children completed a measure to assess aspects of their relationships with teachers and bonds with schools. Children and teachers also completed measures related to children's social and emotional adjustment. Analyses of responses to these measures indicated that students with disabilities had greater dissatisfaction with their relationships with teachers, poorer bonds with school, and perceived higher school danger than students without disabilities. Results of correlational analyses indicated that student-teacher relationship and school bonding variables were associated with social and emotional adjustment variables for students with and without disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to analyze the emotional adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students studying in Special Schools for the Deaf, in Tamil Nadu, with the following objectives:

- (i) to study the socio demographic characteristics of Hearing Impaired Students
- (ii) to find the level of Emotional Adjustment and factors associated with Emotional Adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students
- (iii) to suggest suitable measures to enhance the emotional adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher has adopted Descriptive Research Design to know the students' profiles and the factors associated with their emotional adjustment of the students with Hearing Impairment.

Tools of Data Collection

The appropriate tool for this particular study was chosen as Meadow-Kendall Social-emotional Assessment Inventory for Deaf & Hearing Impaired students, from Gallaudet University. As the inventory was a teacher-rater questionnaire, it was modified into first person singular and was translated into Tamil, and Indian Sign Language and validated by language professionals.

Schools for Deaf, all over Tamil Nadu, were contacted through personal letters explaining the need for a study such as this, and the researcher proceeded to collect data from the schools which consented for time to be given with the students.

The questionnaire was pretested on 40 students first and tweaked and finalized thereafter. The reliability of the inventory was found to be 0.775 by using split-half method.

The questionnaire was relayed in Indian Sign Language for better understanding of the content to evoke clear responses.

Universe & Sample

Students studying in Standards X,XI, & XII, in Higher Secondary Schools for Deaf, in Tamil Nadu, that the researcher received permission to administer the questionnaire, constituted the universe of the study.

555 Hearing Impaired students from 8 Higher Secondary Schools for Deaf, in 6 cities of Tamil Nadu, namely, Coimbatore, Chennai, Ambur, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruvallur & Madurai.

Statistical Tools used for analysis

The statistical tools namely mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, chi-Square and ANOVA were used to analyze the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Respondents' Level of Emotional Adjustment

S. No:	Level of Emotional Adjustment	No: of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less Emotional Adjustment (13-37)	283	51.0
2	More Emotional Adjustment (38-65)	272	49.0
	Total	555	100.0

Each item is given a score and the median value is worked out at 38 in the above table.

The classifications, as less emotional adjustment and more emotional adjustment are done as per the key given for the Emotional Adjustment Scale. Around half of the total respondents (49.0%) of respondents are more emotionally adjusted, than the 51.0% of them who are a little less emotionally adjusted. The level differs very minimally and therefore, it can be said that majority of the respondents have a lower level of emotional adjustment.

Hearing Impairment, being an invisible disability, brings with it a mix of emotions for children. Unable to communicate feelings & frustrations via speech (as that is what is understood) by family members, feeling excluded or even ostracized by the society, unable to participate in all the activities, makes them feel like they are "silent spectators" to all that happens around them. They feel that "hearing" people take advantage of them and miscommunicate or misrepresent them, making them emotionally disturbed in many occasions.

Table 2: Factors Associated with Emotional Adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students

S.No:	Factors	Test Conducted	Result
1.	Age	ANOVA	Significant
2.	Gender	Chi-Square	Significant
3.	Class	ANOVA	Significant
4.	Marital Status of Parents	Chi-Square	Significant
5.	Birth Order	ANOVA	NS
6.	Witnessed Arguments at Home	Chi-Square	NS
7.	Siblings	Chi-Square	NS

8.	Disturbances with Siblings	Chi-Square	NS
9.	Spiritual Interest	Chi-Square	NS
10.	Belief in Morality	Chi-Square	Significant
11.	No: of friends	ANOVA	NS
12.	Group play preferences	Chi-Square	Significant
13.	Group study preferences	Unanimous	
14.	Tendency to compare	Chi-Square	NS
15.	Ridiculed / Mocked by others	Chi-Square	NS
16.	Scholastic Performance	ANOVA	NS
17.	Special Skills	ANOVA	NS
18.	Hobbies	ANOVA	Significant
19.	Interaction with Teachers	ANOVA	Significant

Factors that are associated with Emotional Adjustment of Hearing Impaired Students are :

Age : Respondents aged between 18 and 23 years, are emotionally better adjusted. The younger the respondents, the more difficult the emotional adjustment, given their understanding and maturity. With age, the understanding of situations around increases and therefore the emotional adjustment.

Gender : The respondents of the female gender seemed to have more emotional adjustment than the male gender. The female gender, in India, are taught to be flexible and more adaptable in their families, as they have to leave the parents' place to be with their husbands after marriage and hence adjust better during emotional circumstances.

Class in which the Hearing Impaired students are studying: The respondents who study in Class XII showed more emotional adjustment as they are more mature and understand life better than the respondents in Class X.

Respondents' Parents' marital status: The respondents from families where the parents are separated, exhibit more emotional adjustment and the respondents in families where the parents are divorced show less emotional adjustment. Though the parents may have been separated, the children get to meet them and spend time on various occasions and hence that contributes to the children's adjustments during emotions. Whereas when parents are divorced, it is turbulent for the children and there is certain amount of insecurity and turmoil that accompanies such situations, hence resulting in less emotional adjustment.

According to **Manfred Hintermair (2006)**, deaf children of highly stressed parents were found to have emotional problems such as (frequent temper tantrums, lying, stealing, less obedient, often fights with other children, etc.), hyperactive behavior (restless, constantly fidgeting or squirming, cannot stay still for long, easily distracted, concentration wanders, acts on impulse, etc.).

Students' belief in morality : The respondents who did not believe in morality showed more emotional adjustment than the ones that did believe in moral principles.

Since the respondents have faced difficulties from earlier age on, they seemed to be depending on their own emotions rather than basing their feelings upon intangible principles, incomprehensible concepts such as being honest, respect for others, responsibility for personal actions and condition themselves to take things as they come and adjust accordingly without having a surge of feelings and therefore are able to have better emotional adjustment. Those who depend on moral principles adjust poorly during emotional upheavals as they are not able to comprehend the depth of these principles and cannot have these ideas and principles explained in detail by others because of their impairment.

Preferences to study: The students were unanimous in their preference to study in groups, as they have a shared language and identity.

Group play preferences : The respondents who are solitary players choose to be on their own and they do better also being on their own and emotionally adjust better without letting others know about their emotional status. Whereas the ones who preferred being in groups and playing together with others, bond more with others and build friendships, making it a little difficult to handle during emotional

upeavals, as there are many others' emotions also involved at the same time, besides their own.

Hobbies : Hearing Impaired students who are engaged in playing and carpentry, showed more emotional adjustment as these hobbies are done one-on-one, and do not involve the participation of others, thereby paving the way for their own emotional adjustment.

Interaction with teachers: Every social being has a need for communication, and every individual needs an outlet. This is also true with the Hearing Disabled. Those who communicate with their teachers, are able to talk/sign, discuss, express feelings, share thoughts, and hence are able to receive the guidance and help they need to cope with various emotions and therefore show better adjustments. Those that hide in their own thoughts or feelings and do not seek an outlet certainly cannot cope during emotions.

MAJOR FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Some of the demographic characteristics of Hearing Impaired Students are highlighted as follows:

- Majority of the Hearing Impaired students (**80.2%**) are aged about 19 years.
- Boys constitute more percentage of respondents (**70.5%**).
- Most of the students (**72.3%**) are studying in Class XI & Class XII.
- Most of the respondents' (**89%**) parents live together.
- Almost an equal percentage of respondents (**35.9%**) are first born compared to those born second.
- Almost Three quarters of the respondents (**74.6%**) witness arguments/fights between parents.
- Majority of respondents (**95.7%**) are interested in spiritual matters.
- A little over Three Quarters of Respondents (**79.8%**) believe in morality.
- An overwhelming majority of Respondents (**95.9%**) prefer group play to solitary play.
- The Respondents were unanimous in their group study preferences.
- Over half of the respondents (**68.8%**) state that they tend to compare themselves with Hearing people.
- A little less than three quarters of the respondents (**72.8%**) state that they get ridiculed / mocked for their hearing disability.
- Majority of respondents (**82.2%**) are average performers in academics.
- Sports are special skills for over Three fourths of respondents (**76.8%**).
- Playing is the main hobby for majority of respondents (**63.8%**).
- Almost half of the respondents (**49.4%**) maintain a satisfactory level of interaction with teachers.

SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSIONS

As it is very clear from the study that majority of the students in Deaf schools are less emotionally adjusted, social work interventions play a major role in enhancing the emotional adjustment of Hearing Impaired students. *In order for the Hearing Impaired students to be understood well, their language, which is Sign language, should be promoted and made a requisite to be used by teachers and parents, to listen to them, to communicate freely and bond with them, to assist, mentor, and guide them. *Regular Counselling Sessions should be held for the students in school to address issues and to assist them to overcome emotional disturbances. Signing social workers and teachers are the need of the hour. Thus, the study concludes that a less emotional adjustment was found among the respondents and age, gender, class, marital status, belief in mortality, group play preference, hobbies and interaction with teachers had a significant influence over the emotional adjustment of the school students.

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