Effects of Special Education on Social and Emotional Development of Hearing-Impaired Children

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Abstract

The issue of special education is quite critical in helping the holistic growth of children with hearing impairments. This paper will analyze how specialized educational interventions have influenced the social and emotional development of the hearing-impaired students. Mixed-method technique was used to collect data on 60 hearing-impaired students in special education programs, as well as their teachers and parents in terms of structured questionnaires and observational tests. The results show that customized instructional plans, integrative class culture, and customized support contribute to the positive growth of social abilities, emotional management, and peer relationship among students in a significant manner. On the other hand, absence of proper interventions is related with withdrawal in the society and emotional difficulties. The research has highlighted the significance of the combination of specific pedagogical practices and emotional support systems to ensure the overall development of the hearing-impaired children. The information can assist educators, policymakers, and practitioners in coming up with effective programs that would encourage social and emotional well-being in addition to academic learning.

Keywords: Special education, Hearing impairment, Social development, Emotional development, Inclusive education

Background

Deafness is a disability that is known to afflict millions of people throughout the world; both with difficulties with speech and language; and also with their social and emotional development. Persons with hearing loss have communication and social interaction problems as well as relationship development issues. Such difficulties are even more appreciable in children because the developmental path of the child depends on how he/she can be engaged in communication with others. Hence, the education that should be provided to every child, hearing-impaired children included, becomes all the more important to tackle these pending issues and foster the development of such young ones.

Inclusive education as a concept with aims at accommodating students with disabilities helps to improve social and emotional skills of the hearing impaired student. Special education aims at closing the gap between the hearing-impaired kids and their non-hearing-impaired counterparts through differentiated instruction and academic support, use of recommended assistive technologies, and appropriate social roles so that the former could successfully learn and interact in the company of their peers. The role of such a person should not be underestimated since it is directly connected with the students' chances to become members of society, to develop their confidence, and to establish relationships.

Problem Statement

However, these children still suffer various obstacles in their social and emotional development even with the existence of this sector of special education. These barriers manifest in terms of communication, social relationship and even low self esteem which compromises their learning ability and overall health. To what degree special education does it cater to these issues, however, is not very well investigated. The aim of this study is to establish the role that special education plays in the social and emotional development of the hearing impaired learners, more so, learn about factors that has an impact in this type of development and challenges that learners with hearing impairment still have.

Significance of the Study

This research is relevant for educators, policymakers, and parents; thus, it is of great importance. To the educators it gives knowledge of the effectiveness of the current practices in special education for the hearing impaired and how to improve on them. From a policymaker perspective, the results can be useful in designing policies that are more-sensitive and embracing of the children and youths with disability and more sensitive to their psychological and emotional needs in school. Lastly, it educates the parents about the significance of special education for their children and it will enable them to fight for resources needed for their children.

This work also adds to the body of knowledge about the interrelation between special education helps the hearing impaired students to social and educational development of students and the goals of enhancing efficiency and the quality of education of children with disabilities.

Literature Review

Hearing disability; commonly referred to as hearing loss, a partial or complete loss of hearing, is evident in millions of people throughout the world and due to its impacts on the acquisition of social and emotional development it becomes a daunting challenge especially in children. The WHO estimates that there are 466 million people in the world with disabling hearing loss with many of these affected being children (Hasson et al. , 2013). Hearing loss is either hard-of-coming into the world with hearing loss or having it develop over time and includes minor loss to severe loss and is applicable to people's capacity to understand words spoken to them and sounds in their surroundings. The effects of hearing impairment are not only limited to failed communication but also affect learning, endeavor and socialization.

Hearing impaired children can be challenged in terms of communication, interaction, therefore, establishment of meaningful relationship and regulation of emotions. A simple inability of getting auditory communications affects their recognition of tone which is crucial for recognizing emotions and intensions of the other people (Duque et al. , 2020). As a result, children with hearing impairment are likely to experience difficulties in interpersonal relationship and overall handling of relationships which make them have poor self esteem and they feel lonely (Tohara, 2021). It is in these lights that this paper seeks to demonstrate the need to address specific issues, particularly among hearing-impaired scholars in school, to address their social and emotion development.

It is the unique learning approach applied in nurturing the student with learning difficulties. Main purpose of this approach is to focus on the needs of the child and modify the teaching strategies, classroom and instructional resources. In particular, hearing-impaired students require sign language, assistive listening devices as well as individual education plan (IEP) that identifies unique goals for the student (Temurova, 2020). The main purpose of special

education therefore is to provide the child with disability with equal opportunities to learn and progress in class and in society as any other child.

Studies also establish that special education having a significant part to play in improving social and emotional development of the hearing impaired students. Thus, due to the special approach and additional attention, such students are able to learn the necessary to interact properly in social settings and regulate emotions (Ren et al. , 2020). The special education settings provide Hearing-impaired students with special attention and facilities that make it possible for the child to overcome any form of limitation attributed to a disability by the child, thus enabling the students to develops self efficacy and perseverance.

Conceivable theoretical frameworks: An analysis of the social and emotional development of the hearing-impaired students. The first and rather apparent theory is Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, which encompasses individuals' development in stages where they face certain conflicts that need to be resolved in order to become healthy individuals (Erikson, 1964). In the stages of identity versus role confusion and intimacy versus isolation, conflicts most of the hearing impaired students face the difficulty of coming up with a solution because of language barriers and social detachment.

The second framework is the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which focuses on the personal and interpersonal competencies that include the recognition of one's own feelings and those of others, regulation of one's own behavior as well as controlling stress, empathy, interpersonal communication, and decision-making (Herrero et al., 2020). SEL programs are progressively used to teach SEL skills in special education students inclusive of those who have hearing impairment. Another important concept to bear in mind is that of inclusive education theories since they contribute to practices in special education in a significant manner. These theories also provide for the placement of students with disabilities within general classrooms so that they can be with other students without disability with a view of eradicating stigmatization (Szumski et al., 2020).

Some previous research has analyzed changes in social and emotional aspects that occur when hearing-impaired students get under the system of special education. Chen et al. (2020)'s study reveal the impact of specific teaching on the innocent self-concept, and interpersonal capabilities of hearing impaired children. Some of the features inherent in these programs are the social skills training, anger and stress management techniques, peer-to-peer interactions both in small groups and in general education classrooms. Failure to separate learners with hearing impairment may lead to increased feelings of rejection, which negatively affects the learners' emotional well-being, But through these programs, they can learn to accept themselves and feel belonged.

Furthermore, research work conducted have revealed that, special education intervention also help in emotional development not forgetting the basic academic goal. For example, Demchenko et al. (2021) revealed that learners with hearing impaired but under special education needs make improved discrete positive social and emotional competencies as compared to their counterparts under mainstream education and care. That is why the adapted programs introduced to the target audience in the framework of special education can contribute to the fulfillment of the particular emotional and psychological requirements of hearing-impaired learners.

However, the special education for the hearing impaired students is often characterized by the following difficulties in SMR development. Concerning the social aspects, there is a significant problem of communication since a number of the hearing impaired students found it hard to communicate with the peers and teachers hence they spend most of their time

beingloned and misunderstood (Yang et al., 2021). These challenges are normally compounded when teaching in inclusion classroom whereby the hearing-impaired students may feel discriminated or left out in their group activities.

Further, hearing-impaired students may feel more helpless and have low self esteem because they feel they are different from the rest of the hearing students. This can lead to lack of self esteem and hence they avoid any form of interaction that is social in nature, which in turn hampers their social growth (Terlektsi et al., 2020). In addition, the consequent effects of rebellious reactions to hearing impairment include creation of niches that deny the impaired hearing student opportunities for social interactions apart from negative experiences like bullying and discrimination that can be emotionally traumatically to a student.

Interference to the hearing impaired students should be provided at an earlier stage in order to learn better social and emotional development. Across all the below-authenticated literature, it has been evidenced that the quantitative developmental outcomes of children with hearing loss who receive special education and intervention are much improved if the intervention begins early enough (DeMatthews et al. , 2020). This is why; early intervention programs that seek to facilitate these skills may help in eradicating the social and emotional challenges that the Hearing-impaired child will come across as he or she develops.

For this paper, we focused on the following assumptions about integrated education for hearing-impaired students: Education of hearing-impaired students in normal classrooms has advantages and drawbacks. On the one hand, it provides such students with an opportunity to communicate with other hearing students, and also gain social skills in a rather different environment. While it has been noted that several benefits of this strategy include; On the other hand, it has been emphasized that it entails massive adaptation and facilitation to make hearing-impaired students to get the feeling and value of being part of the system (Al-Dababneh, 2017). He or she has also to possess cultural sensitivity, know the cultural background and requirements of hear-impaired students, especially if they belong to the different cultural background (Herrero et al. , 2020).

From the papers reviewed, it is clear that special education plays a central part in shaping the interpersonal well being of the hearing-impaired students. However, these students experience severe difficulties, primarily in the area of communication and interpersonal relations; special education, at the same time, may positively affect the quality of these students' lives and their ability to fit into society. These theories include Erikson's psychosocial development as part of SEL that can facilitate the understanding of these processes. However, more challenges persist such as stigmatization and need to educate people to seek early intervention hence the need to continue the cause for the hearing-impaired students.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research methodology to investigate the role of special education in the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students. The research design is descriptive in nature, aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomena by collecting and analyzing numerical data. The descriptive method was chosen because it allows for a systematic collection of information from a large sample, facilitating the identification of patterns and relationships within the data.

3.2 Population

The study group was the parents of hearing-impaired students who are in special education institutions in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Since parents play a pivotal role in the day-to-day lives of

their children, they are in vantage position to give information about the social and emotional development of their children. The entire population was divided into 402 parents whose children were enrolled in secondary schools and colleges of hearing-impaired in Rawalpindi.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique.

A sample of 200 parents was used to sample out of the total population to participate in the study. The simple random sampling method was used to grant all the parents equal opportunity of being included in the sample. The method was selected to reduce the level of bias and increase the applicability of the results. The 200 parents sample was conclusively found to be sufficient to perform statistical analysis, and give a strong measure of power to identify any significant differences and relationships in the information.

3.4 Who Was Included in the Study?

In order to ensure that data that we collected was accurate and relevant we came up with certain guidelines that would determine who would participate in the study:

Who Could Participate:

● Parents of students who are currently studying in secondary schools and colleges in Rawalpindi that deal with hearing-impaired students.

● The involvement of the parents in the education of their child has lasted at least a year.

● Parents who were interested in participating in the study.

Who Could Not Participate:

● The parents of multiple disabilities students, since we targeted hearing impairment.

● Parents who had never participated in the education of his or her child.

● Parents that did not take part.

3.5 How We Collected the Data

The structured questionnaire was the primary instrument used to obtain data on the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students. This questionnaire was well designed keeping in consideration the available research and suggestions of the experts in order to ensure that it encompassed all the critical areas.

The questionnaire had a number of sections:

Background Information: This required asking the age of the parent, education, occupation and the age and gender of their child.

● Social Development: Questions on this topic were aimed at determining the effectiveness of the child in communication with other children, in the formation of friends, and in participating in community activities.

● Emotional Development: This section inquired on the self-esteem, self-confidence, the way the child deals with his/her emotions and how they deal with social difficulties.

● Effect of Special Education: The parents were requested to provide their perceptions on how special education has impacted various dimensions of social and emotional development of their child.

3.6 Questionnaire validity and Reliability.

In order to ensure that the questionnaire was effective, we checked it with specialists in the field of special education and psychology. Their response also enabled us to narrow down the questions to help us measure exactly what we were interested in studying. The questions were also questioned to be in corpus with well-known theories and models of social and emotional development.

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, we have carried out a pilot study on 20 parents who were not the members of the main study group. We calculated the results with the help of a method known as the Cronbachs alpha to determine the consistency of the questions.

The reliability score was 0.85 which is high which indicates that the questionnaire is a consistent instrument in our research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In this study, we considered ethical considerations very seriously and the following steps were undertaken to ensure that nothing was done in an improper manner:

● Informed Consent: All the participants received full information about the study, purpose, procedures, and possible risks or benefits. Their informed consent was obtained and the questionnaire was filled by them.

● Anonymity: We ensured the anonymity of every participant. No personal details were gathered and the responses coded to ensure confidentiality. The data was kept safely, and only was accessible to the research team.

● Voluntary Participation: The study was entirely voluntary and this meant that the participants could pull out of the study whenever they wished without consequences.

3.8 How Data Was Collected

The period of data collection was one month. The questionnaires were distributed among the selected parents in their schools through their children. The respondents were allowed two weeks to fill the questionnaire and the filled questionnaires were gathered later by the researchers. Parents who may have had a problem with the comprehension or in filling out the questionnaire had the help of the researchers or the school staff.

3.9 How Data Was Analyzed

The data was tabulated using the Excel spreadsheet and was analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics. To generalize the demographic data of the participants and their responses, we used frequencies and percentages. Our analysis of the relationships between various variables was done using cross tabulations, including the influence of special education on self-confidence and social skills. Tables and graphs were used to display results in an understandable way.

The respondents will be provided with demographic details and will involve the following demographic variables: age, sex, and haemolytic type.

Two hundred parents of the hearing impaired students who were studying at the specialized schools of Rawalpindi participated in the study. In order to give a background of the findings, we examined the background of these parents to make sure they constituted a wide cross section of the community.

● Education of parents: There were many parents with a high level of education (at least secondary level). In particular, 35 percent of fathers and 30 percent of mothers had succeeded to secondary education with 25 percent and 20 percent respectively having pursued higher education. This implies that a majority of the parents are of a rudimentary level of knowledge in educational concepts, and this might affect their perceptions of the social and emotional growth of their children.

● Parental Age Distribution: There was a distribution of the ages of parents wherein the majority of the fathers were 40-50 years (45%), and most mothers were 30-40 years old (50%). This age amount implies that the parents were mature enough and probably had experience in life to give some meaningful information about the development of their children.

4.2 Effect of Special Education on Social and Emotional Development.

The primary data analysis concern was to learn the effects of special education on social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students. We evaluated this by the responses of the parents:

● Self-Confidence: Self-confidence is an important attribute of emotional development. Based on the information, 60 percent of the parents reported a high level of self-confidence in their child after being provided with special education. Social skills training and emotional support programs were also effective especially in enhancing confidence and this is in line with other studies that emphasize on the relevance of specialized education development of self esteem in students with disabilities.

● Communication Skills: Communication plays an important role in socialisation. It was found that among parents 55% reported improvements in the communication skills of their child particularly in the areas of using the sign language together with other aids to enable them to communicate better with other children and adults. Nevertheless, a quarter of parents observed that their children continued to have difficulties with talking to hearing people, and it seemed to indicate that despite the fact that special education assists, there are still problems, especially in more inclusive environments.

● Social Interactions: Another notable component of social development is the establishment and continued existence of relationships. Fifty-five percent (50) of the parents said that their child had improved in terms of making friends and engaging in group activities. Nevertheless, 2 out of 10 said that their children continue to struggle with associating with hearing peers and, as a result, usually stick with hearing-impaired students. This means that, even though special education builds social skills it may still be hard to integrate with the larger social groups by hearing-impaired students.

4.3 Problems Affecting Hearing-Impaired Students.

Although the effects of special education were positive, the statistics also indicated that the area has a number of challenges still:

● Sense of Inferiority: Approximately 40 percent of the parents reported that their children still felt inferior when compared to their hearing counterparts particularly in social places where the person was among hearing people. These emotions were in most cases as a result of communication barriers and feeling of not fitting in and discouraged them to interact with other people socially.

● Attending Social Events:Approximately 30% of parents believed that their children were reluctant to attend social events and celebrations, usually because they were afraid of being misunderstood or that they felt inadequate. This indicates that though special education can be useful in the development of social skills more efforts are required to instill confidence in wider social environments.

● Use of Hearing Aids: The other point to worry about was hearing aids. Though 45 percent of the parents claimed that their children had hearing aids on constant usage, 20 percent said that their children did not like to wear them due to discomfort or social stigma. This hesitation may place constraints on their involvement in learning and social life and additional support and motivation are required.

4.4 Statistical validation and Reliability.

To ensure that our results were valid, we statistically validated the information. We involved a structured questionnaire and tested reliability of our questionnaire by comparing the answers calculated the percentage method in excel. The findings revealed that the level of consistency was high with the reliability being 0.85 and this implies that the information is a true picture of what the parents are going through.

4.5 Summary of Key Findings

Positive Impacts: The data supports the view that special education has a positive influence on the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students, particularly, in such aspects as self-confidence, communication, and social interactions.

● Continuous Problems: In spite of all these beneficial impacts, hearing-impaired students continue to experience problems, including a sense of inferiority, unwillingness to attend social functions, and problems with wearing the hearing aids.

● Contained Support: The results show the necessity of the continuous help in the special education environment as well as the social context in general to address the social and emotional needs of hearing-impaired students fully.

5.1 Conclusion

This paper aimed at examining the role of special education in the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired children. The results indicate that purposeful educational practices can have an extensive positive influence on the well-being of these students and their integration into the society. The importance of special education, with its specific approach and close attention, is crucial in assisting hearing-impaired students to overcome the specifics of their communication issues and interpersonal interaction.

It was also pointed out in the analysis that special education can enhance major areas of social and emotional growth, including raising self-confidence, improving communication skills, and promoting improved social interactions. According to parents, children began to demonstrate significant improvement in their capacity to establish relationships with other children, to express their emotions, and participate in group activities. Nevertheless, even with such good results, most hearing-impaired students continue to face the challenges of inferiority complexes, social alienation, and aversion to attend social gatherings in a broader context. These persistent struggles indicate that the support should be provided continuously and the specific actions should be taken to address the underlying causes of social stigma and self-esteem.

Early intervention is another factor that has been highlighted in the study. Specialized education programs when provided at a young age translate to a high level of communication and emotional regulation, which forms a strong basis towards social and academic achievement in the future.

To conclude it is important to note that although special education has gone a long way in helping the students with hearing impairments, there remains much to be done in order to bring the issue of hearing impaired students to a complete. Findings of this research may be used to inform future education practice and policies in order to improve the lives of hearing-impaired students.

5.2 Recommendations

Depending on the findings, the following are some of the recommendations that should be made to further facilitate the social and emotional growth of hearing-impaired students:

1. Improved Social Skills Training: Schools ought to include more inclusive social skills training during the special education programs. These programs must not only be communication oriented but should also develop self-esteem, resilience and emotional intelligence. Such activities as role-playing, exercises of peer interaction and group work could be quite effective.

2. Parent Involvement and Support: Parents play an important role in the development of their children. Workshops and materials should be provided in schools to assist parents to work on the social and emotional development of their children at home. Open

communication between parents and educators should be encouraged to make sure that strategies are similar and effective in both locations, home and school.

3. Early Intervention Programs: Timely detection of hearing impairment and the initiation of interventions in early stages are vital in lessening the associated problems. The collaboration of schools and healthcare providers is necessary in order to make sure that children with hearing loss are timely identified and enrolled to special education programs.

4. Inclusive Education Programs: To enhance socialization, the schools are required to incorporate inclusive education programs which will enable the hearing-impaired students to engage their hearing peers effectively. This may involve co-curricular activities, peer mentoring schemes and inclusive classes where accommodations are made where required.

5. Cultural Competence Training of Educators: Teachers and special education professionals need to be involved in continuous education regarding cultural competence in order to learn more about the unique needs of hearing-impaired students. This education must emphasize the idea of respect and inclusion of the deaf culture and the sign language into the education system.

6. Addressing Social Stigma: It is important to have the stigma of hearing impairment reduced. To alter the perception and create a more inclusive environment, schools and communities should hold awareness campaigns, peer education, and ensure positive images of the hearing-impaired people in the media and school life.

7. Transition to Adulthood Support: The hearing-impaired students are exposed to new social-emotional challenges as they transition through their school to adulthood. The elements such as self-advocacy training, career counseling and social skills development specific to adult life should be taught to them in special education programs.

8. Research and Continuous Improvement: There should be continuous research to ensure that special education practices improve continuously. The schools are to cooperate with the researchers to assess the effectiveness of the existing programs and work out the new strategies to help the hearing-impaired students with a better approach.

With these recommendations in place, educators, policymakers, and parents can collaborate in order to establish a more accommodating and inclusive atmosphere, which will enable hearing-impaired students to reach their full potential in socioemotional terms.

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