



Effects of Personal Worries and Religion on the Academic Achievement of Students with Hearing Impairment in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

This whole work was carried out by the author MOA.

Short Research Article

Received 13th March 2014

Accepted 17th July 2014

Published 23rd July 2014

ABSTRACT

Abstract: This study investigated the effect of personal worries and religion on the academic achievement among students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Forty three students with hearing impairment participated in the study. Three (3) research questions were answered in the study. The average student's academic record were used to determine the academic strength of each student with hearing impairment and a Personal worries scale developed by the researcher were also used for data collection. Data generated was analysed using descriptive statistics of bar chart as well as inferential statistics of t-test. The finding revealed that academic worries top the list of worries and religion has no significant effect on academic achievement of students with hearing impairment. The study recommends that both the home and school environment should be made conducive in order to improve their academic strength and quality of life of students with hearing impairment.

Keywords: Personal worries; religion; academic achievement; hearing impairment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The sense of hearing is an invaluable and vital aspect of our daily experience. It is the most important sense for the acquisition of language. When hearing is defective, it poses threat to children because it is crucial. Hearing impairment is a serious setback which revolves around the development of communication skills. Communication difficulties are major impediment when children with hearing impairment participate in regular classroom programme [1,2,3]. Hearing impairment is a generic term that includes the deaf and hard-of-hearing with hearing loss ranging from mild to profound, encompassing children who are deaf and those who are hard of hearing. When used by educators, the term "hearing impairment" indicates an auditory disability for which special services are needed. According to [4] hearing impairment is a condition that revolves around vocabulary development and communication difficulties giving rise to inability to respond to auditory-verbal stimulus.

Compared to other types of disability, it is a silent disability that predispose individual to social and academic challenges. Unlike the situation of their counterparts who hear, the condition is occasioned by limitation and worries in language and writing dexterity for both parents and professionals working with students who have hearing impairment both within and outside the classroom. Its effects is quite diverse and complex due to the multitudinous ways in which families, societies, and cultures, react to and interact with children who are born deaf and hence do not spontaneously learn to talk and comprehend speech. Traumatically or organically, hearing impairment is often accompanied by learning disability or other cognitive deficit that can lead to or predispose an individual to behavioural problems. Children with hearing impairment are often vulnerable to behavioural and emotional problems which adversely impact their interpersonal relationship, cognitive development and school achievement while limited communication experienced by the individual who is deaf/hard of hearing may lead to distortions in social and psychological developments as well as in emotional and behavioural related difficulties with the 'hearing' society [5,3].

These are problems such as internalizing behaviours like isolation, depression, anxiety and/or externalizing behavior such as aggression, hyperactivity and/or delinquency. [6] stated that worrying can impair a child's academic progress as well as cause problems in social and emotional adjustment. Frequent worrying disrupts effective learning by interfering with the individual's ability to concentrate appropriately on learning tasks [7,8] while [9] observed that intense worrying can also cause emotional stress, sleep disturbance, depression, psychosomatic illnesses, and absenteeism. [9] a study in the US involved children in Grades 2 to 6 who were discovered to be most worried most about health related matters (operations, medical treatment, getting sick, the health of family members), school issues (tests and grades, being called on to perform), and the possibility of personal harm (being physically attacked and hurt by others). Studies of [10,11] have identified school examinations, workload, and homework as the principal causes of worry, contributing significantly to students' stress levels.

Over the past decade, considerable research has emerged that demonstrates the benefits of religious practice within society [12,13,14,15]. Religious practice promotes the well-being of individuals, families, and the community. In addition, religious practice leads to an increase in physical and mental health, longevity, and education attainment [15]. Religion has long been considered an important force in shaping social life [12]. While the consequences of religion for morality and social organization have been the subject of much in the historical record, the effects of religion on personal health and wellbeing have more recently received

considerable attention. [13] identified mechanisms for such positive effects in (1) health behaviors (2) social cohesiveness -religiosity activates a social network for coping and support; and (3) coherence. According to [15] religious practice promotes the well-being of individuals with or without disabilities, families, and the community as a whole. Academic expectations, the level of education attained, school attendance, and academic performance are all positively affected by religious practice. In a study conducted by [14] educational attainment aspirations, math and reading scores correlated positively with more frequent religious practice.

Studies have shown that students in religiously affiliated schools tend to exhibit a higher level of academic achievement than their peers in secular schools, particularly in low income urban neighborhoods. [15] found religious attendance to serve as a protective mechanism in high-risk communities in a way that it does not in low-risk ones, stimulating educational resilience in the lives of at-risk youth. According to [15] more frequent attendance at religious services predicts less distress, even when controlling for the normal socio-demographic predictors of this condition. Irrespective of religion, children with hearing impairment have experienced much emotional trauma due to their inability to respond to auditory verbal stimulus which result poor academic outcome as well as impaired interpersonal relationship with families and peers. However, little or no research has been conducted to assess the impact of personal worries as well as religion on the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment. Therefore, this study will investigate the relationships that exist between personal worries, religion and academic achievement of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ Is there any difference in the worries of high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment?
- ❖ Is there any significant difference in the worries of students with hearing impairment based on religion?
- ❖ Is there any significant difference in the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion?

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study was a survey research method. It was directed at investigating the relationship that exists between personal worries, religion and academic achievement of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo state.

3.1 Participants

The study employed a multistage sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Andrew Foster College, Ibadan, Oyo State. Andrew Foster College is a school for students with hearing impairment where the American Sign Language and Total Communication are used as a means of communication within the school. A random sampling technique was used to select forty three students with hearing impairment in the senior secondary school 1 and 2. The study involved 29 (67.4%) male and 14 (32.6%) female students with hearing impairment who were further classified based on their past academic records which was obtained from the school management. The participants were further stratified into 20 (46.5%) high achieving and 23 (53.5%) low achieving students with hearing impairment.

4. INSTRUMENTATION

4.1 Student's Academic Records

The researchers made use of the first and second term academic results (a teacher made test) in both Mathematics and English Language of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo State. The average scores in teacher made test in Mathematics and English Language over a period of two academic terms (a term equals 13 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of summative evaluation in the Nigeria secondary educational system) were determined to know the academic strength of each student in percentage. The average score of 50% were used to determine the low achievers (<50%) and high achievers (>50%) in their academic records in the last two academic terms.

4.2 Personal Worries Scale

This scale is self-developed structured questionnaires which ask some psychological questions from the participant on some issue relating to academic worries, social worries and health worries of students with hearing impairment. From the above descriptions, the researchers developed a concise research instrument tagged *Personal Worries Scale (PWS)* which is divided into sections A and B to determine the influence of personal worries on the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment in school. Section A of the "PWS" seek to find information on some demographic characteristic of the participants while the Section B consist of three parts which are questions that queries academic worries (10 items), social worries (9 items) and health worries (5 items) (See Appendix 1). The reliability of the research instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the Personal Worries Scale (PSW) was pre-tested among some students with hearing loss in an integrated school in Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria. The research instrument; Personal Worries Scale (PSW) was found to be reliable at $\alpha = .64$.

5. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics involving frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics involving t- tests was used to analyze the data collected.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research question 1: Is there any difference in the worries of high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment?

Fig. 1 showed that there is little or no difference in the worries of high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment. The chart revealed that 49% of the study participants who falls under the low achieving category worry about their academics compared to 51% of the study participant who falls under the high achieving category. However, 51% of participants (low achieving students with hearing impairment) worry about their social life compared to 49% of the participants (high achieving students with hearing impairment) who do not have much worries about their social life. In terms of health worries, the study revealed that 48% of the participants (low achievers) worry more about their health while 52% of high achieving students who worry about their health.

Research question 2: Is there any significant difference in the worries of students with hearing impairment based on religion?

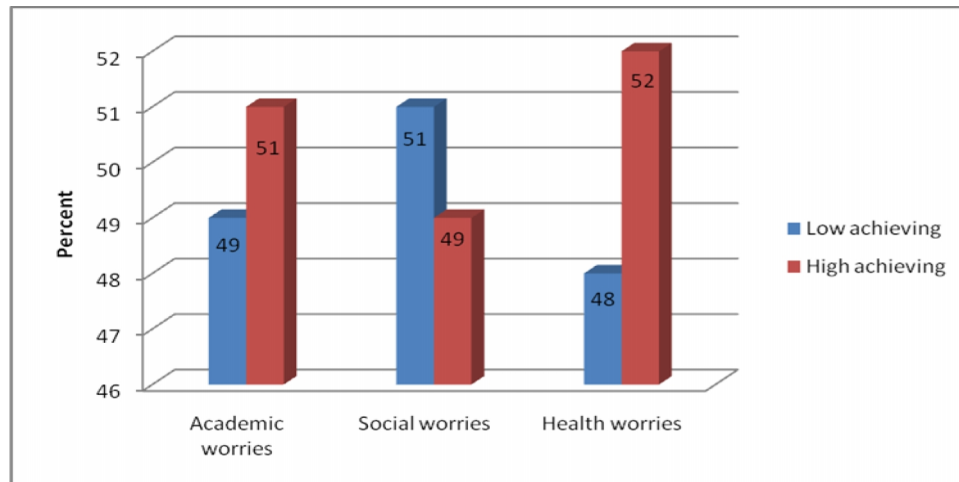


Fig. 1. Graphical representation of differences in worries among high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment

Table 1 revealed that there is no significant difference between Christian and Islamic students on worries (t-value= -0.82 and $p > 0.05$).

Research question 3: Is there any significant difference in the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion?

Table 1. T-test summary showing difference in worries of students with hearing impairment based on religion

Religion	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	P	Sig
Christianity	31	22.6	5.91				
Islam	12	24.1	4.65	41	-0.82	0.4	NS

NS- Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 revealed that there is no significant difference on the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion (t-value= -1.335 and $p > 0.05$).

Table 2. T-test summary showing difference academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion

Religion	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	P	Sig
Christianity	31	57.6	10.91				
Islam	12	62.1	6.48	41	-0.82	0.4	NS

NS- Not Significant at 0.05 level

7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Research question one states that 'is there any difference in the worries of high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment?' The study revealed that there is little

or no differences in worries of high achieving and low achieving students with hearing impairment both in academics, social life and in health issues. This finding corroborate the report of [16,5,17] who all noted that hearing loss affects an individuals' cognitive abilities, interpersonal relationships and school achievement. Similarly, the finding of this study lend support to [6,8,9] who stated that worry can impair child's academic progress and cause emotional stress.

Research question two states that 'is there any significant difference in the worries of students with hearing impairment based on religion?'. The study found out that there is no significant difference in the worries of students with hearing impairment based on religion. In other words, irrespective of religious affiliation, worries of students with hearing impairment are still the same. The result corroborates the finding of [6,3] that children with hearing impairment have limited access to incidental learning, a partial understanding of what is happening in the social environment, a difficulty in initiating and maintaining relationship with others. [15] also indicated that religious organizations have influence over their followers and provide potential access to the underserved at-risk populations for increasing awareness, encouraging health services utilization. However, the finding of this study negates the report of [15] who found that religious attendance serves as a protective mechanism in high-risk communities and in the lives of at-risk youths.

Research question three states that 'is there any significant difference in the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion?'. The finding revealed that there is no significant difference on the academic achievement of students with hearing impairment based on religion. This finding support the assertion of [15] who remarked that religious practice promotes the well-being of individuals, families, and the community. In other words, religious practice leads to an increase in physical and mental health, longevity, and education attainment.

8. CONCLUSION

Irrespective of religious affiliation, individuals with hearing impairment worry about many issues of life. As revealed in this study, students with hearing impairment find it difficult to actively participate in social activities and this creates a barrier to effectively relate with other member of the society and expressing their feelings. Hence, they tend to suffer from isolation and rejection. The academic outcome is also a major concern for most students with hearing impairment; it is a major worry being experienced by some individuals with hearing loss in the school setting.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Based on this research finding, this study recommends the need for consensus and collaborative efforts among organizations, service providers, and/or parents and other all the stakeholders involved in the education of children with hearing impairment. Parents are the key to the success of their students, therefore they must be willing and ready to work together to provide the optimal learning environment for deaf and hard of hearing children. Parents of children with hearing impairment must understand emotional clues and other body language that may be a pointer to worries among their children. Parents and guardians should make the home environment friendlier and conducive so that children with hearing loss can effectively express their mind and be free from various factors that may predispose them to emotional/ psychological trauma. Religious communities offer regularized social interaction, leading to exposure to new ideas and facilitating the process of effective problem

solving techniques. Religious leaders and religious organisations should use their influence over their followers or congregations and provide potential access to these underserved, at-risk populations for increasing awareness about the dangers of internalizing worries.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX

Personal Worries Scale (PWS) Department of Special Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Section A

Demographic Information

Instruction: Please, tick () the appropriate box

Age :13-15 () 16-19 () 20-25 ()
Gender :Male () Female ()
Class :Junior Class () Senior Class ()
Religion :Christianity () Islam () Others

Section B

Academic and Social Worries of Students with Hearing Impairment

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
Academic worries: I worry about					
1	how to cope with school work	—	—	—	—
2	I may not go to a good Polytechnic or University	—	—	—	—
3	Getting poor results in tests	—	—	—	—
4	Failing important examinations	—	—	—	—
5	My teacher will scold me	—	—	—	—
6	Teachers having bad impression of me if I submit my work late	—	—	—	—
7	My work not meeting teacher's expectation	—	—	—	—
8	Not coming top in the class	—	—	—	—
9	Too much homework	—	—	—	—
10	School work being too difficult for me	—	—	—	—
Social worries		SA	A	D	SD
1	I worry about my hearing loss	—	—	—	—
2	I worry about having good communication skills	—	—	—	—
3	I worry about keeping good relationships with my friends	—	—	—	—
4	I worry about my personal appearance	—	—	—	—
5	I worry about being teased or talked about	—	—	—	—
6	Not doing well in extra-curricular activities	—	—	—	—
7	My parents always scold me	—	—	—	—
8	I worry about not being allowed to buy what I want	—	—	—	—
9	I worry about not having enough pocket money	—	—	—	—
Health worries		SA	A	D	SD
1	I worry about my health	—	—	—	—
2	My hear always ache me	—	—	—	—
3	I worry about the drugs I take every day	—	—	—	—

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
Academic worries: I worry about					
4	My health sometimes prevent me from coming to school	—	—	—	—
5	I don't have enough information about my health condition	—	—	—	—

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Peer-review history:

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