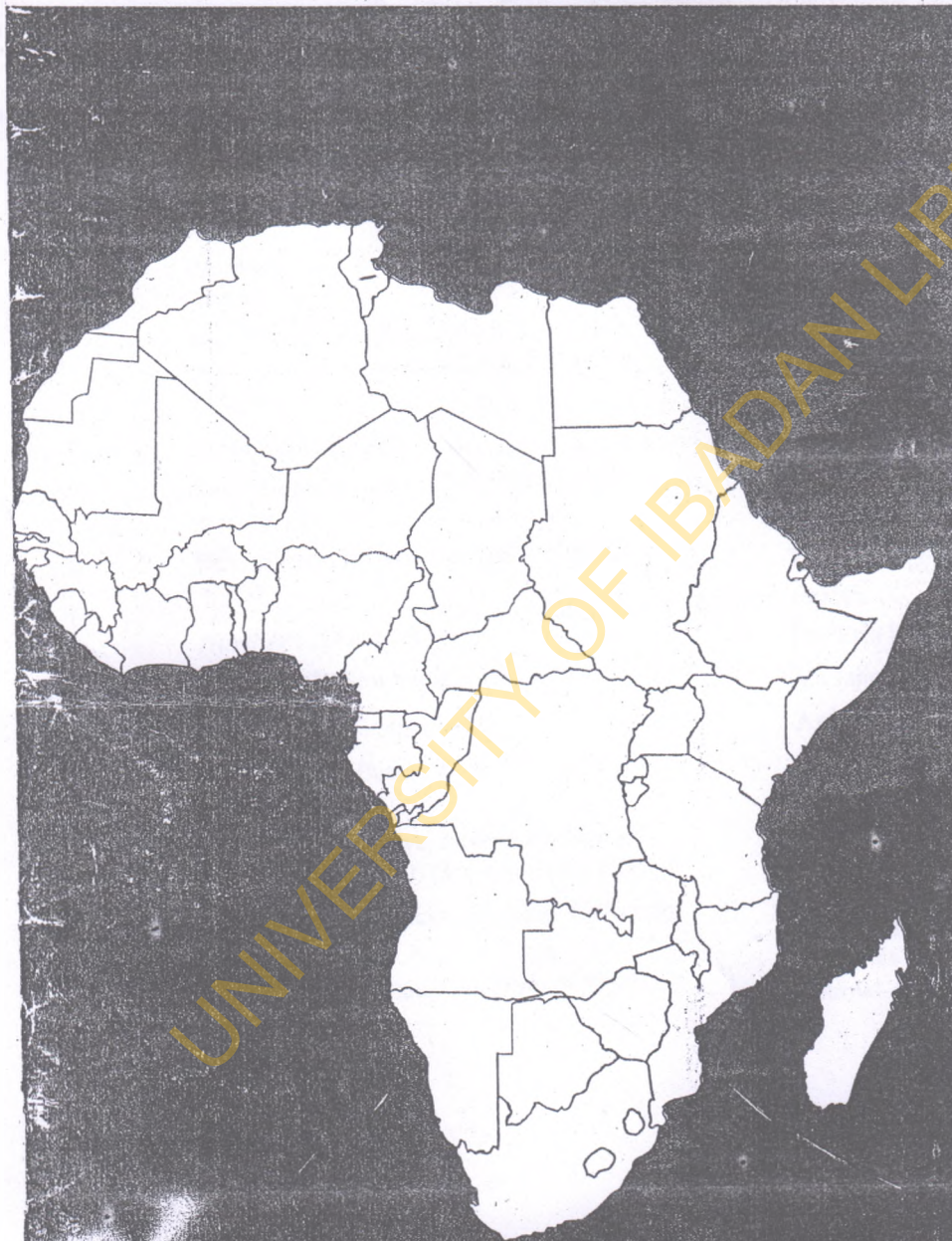


# African Journal of Special Needs Education

Vol.5 No.2 September 2000



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# The Psycho-Social Adjustment Difficulties of Students with Hearing Impairment School Setting in Oyo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study was designed to examine the effects of mainstreaming on the psycho-social adjustment difficulties of students with hearing impairment in integrated school settings. It also assessed the effects of hearing-impairment on the social and emotional adjustment difficulties of the affected students. The main instruments used for the study were two sets of questionnaires. Four research questions were raised and tested statistically. The sample consisted of 60 students with hearing impairment and 60 teachers from four integrated schools in Oyo State. The findings reveals that the students with hearing impairment attending integrated schools manifested higher adjustment difficulties than their normal hearing peers. The study also reveal that the students isolated themselves from the social and emotional demands as a result of their communication difficulties and ineffective interaction strategies.*

## Résumé

*L'étude a été conçue pour examiner les effets de l'inclusion des étudiants malentendants dans les cadres scolaires intégrés, sur leur adaptation psychosociale. Elle a également tenté d'évaluer les effets de l'handicap de l'ouïe sur les difficultés de l'adaptation sociale et émotionnelle chez les enfants. Les principaux instruments utilisés pour cette étude étaient constitués de deux questionnaires. Quatre questions de recherche ont été posées et testées statistiquement. Les échantillons étaient composés de 60 étudiants malentendants et de 60 enseignants de quatre écoles intégrées dans l'Etat d'Oyo. Les résultats ont révélé que les étudiants malentendants inscrits dans les écoles intégrées éprouvaient plus de difficultés d'adaptation que leurs pairs non-handicapés. L'étude a aussi révélé que les étudiants s'isolaient des exigences émotionnelles et sociales à cause de leurs difficultés de communication, et de l'inefficacité de leurs stratégies d'interaction.*



## **Background**

Human beings are connected to the hearing world through sense of hearing and the perfect radiation of this hearing mechanism engenders relative psycho-social stability of human life. Hearing enables us to enjoy music, conversations, songs of birds, sounds of the wind, rain, passing vehicles and rumbling sky, and people who cannot hear are deprived of these privileges (Mba, 1981). This deprivation involves loss of contact with the world of sound which in turn leads to psychological isolation from the sound environment; limited awareness of auditory signs and signals; little or no appreciation of music; and poor concepts resulting from lack of auditory perceptions (Meadow, 1988). This means that the individuals with hearing impairment suffer greatly due to their inability to make use of their sense of hearing. Their personal attitudes to inability to communicate, cope and understand what the real world is like through the sense of hearing affect their social and emotional adjustment concepts (Meadow, 1984).

Due to hearing and communication difficulties most children with hearing impairment in integrated schools exhibit social and emotional adjustment difficulties, with evidences of clear demonstration of incapability and inferiority complex; inability to develop self-identity, frustration and stress, social isolation and diminished interactive benefits as a result of negative feedback from other members of their environment since they cannot be heard (Levine, 1981). But at the same time, it has been suggested that for individuals with hearing impairment to develop positive social and emotional adjustment concepts, they must be integrated in the mainstream school setting so as to enable them relate in a mutual satisfactory model with their hearing counterparts (Mindel & Vernon, 1991). Based on this, the idea of mainstreaming has gained world-wide adoption. For instance, Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981) endorsed mainstreaming. The policy states:

As far as it is possible, handicapped children should be educated in the regular schools with normal children, and that the children should not be segregated unnecessarily.

Since then there has been a continuous interest and progress in mainstreaming as a process of educating children with hearing impairment especially in Oyo State.

Against this background there have been claims and counter claims about the efficacies of mainstreaming as a programme. Some schools of thought concluded that mainstreaming has failed to develop psycho-social adjustment strategies in children with hearing impairment as it often engenders an interpersonal isolation by the hearing peers (Kirk, 1972). In line with this, Gresham (1982) observed that students with disabilities were socially rejected and excluded from interaction with their regular class peers because of their anti-social behaviour and lack of social interactional skills. On the other hand, Murphy and Jones (1979) pointed out that students with hearing impairment attending ordinary classes are fully integrated academically and socially into the normal life of the school as a result of sharing a class with the hearing peers. Thus, students with hearing impairment have been able to develop favourable attitudinal changes in the willingness to socialise, play, work and cope effectively within the system.

## **Methodology**

As a result of limited number of integrated schools in Oyo State, the researchers made use of purposive sampling technique in selecting the subjects for this study. The subjects consisted of sixty (60) teachers from four (4) integrated schools in Oyo State and sixty (60) students with hearing impairment, comprising 24 (40%) females and 36 (60%) males from two (2) integrated schools. Thus, the study used one hundred and twenty (120) subjects from four (4)



integrated schools. The researchers sampled those with minimum of four (4) years in the integrated setting.

Data collection was carried out using questionnaires based on the Likert Scale Format of response, i.e., Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. This instrument was constructed with the aid of extracts from Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI), Akinboye (1986).

The questionnaires were distributed and administered by the researchers in the four (4) integrated schools in Oyo State. For objective and accurate responses, the researchers ensured that each subject responded to his or her copy of the questionnaire independently. Therefore, the data gathered represented independent opinions of the subjects. Chi-square statistical method was used to analyse the data. The alpha-level was set at 0.05.

### Results of the Findings

*Table i - Analysis of the responses of Psycho-social Concepts*

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Obs</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Tab</sub>	Significant level
School 1	05 (05)	06(05)	04(3.7)	04(04)	02(2.3)	20	3.43	21.026	Not significant (ns)
School 2	02(2.5)	02(2.5)	01(1.8)	02(1.2)	02(1.2)	10			
School 3	04(3.8)	04(3.8)	03(03)	03(03)	01(.18)	15			
School 4	04(3.8)	03(3.8)	02(03)	02(03)	02(1.8)	15			
Total	15	15	11	12	07	60			

This result shows that the X<sup>2</sup> table value of 21.026 is greater than the observed X<sup>2</sup> value of 3.43, hence necessitating accepting of the null hypothesis. As a result, it was found that there was no significant difference between students with hearing impairment and their hearing counterparts in the demonstrations of psychosocial adjustments skills. Both students with hearing impairment and the hearing individuals manifested similar socio-emotional adjustment skills in the same way under mainstream school setting.

*Table ii - Analysis of the Respondents' Reactions to the Efficacies of Mainstreamed Programme.*

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Obs</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Tab</sub>	Significant level
Teachers	3(7)	6(8)	13(11.5)	17(16)	2(17.5)	60	7.6	9.5	(ns)
Students	11(7)	10(8)	10(11.5)	15(16)	14(17.5)	60			
Total	14	16	23	32	35	120			

The analysis shows that the observed value of 7.6 is less than the tabulated value of 9.5. This finding reveals that mainstreamed programme cannot independently develop positive socio-emotional adjustment concepts in hearing impairment unless certain conditions and conflicts between the hearing impaired and over communication difficulties are resolved.



*Table iii – Analysis of the Teachers' Position on the Academic Performances of students with Hearing Impairment and the Hearing Students.*

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Obs</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Tab</sub>	Significant level
School 1	2(2.3)	3(2.3)	4(4.3)	4(5)	6(6)	20	5.46	21.026	(ns)
School 2	1(1.2)	2(1.2)	2(2.2)	2(2.5)	3(3)	10			
School 3	2(1.8)	1(1.8)	3(3.3)	5(3.8)	4(4.5)	15			
School 4	2(1.8)	1(1.8)	3(3.3)	4(3.8)	5(4.5)	15			
Total	07	07	13	15	18	60			

The result shows that the observed value of 5.46 is less than the table value of 21.026. Hence the observation confirms that there was no significant difference between the academic performances of students with hearing impairment and the hearing ones in the same school setting.

*Table iv – Analysis of the Responses to the Sex-Related Issues*

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Obs</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Tab</sub>	Significant level
School 1	6(6.3)	5(5.7)	4(3.7)	2(1.3)	3(3)	20	5.7	21.026	(ns)
School 2	4(3.2)	2(2.8)	1(1.8)	1(0.7)	2(1.5)	10			
School 3	4(4.8)	6(4.3)	2(2.8)	0(1)	3(2.5)1(2.3)	15			
School 4	5(4.8)	4(4.3)	4(2.8)	1(1)		15			
Total	19	17	11	04	09	60			

The analysis in table IV shows that the tabulated value of 21.026 is greater than the observed value of 5.7. This finding indicates that the females with hearing impairment developed positive psycho-social adjustment skills faster than their male counterparts.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study indicated that students with hearing impairment in integrated schools have social and emotional adjustment difficulties. They manifested higher adjustment difficulties than the normal hearing students in the same mainstream schools. The students with hearing impairment exhibited different patterns of behavioural difficulties that were different from ordinary class peers. The differences were as a result of some factors such as negative parental reactions to students' deafness, difficulty in communication and estrangement from normally hearing peers and their teachers (Gresham, 1982).

It was also observed that the students with hearing impairment in integrated schools were not well accepted; they were ignored and rejected by the normal hearing ones as a result of their communication difficulties and limited interaction strategies. Although, this study found insignificant difference between the academic performances of students with hearing impairment and hearing students, the researchers observed that the former on average performed favourably well vis-à-vis their hearing peers.

With respect to sex, the study found insignificant difference between the reactions of males and females with hearing impairment to the social and emotional demands of the integrated schools. The study also revealed that males with hearing impairment developed positive psycho-social adjustment skills slower than their female counterparts. The females with



hearing impairment interacted socially with their hearing counterparts, most especially the males. They were found playing some indoor games together, moving together during class break-sessions, and most time they exchanged pleasantries and gifts regularly as do male/female with hearing impairment among their male counterparts. Most often than not, males with hearing impairment found it difficult to associate with others due to lack of ability to develop positive socio-emotional adjustment strategies. Hence, this instilled poor psychological and self-concept in them (Owolawi, 1996).

As against the findings of Atinmo (1996) and Oyebola (1997) this study found insignificant differences in the academic performances of the individuals with hearing impairment and their hearing counterparts in the observed schools. The school teachers ironically revealed that the hearing impaired competed favourably with their hearing counterparts in all the classroom assignments, except when the assignments were given verbally by non-specialist instructors.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper demonstrated the psycho-social adjustment difficulties of students with hearing impairment attending integrated schools. It showed the effects of mainstream programmes on the social and emotional adjustment difficulties. In addition, the study found that students with hearing impairment in integrated schools exhibited poor self-image and socio-emotional disadvantages as a result of poor communicative skills. In assisting such students to develop positive psycho-social adjustment skills, we therefore recommend that they should be rehabilitated fully so as to naturally receive and develop linguistic, as well as communicative skills through the use of audition.

Schools should foster social interactions between students with hearing impairment and, the normal ones through positive encouragement of extra-curricular activities both in the classrooms and the outside environment. The hearing individuals should be dissuaded from ignoring, neglecting and isolating those with hearing impairment, rather they should be seen as life-partners in progress.

Students with hearing impairment should be counselled properly so as to eliminate fear and insecurity tendencies in them. They should be given meaningful acceptance, love, care and opportunity to interact freely through total communication. They should be integrated fully into both the social and educational systems of the school.

The entire mainstreaming programmes should be restructured to allow opportunities for successful interaction between students with hearing impairment and their hearing counterparts. They should be exposed to sporting activities as well as a wide variety of normal social gatherings both within and outside school environment.

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