

ISSN: 0189-7195

**The Journal of Advocacy  
and Rehabilitation in  
Special Education  
(JARSE)**

**Volume Eighteen Number One, December 2019**

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## PERCEIVED SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

BY

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### Abstract

*Inclusion of students with hearing impairment into regular schools came as education policies in Nigeria so that long tends of exclusion of students with hearing impairment from school get resolved. The rationale behind inclusion was not only academic gain but also the development of the social relation of students with hearing impairment with members of the society. This study examined the perceived social and educational problem encountered by students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Three research questions were generated for the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. One hundred (100) students with hearing impairment were drawn from ten (10) Inclusive schools in FCT, Abuja. One instrument of two parts was used for the purpose of data collection. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used for the data analysis. The results showed that students with hearing are confronting various challenges in the schools such as low self-esteem, the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials and the lack of attention from school personnel. Also, the students with hearing impairment do not a significant difference in challenge they faced based on age and gender.*

**Keywords:** *Educational problems, Inclusive schools, Students with hearing impairment, Social problems,*

### Introduction

During the last few decades, several changes have taken place in the educating students with special needs. In many countries, the inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with hearing impairment, is a fundamental element of educational policy. The philosophy behind this evolutionary change was the commitment of the professionals who had an urge to go side by side with other professionals working in other parts of the world in providing services and education to students with hearing impairment inclusive schools.

The concept of inclusive education has been drawn from the human rights view point, Which believe that every child should be given the right to education, irrespective the physical or sensory condition. This mean student with hearing impairment and their normal hearing counterparts are studying together, which enables them to get to know one another, to be together in the same classroom during the classes and leisure time activities. It requires identifying barriers that hinder learning and reducing or removing these barriers in schools. The key emphasis of inclusive education is universalizing access and promoting equity for all learners and removing educational disparities among them.

Students with hearing impairment may have partial or full hearing loss on one or both ears. The characteristics shown by the students depend on the degree of hearing loss and the onset of that loss. The earlier the hearing loss exhibits itself in a child, the more trouble he or she will



have in evolving the spoken language. A hearing impairment contains not only the loss of hearing but the loss or restriction of the capability to acquire language and speech. Partial or total deficiency of language takes a serious repercussion for the child's development (Adoyo, 2008). Most of the students with hearing impairment usually develop low self-esteem and this can lead to anti-social behaviours like aggression, lack of self-confidence; and feeling of self-defeatism and low self concept. Students with hearing impairment who find themselves in the midst of normal hearing students are often demeaned and are exposed to disrespect as their normal hearing counterparts may call them names in relation to the type of their disability. In addition, they (normal hearing students) whether in the school or outside may discriminate against the students with hearing impairment. Occasionally, they are emotionally unstable and deprived of their basic rights (Anderson, 2004).

Generally, it appears that the child's social development is closely related to his or her normative cognitive development. If the child's cognitive functioning is limited, or development is hampered by certain conditions such as hearing impairment, social and normative development will likewise be deficient because the inadequate acquisition of insight into what is acceptable and unacceptable (abstract values) will cause problems, (Adoyo, 2008). By implication, the child's inability to hear may also hamper the learning of various socially acceptable habits. The child with hearing impairment faces problems acquiring and understanding moral behaviour codes because it is mainly through language that they are transferred from one member of society to another. The socialization of students with hearing impairment is deficient because of inability to hear and deprives the child of the most meaningful guidelines, for molding of behaviour (Stinson and Whitmire, 2000). The child with hearing impairment is largely isolated from his or her hearing counterparts, because of the inability to communicate freely and understand language properly.

Students with hearing impairment may be more fatigued than their classmates with normal hearing due to the listening effort needed, may have immature behaviour, barriers build with a negative impact on self-esteem as the student is accused of hearing when he or she wants to daydream or not paying attention. The student with hearing impairment loses the ability for selective hearing and has increased difficulty suppressing background noise which makes the learning environment stressful. Communication is significantly affected, and socialization with peers with normal hearing becomes increasingly difficult. With full-time use of hearing aids/ FM System, the child may be judged as a less competent learner, resulting in poorer self-concept, social immaturity and sense of rejection. The child may appear inattentive and frustrated. Hearing impairment restricts normal linguistic and intellectual development of the students. However, with proper support and rehabilitation, most students with hearing impairment can perform well in school, by so doing demystifying tags or stereotypes associated with their disabilities.

Another main problem encountered by the students with hearing impairment is communication barrier. Nowadays inclusion of students with their normal hearing counterparts makes learning problematic because most of the teachers lack knowledge of communicating through sign language to the students with hearing impairment. Teachers who lack competence in sign language can only speak orally and provide support for students without hearing impairment at the expense of those with hearing impairment. Many students with hearing impairment fail to communicate because they cannot hear what the teacher or the other students are saying. They may never ask the other students to repeat themselves. Although, it is widely accepted that inclusion maximizes the potential of the vast majority of students, ensures their rights and is the preferred educational approach for the 21st century (Tirussew, 2005). Gezahegn, (2013) reported that students with hearing impairment miss numerous opportunities communication barriers.

Absence of resource center is another challenge for the education of students with hearing impairment students. The resource center is an instructive focus which is furnished with explicit materials and assistive gadgets just as staffed with experts to offer extraordinary help to students with special needs (Carrington and Robinson, 2006). The learning process and



procedure involved by students with hearing impairment is not different from other students. However, these students face enormous challenges due to the hearing problem that other students do not have, some of these students need highly specialized equipment to help them learn effectively. In this study, an analysis of the challenges that students with hearing impairment face both social and education were examined.

### Research Questions

1. What is the major challenge encountered by students with hearing impairment in a regular school?
2. Is there any significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in regular schools on the basis of gender?
3. Is there any significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in a regular school on the basis of age?

### Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design because the study involved the use of a representative sample of the population. The population of the study comprised all students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools in six area council of FCT. A sample of ten schools that are running the inclusive education were randomly selected. One hundred (100) students with hearing impairment were randomly drawn from the ten (10) regular schools. The instrument used for the collection of data was a self-developed questionnaire titled: Challenges Encountered in Regular School by Students with Hearing Impairment Questionnaire (CERSSHIQ). The questionnaire was divided into Sections A and B only. Section A contains questions relating to personal data of students such as: sex, age, and class while Section B contains 10 items. All the items were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agreed (SA) -4, Agreed (A)-3, Disagreed (D)-2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD)-1. The validated instrument was trial tested using three schools from another area outside the study area using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which gives a reliability coefficient of 0.74. The instrument was administered with the help of some teachers who served as research assistants.. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean (X) and standard deviation (S.D) and inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

### Results

**Research Questions 1:** What is the major challenge encountered by students with hearing impairment in a inclusive school?

Table 1: Students responses on major challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in a inclusive school.

| S/No                           | As far as I am concerned my major challenge is:                                       | Mean (X) | St.D |
|--------------------------------|---|----------|------|
| 1                              | that I find it difficult to interact with my other peers with normal hearing.         | 2.26     | 1.19 |
| 2                              | that I find it difficult in communicating with other students with hearing impairment | 2.18     | 0.98 |
| 3*                             | the lack of interest in schooling   | 2.56     | 1.06 |
| 4                              | that I am unable to be properly integrated into the society                           | 2.10     | 1.68 |
| 5                              | the problem of low self-esteem due to my present condition                            | 2.43     | 1.8  |
| 6                              | the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials                                     | 2.40     | 1.03 |
| 7                              | the lack of attention of the school personnel   | 2.48     | 1.02 |
| 8*                             | the lack of recognition as full members of the society                                | 2.53     | 1.15 |
| 9                              | the problem of low self-esteem due to my present condition                            | 2.13     | 1.17 |
| 10*                            | Interpreters are not fully involved in teaching and learning in my school.            | 2.59     | 1.92 |
| <b>Overall mean (X) = 2.44</b> |   |          |      |

\*Items on reverse code Significant mean (X ≥ 2.50)



From Table 1 above, the result shows that the overall mean score show that students with hearing impairment are facing both social and educational challenges on items 3, 8, and 10 at a mean range of 2.56 to 2.59 and disagreed on items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 at a mean of 2.10 to 2.48. However, the overall mean is less than the cut off mean (i.e  $2.44 < 2.50$ ). Hence, it concluded that the majority of the students with hearing impairment in regular school are facing social and educational problem which could be as a result of their hearing impairment.

**Research Questions 2:** Is there any significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in regular schools on the basis of gender?

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation and t-Value on the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in regular schools on the basis of gender

| Variable | N   | X     | SD    | r cal | r-crit. | p-value |
|----------|-----|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Male     | 100 | 17.02 | 3.341 | 1.18  | 1.96    | .314    |
| Female   | 100 | 41.58 | 9.837 |       |         |         |

Significance at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows a calculated t-value of 1.18 is less than a critical t-value of 1.96, with the corresponding p-value of .314 which is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Hence, there is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in a regular school on the basis of gender.

**Research Questions 3:** Is there any significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in a regular school on the basis of age?

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and t-Value on the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in regular school on the basis of age

| Variable           | N   | X     | SD      | r-cal | r-crit. | p-value |
|--------------------|-----|-------|---------|-------|---------|---------|
| Between the groups | 100 | 3.341 | 45.952  | 0.40  | 3.00    | .534    |
| Within the groups  | 100 | 27.49 | 5416.92 |       |         |         |

Significance at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that calculated t-value of 0.40 is less than a critical t-value of 3.00, with the corresponding p-value of .534 which is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance. Hence, there is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by students with hearing impairment in a regular school on the basis of gender.

## Discussion

This study revealed that the major challenge of students with hearing impairment in regular schools is the difficulty they experience in their daily interactions with their normal hearing peers. This corroborates the findings of Olawale (2000) who reported that students with hearing impairment are exposed to discrimination due to their disability. Okoye (2010) found that one of the basic challenges of students with hearing impairment is the feeling of loss of self-worth when aspirations are not met. Irrespective of the student's gender, such feelings often lead to an inferiority complex which is a common phenomenon among the students with disability. Also, Akinpelu (2004) found that hearing impairment obstructs growth and educational progress. This is because students with hearing impairment cannot carry out duties and assignments at the normal speed when compared with their normal hearing counterparts.

The result from this current study revealed that students of different age groups in the regular school for students with hearing impairment perceive their challenges the same way. Irrespective of age, many of the students with hearing impairment encounter a lot of problems in schools and such challenges often lead to frustration. This is in agreement with the findings of



Farooq (2012) the entire group that participated in his study agreed that there were structural and personal problems experienced by students which include the negative attitude of the people towards them and lack of assistive devices.

The result from this current study revealed that students of different age groups in the regular school perceive their challenges the same way. This is in line with the study of Crisp (2002) that irrespective of age many of the students with hearing impairment encounter a lot of problems in schools and such challenges often lead to frustration.

## Conclusion

Students with hearing impairment encountered both social and educational problems in inclusive schools. These include communication barriers, negative attitude of members of the school community and lack of materials and assistive devices.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made, based on the findings of the study:

1. sign language interpreters and note takers should be made available for students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools
2. resources that can assist teaching and learning among students with hearing impairment should be made available by the government and the school authorities.
3. the teachers should be made to learn sign language, this will remove the communication barrier that students with hearing impairment experience in the inclusive school.
4. social interaction among students with hearing impairment and their hearing counterparts should be encouraged.
5. rehabilitation counsellors should be made available to help students with hearing impairment overcome their social and educational problems.

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