

ISSN 0795-8730

# Journal of Special Education

Vol. 11, No. 1, July, 2013



**Journal of the Department  
of Special Education,  
University of Ibadan**

# Journal of Special Education

Vol. 11, No. 1, July, 2013

*Journal of the Department of Special Education; University of Ibadan*

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## Parental Factors as Determinants of Social Inclusion of Students with Hearing Impairment in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study examined parental factors as determinants of social inclusion of students with hearing impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 parents of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan. One research instrument was used for data collection: parental factors and social inclusion questionnaire ( $r=0.83$ ). Three research questions were generated and answered in the study. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis. The study found that parents' marital status ( $r=0.782$ ,  $<0.05$ ), parenting style ( $r=0.539$ ,  $<0.05$ ) and socio-economic status ( $r=0.865$ ,  $<0.05$ ) correlated with social inclusion of students with hearing impairment. The findings of the study also showed that parents' marital status, parent socio-economic status and parenting style significantly predicted social inclusion of students with hearing impairment ( $F$ -ratio of 64.045  $p<0.05$ ). The relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable are as follows: parent socio-economic status ( $\beta=0.851$ ), parent marital status ( $\beta=0.184$ ), parenting style ( $\beta=0.158$ ) respectively. It was therefore, recommended that parents should play key roles in ensuring the inclusion of their children with hearing impairment into the mainstream of the society.

**Keywords:** Hearing impairment, Parental factors, Social inclusion, Socioeconomic.

### Introduction

Children with hearing impairment need the full support of the parents for them to have sense of pride, self-esteem, and acceptance and to feel among in the society. The families in general and parents in particular have often been deemed to be the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in moulding a child's



personality remains the perfect relationship with parents of such child.. If his parents love him with a generous, ever flowing, non-possessive affection and if they treat him as a person who like themselves, has right and responsibilities, then his chances of developing normally is very high, but if they diverge from this, the child's development may be distorted (Isaiah, 2011).

Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to childhood. It refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship. In the case of humans, it is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question, although government and the society play a role as well. In many cases, orphans or abandoned children receive parental care from non-parents and blood relation(s); others may be adopted, raised through foster care or be placed in an orphanage. Usually parental figure provides for a child's physical needs, protect him from harm, and impart in him skills and cultural value until he reaches legal adulthood. The inability of children who are deaf or hard of hearing to understand their parents' spoken language hinders parent-child relationship (Marschark, 2007). Consequently, communication barrier among parents of children with hearing impairment and their children affect their children social inclusion which therefore results in poor social adjustment. Every child with or without hearing impairment needs to be included in the mainstream of the society. A typical child from intact home, high socioeconomic background, who enjoys cordial parenting style, will not find it difficult to adapt to his environment, because the family is an extension of the society.

The adverse effect of hearing impairment on the inclusion of a child with hearing impairment into the environment cannot be overemphasised. For instance, Isaiah (2011) reported that stakeholders in the field of special education are making efforts to educate the public on their need to integrate the individuals with hearing impairment into the society. It seems their efforts are not yielding the expected results because all forms of discrimination still exist against individuals with hearing impairment just like their counterparts with other kinds of disabilities in Nigeria.

Kwei (2002) explained that in the developing countries of Africa, children with hearing impairment live in a society where cultural beliefs about disabilities and attitudes towards persons with hearing impairment often include shame, prejudice and exclusion from the community. According to Kwei (2002), children with hearing impairment are often isolated, discriminated against and considered inferior and that some section of the society see them as accursed group, others subject them to various abuses that cumulatively make them bitter against the society. Jackson and Scott (2002) stated that a social inclusion perspective clearly placed an obligation on the society to ensure the condition for all children to realised their potentials. Inclusion demands that specific barriers to inclusion such as disability be addressed.

Parents should be a positive role model for their children with hearing impairment since these children learn a great deal from what they see others do. These children require of their



parents exactly the same things that hearing children do, although the means and process of providing these requirements may be different (Marschark, 2007). Although, most of what it is to be a parent of a child with hearing impairment will share many features of what it is to be a parent of any child (Ogden, 1984). It is quite clear that the stress and challenge of parenting a child with disability is considerably compounded by such factors as socio-economic status of the parents. National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS, 2003), and that conditions of material and financial hardship are not unusual for families with disabled children in many countries. Socioeconomic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Sociologists often use socioeconomic status as a means of predicting behaviour in the society. Most parents of persons with special needs have low occupations and low income. This is a bad start in life for the children because this will affect them in no small measure especially their social lives.

Children with hearing impairment no doubt are part of the society. Therefore, whatever affects the society also affects them and for these set of people, the situation is in most time great. It is suffice to say that most of the problems experienced by students with impairment are those encountered by their parents. Many children with hearing impairment have parents who are either unemployed or underemployed. A large number of parents of children with disability experience abject poverty. In developed and developing countries, it has been found that parents of children with disability spend three times the costs of bringing up a child than parents of non-disabled children, and that the average cost of bringing up a disabled child is considerably more than even the maximum benefit levels would provide (Dobson and Middleton, 1998).

There are different parenting styles such as: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved parenting styles (Baumrind, 1978). These different styles of parenting have psychological, social, physical and emotional impacts on the children including those with hearing impairment. Every parent(s) exhibit a particular parenting style consciously or unconsciously. Authoritarian parenting style generally leads to children who are obedient and proficient, but they rank low in happiness, social competence and self-esteem (Maccoby, 1992). Permissive parenting often results in children who rank low in happiness and self-regulation. These children are more likely to experience problem with authority and tend to perform poorly in school. Children brought up with an uninvolved parenting style rank lowest across all life domains. They tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent than their peers.

Often, parents act as "value socializers" shaping their children's perceptions of the appropriateness about life and decisions (Astin, 1994). Eccless (1994) theorised that parents are "expectancy socializers" who greatly influence their children self-perceptions of being academically and vocationally competent. Parents have a primary influence on their children regardless of being normal or abnormal (Simpson and Kamp, 1990). Mba (1990) stressed that parents spoke angrily to children with hearing impairment and regard him as an intruder into the family and they neglected his affairs and sees him as unproductive. However, Children with hearing impairment like their counterparts without hearing impairment should



obtain initial experience and training through interaction with parents and siblings. This then calls for the acquisition of means of communicating with hearing impaired children by their parents and siblings. If the society sees that the parents and other family members accept this child with hearing impairment, they will be encouraged to accept them and learn to communicate with them thereby fostering the inclusion of these set of individuals in all sphere of the community social lives.

Parent of children with hearing impairment who observed their children regularly have the opportunity to glimpse into their children world, learn to communicate more effectively with them and are given another setting to offer gentle nurturing guidance. In this type of family, children begin to learn responsibility and consequence of their actions within parental assistance. Isaiah (2011), citing Ubani (2006), remarked that the families in general and parent in particular have often been deemed to be the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in moulding a child's personality is his relationship with his parents.

There is little work that specifically addresses the concept and practice of parenting within the context of deaf children. Parenting means the skills, knowledge, roles, resources, experiences, qualities, values, tasks, and activities required to bring up a child successfully. Then the problem in the context of deaf children is that we have very little idea of what 'normative' parenting might be. To use a concept borrowed from Schutz, deafness lies outside parents' "sphere of relevance" (Schutz, 1962). What he meant by this is that for all of us, there is a whole complex set of subjects, experiences, people and contexts that have a meaning for us, because they in some way affect who we are, how we live, what our priorities and values are, how we perceive our own identity, and how we present ourselves to the world. However, deafness comes to most families as an "imposed set of relevancies" (Voysey, 1975), thus engaging parents in an ongoing process of trying to understand what the deaf experience is and what meaning deafness is to have in their lives and in the life of the family (Young, 1999).

This notion of how parents build up their meaning of the deaf experience is significant to a discussion on parenting, because we know that the assumptions parents hold about what it is to be deaf affect their decision-making concerning their deaf child. Early in a child's life, a parent will attribute meaning to being 'deaf'. That interpretation will have an impact on parental feelings and interaction with the child. If a parent views his child as unique rather than flawed, the child will develop a more healthy view of himself (Medwid and Weston, 1995). Parents' choices will be greatly influenced by their knowledge of and attitudes towards deafness, deaf people, and the current state of deaf education (Schwartz, 1996). This effect is most obviously seen in relation to communication (Nash, 1975).

To take some broad examples, if for a parent deafness carries a meaning of personal tragedy, likely social exclusion and isolation, then an approach to communication that seems to maximise a child's ability to speak and hear as near 'normal' as possible will make sense



(Schwartz, 1996). In thinking about parenting in the deaf context, a central issue is what exactly that deaf context is for parents, and what influences and defines the expectations, assumptions and understanding of the deaf experience they hold. It is important because those expectations affect key decisions parents will make in relation to how they treat their deaf child, the aspirations they hold for him/her, and how the family functions. This issue of how expectations and understandings of the deaf experience are formed and revised is an underpinning concept to much of the discussion to follow.

Socio-economic condition of the parents also plays an important role in determining social wellbeing of their children. Children generally from the low socio-economic background are affected intellectually, educationally, occupationally, even health wise, in many societies like Nigeria and many other African countries. If this could be the case for the so called hearing then the hearing impaired will be much more affected (Olayinka, 1993). Low socioeconomic status often engenders economic stress, in turn leading to unsupportive and hostile parenting practices which have been found to be negatively related to social inclusion. Lower socioeconomic levels may limit the type of information available and restrict the quality of educational opportunities and the availability of role models.

Children generally including the hearing impaired from the low socio-economic background is affected intellectually, educationally, occupationally, even health wise in many societies like Nigeria and many other African countries. Daramola (1990) averred that if this could be the case for the so called hearing then the hearing impaired will be affected in a double way. The effects of poor socio-economic status on the children becomes enormous for parents of the children with disabilities and the child with hearing impairment inclusive in the sense that their own means of education is more expensive when compared with the normal child. The social profile of parents in relation to their educational background has also been raised as an issue of importance. Some parents from poorly educated and/or working class backgrounds will feel ill-equipped to understand and interact with largely middle class, well-educated professionals, and vice versa (Bailey, 1987). Parents themselves talk about becoming educators, advocates, interpreters, campaigners, experts, and clients (Beazley and Moores, 1995; Gregory, Bourlton, Harris, Lynas, McCracken, Power, Watson, 1995; Moores, 1987; Morgan-Redshaw, Wilgosh, Bibby, 1990).

Teaching and learning about the family, social and cultural values and norms of the society is an important parenting task that pose a lot of problem for parent(s) and their children with hearing impairment due to communication barrier and the effects of deafness on the family. Lack of parent-child interaction, that is, inability to hear and be heard, has also created a huge hassles and challenges in parenting children with hearing impairment. Parental factors are paramount in the social inclusion of children with hearing impairment. This is because the home is the first school or environment of the child. Factors such as parents' marital status, socioeconomic background and parenting style have a way of affecting children including those with hearing impairment. Children from unstable home, low socioeconomic background and poor parenting style are not likely to be socially included as those from favourable or intact background.



This study, therefore, examined the relationship among parents marital status, parenting style, socioeconomic background and social inclusion of the students with hearing impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the relationship among parental factors (parents' marital status, parenting styles, parents' socio-economic) and social inclusion of students with hearing impairment?
2. What is the composite contribution of the independent variables (parents' marital status, parenting styles, parents' socio-economic status) to the dependent variable (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (parents' marital status, parenting styles, parents' socio-economic status) to the dependent variable (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment.

### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey design of correlational type was adopted for the study. This design was adopted because the researchers did not manipulate the variables of interest in the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for the study comprised 60 parents of students with hearing impairment in Oyo state, Nigeria. The participants were selected from Ibadan, Ogbomosho and Oyo. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study.

### **Research Instrument**

One research instrument was used for data collection: Parental factors and Social Inclusion questionnaire ( $r=0.83$ ). The instrument has two sections. Sections A and B. Section A has to do with the demographic variables of the participants while section B has to do with items on parental factors.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple regression analysis were used to analyse data in the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the relationship between the variables while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyse composite influence of independent Variables on the dependent variable.

### **Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship among parental factors (parents' marital status, parents' socio-economic status, parenting styles) and social inclusion of students with hearing impairment?



**Table 1:**

Variables	Parents' marital status	Parents' socio-economic status	Parenting style	Social Inclusion
Parents' marital status	1.			
Parents' socio-economic status	0.548**	1.		
Parenting style	0.665**	0.566**	1.	
Social Inclusion	0.782**	0.865**	0.539**	1.

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 1 shows that positive relationship exist between parents' marital status and social inclusion ( $r=0.782$ ,  $p<0.005$ ). Also, there is positive relationship between parents' socio-economic status and social inclusion ( $r=0.865$ ,  $p<0.005$ ). Parenting style showed positive relationship ( $0.539$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) with social inclusion.

**Research Question Two:** What is the composite contribution of the independent variables (parents' marital status, parenting styles, parents' socio-economic status) to the dependent variable (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment?

**Table 2:**

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	35.309	3	11.770	64.045**	0.001	0.77
Residual	10.291	56	0.184			
Total	45.600	59				

\*\* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 reveals that independent variables have a composite contribution on dependent variable (F-value=64.045 and  $p<0.05$ ). R<sup>2</sup> is 0.77, this implies that independent variables (marital status, parenting style and parents' socio-economic status) accounted for 77% of variation in dependent variables (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment.



**Research Question Three:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (parents' marital status, parenting styles and parents' socio-economic status) to the dependent variable (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment.

**Table 3:** Relative contribution of marital status, parent socio-economic status and parenting style to social inclusion.

	B	Std. error	Beta weight	Rank	t-value	P-value
Constant	0.567	0.367			1.545	0.128
Marital status	0.065	0.027	0.184	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2.397**	0.020
Parent socio-economic status	0.200	0.018	0.851	1 <sup>st</sup>	10.930**	0.001
Parenting style	0.068	0.037	0.158	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1.867	0.067

Table 3 indicates relative contributions of independent variables to the dependent variable. Marital status and parents' socio-economic status have a significant effect on social inclusion of students with hearing impairment (t-value=2.397 and 10.930,  $p < 0.05$ ). While, parenting style has no significant effect on social inclusion (t-value=1.867 and  $p > 0.05$ ). beta weight gives the magnitude of contribution of independent variables. Parents' socio-economic status has the highest contribution and ranked first (0.851), marital status ranked second (0.184), and parenting style ranked third (0.158).

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the study showed that positive relationship exist among marital status, parents' socio-economic status, parenting style and social inclusion ( $p < 0.005$ ). This finding agrees with the submission of Marschark (2007) who reported that students with hearing impairment require of their parents exactly the same things that hearing children do, although the means and process of providing these requirements may be different. Also (NDCS, 2003) reported that the stress and challenge of parenting a child with disability such as those with hearing impairment is considerably compounded by such factors as socio-economic status and financial hardship. Sociologists often use socioeconomic status as a means of predicting behaviour in the society. Most parents of persons with special needs have menial jobs and low income. It is therefore anticipated that parents should play a role not only in the promotion of their children with hearing impairment social inclusion but for successful independent life.



Research question two reveals that independent variables have a composite contribution to dependent variable ( $F\text{-value}=64.045$  and  $p<0.05$ ).  $R^2$  is 0.77; this implies that independent variables (marital status, parenting style and parents' socio-economic status) accounted for 77% of variation in dependent variables (social inclusion) of students with hearing impairment. This finding agrees with that of Olayinka (1993) who reported that most of the problems facing students with hearing impairment are as a result of the problems facing their parents. He further stated that many households of the children with hearing impairment consists of parents who are either unemployed or underemployed, who do not have health insurance, and who because of their financial struggle, are unable or unwilling to schedule regular medical check-up for themselves, let alone regular auditory assessment for their wards with hearing impairment. Also, the different styles of parenting have psychological, social, physical and emotional impacts on the children including those with hearing impairment. Hence, the students with hearing impairment find it difficult to be integrated into the mainstream of the society.

The result from research question three shows that the independent variables contributed to social inclusion of students with hearing impairment. Beta weight rank shows the order of magnitude of contribution of independent variables on dependent variable. Parents' socio-economic status has the highest contribution and ranked first, marital status ranked second and parenting style ranked third. The finding agrees with Isaiah (2011). He reported that parental factors contributed to the integration of students with hearing impairment to the society.

## Conclusion

This study examined parental factors as determinants of social inclusion of students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Oyo state. It was found that the three independent variables - parents' marital status, parents' socio-economic status, and parenting styles have positive relationship with the dependent variable – social inclusion of students with hearing impairment. Again, all the independent variables contributed to the social inclusion of students with hearing impairment, when taken together. However, when considered individually, the contribution of parenting style to social inclusion of students with hearing impairment was low.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. The parents of students with hearing impairment should ensure that they maintain intact homes, so that their children will not be affected negatively.
2. The parents of students with hearing impairment should show love to their children with hearing impairment in order to enable them interact with other members of the society.
3. Students with hearing impairment should be helped by their parents to have sense of belonging in the society.



4. Stakeholders in the affairs of persons with hearing impairment should intensify their public awareness on the potentials of persons with hearing impairment.
5. Parents of students with hearing impairment should collaborate with other stakeholders in the field of rehabilitation of children with hearing impairment in order to enhance their social inclusion.
6. The government should put in place and enforce policies that would encourage social inclusion of students with hearing impairment.

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