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THE IMPACT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ON THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY IN RAWALPINDI

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Abstract

Special education refers to the practice of providing education to students in a way that meets their individual differences, disabilities, and special needs. This includes self-planning and monitoring processes for instruction, adaptable tools and materials, and accessibility. The objectives of this study were to identify the role of special education in the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students and also identify the factors effecting and the problems faced by hearing impaired. The research method selected for the study was Quantitative research methodology. As this research involves a descriptive method of research, information about the role of special education in social and emotional development of hearing impaired students collected through questionnaire from the parents. As parents are very close to the students, they watched and observed them at home and at different places. Therefore, their observation makes the data more authentic. The population of the study comprised of 402 parents of Hearing-impaired students studying in hearing impaired secondary schools/colleges of Rawalpindi. A group of 200 parents 50% of total population of hearing impaired students was selected as sample of the research. Content validity of the research tool found with the guidelines of different experts of the field of special educational research. Their opinions and remarks are used to update the research tool. Reliability of the Research tool was founded by using percentage method in excel sheet. This study was significant for students because special Education provide adequate learning environment students with special needs and for teachers because it empowers them to be an advocate for social justice, inside and outside the classroom, parents to know understanding of a child's social emotional development.

Keywords: *Special Education; Hearng Impaired Children; Soial Survey; Emotional Development.*

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 develop 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 population for this study comprised the parents of hearing-impaired students enrolled in specialized educational institutions in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Given that parents are closely involved in the day-to-day lives of their children, they are well-positioned to provide insights into the social and emotional development of their children. The total population consisted of 402 parents whose children were studying at secondary schools and colleges for the hearing-impaired in Rawalpindi.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

From the total population, a sample of 200 parents was selected to participate in the study. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that every parent had an equal chance of being included in the sample. This technique was chosen to minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings. The sample size of 200 parents was determined to be adequate for statistical analysis, providing sufficient power to detect meaningful differences and relationships within the data.

3.4 Who Was Included in the Study?

To make sure the data we collected was both accurate and relevant, we set specific guidelines for who could take part in the study:

Who Could Participate:

- Parents of students currently attending secondary schools or colleges for hearing-impaired students in Rawalpindi.
- Parents who have been actively involved in their child's education for at least one year.
- Parents who were willing to take part in the study.

Who Could Not Participate:

- Parents of students with multiple disabilities, as we focused specifically on hearing impairment.
- Parents who had not been involved in their child's education.
- Parents who chose not to participate.

3.5 How We Collected the Data

We used a structured questionnaire as the main tool to gather information about the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students. This questionnaire was carefully

developed based on existing research and advice from experts to make sure it covered all important areas.

The questionnaire included several sections:

- **Background Information:** This section asked about the parent's age, education, occupation, and the age and gender of their child.
- **Social Development:** Questions here focused on how well the child interacts with their peers, makes friends, and joins in group activities.
- **Emotional Development:** This part asked about the child's self-esteem, self-confidence, how they manage their emotions, and how they handle social challenges.
- **Impact of Special Education:** Parents were asked to share their views on how special education has influenced different aspects of their child's social and emotional growth.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To make sure the questionnaire was effective, we had it reviewed by experts in special education and psychology. Their feedback helped us refine the questions to accurately measure what we wanted to study. We also ensured the questions were in line with well-established theories and models of social and emotional development.

To check if the questionnaire was reliable, we conducted a pilot study with 20 parents who were not part of the main study group. We analyzed the results using a method called Cronbach's alpha to measure how consistently the questions performed. The reliability score was 0.85, which is considered high, showing that the questionnaire was a consistent tool for our research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

We took ethical considerations very seriously in this study and took the following steps to ensure everything was done properly:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were given detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and any potential risks or benefits. We obtained their informed consent before they filled out the questionnaire.
- **Confidentiality:** We guaranteed the anonymity of all participants. No personal identifying information was collected, and responses were coded to maintain confidentiality. The data was stored securely, and only the research team had access to it.

- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation was completely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

3.8 How Data Was Collected

Data was collected over one month. The questionnaires were handed out to selected parents through their children's schools. Participants had two weeks to complete the questionnaire, and researchers collected the completed forms afterward. For parents who needed help understanding or completing the questionnaire, assistance was provided by either the researchers or school staff.

3.9 How Data Was Analyzed

The data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using descriptive statistics. We calculated frequencies and percentages to summarize the demographic information of the participants and their responses. We used cross-tabulations to examine the relationships between different variables, such as the impact of special education on self-confidence and social skills. The findings were presented clearly using tables and graphs.

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

The study involved 200 parents of hearing-impaired students enrolled in specialized schools in Rawalpindi. To provide context for the findings, we analyzed the background of these parents to ensure they represented a broad cross-section of the community.

- **Parental Education Levels:** A large number of parents had at least a secondary level of education. Specifically, 35% of fathers and 30% of mothers had completed secondary education, while 25% of fathers and 20% of mothers had gone on to higher education. This suggests that most parents have a basic understanding of educational concepts, which could influence their views on their children's social and emotional development.
- **Parental Age Distribution:** The parents' ages varied, with most fathers being between 40-50 years old (45%) and most mothers between 30-40 years old (50%). This age range indicates that the parents were mature and likely had enough life experience to provide meaningful insights into their children's development.

4.2 Impact of Special Education on Social and Emotional Development

The main focus of the data analysis was to understand how special education impacts the social and emotional development of

hearing-impaired students. We assessed this through the parents' responses:

- **Self-Confidence:** A key aspect of emotional development is self-confidence. According to the data, 60% of parents noticed a significant increase in their child's self-confidence after receiving special education. Programs that included social skills training and emotional support were particularly effective in boosting confidence, which aligns with other research highlighting the importance of specialized education in building self-esteem among students with disabilities.
- **Communication Skills:** Communication is crucial for social interactions. The data showed that 55% of parents observed improvements in their child's communication skills, especially in using sign language and other aids, which helped them interact better with peers and adults. However, 25% of parents noted that their children still struggled to communicate with hearing individuals, suggesting that while special education is helpful, challenges remain, particularly in more inclusive settings.
- **Social Interactions:** Forming and maintaining relationships is another important part of social development. Half of the parents (50%) reported that their child had become better at making friends and participating in group activities. However, 20% mentioned that their children still found it challenging to interact with hearing peers, often preferring the company of other hearing-impaired students. This indicates that, although special education fosters social skills, integrating into wider social circles can still be difficult for hearing-impaired students.

4.3 Challenges Faced by Hearing-Impaired Students

Despite the positive impacts of special education, the data also pointed to several ongoing challenges:

- **Sense of Inferiority:** About 40% of parents reported that their children continued to feel inferior to their hearing peers, especially in social settings where they were surrounded by hearing individuals. These feelings were often due to communication barriers and a sense of being different, which discouraged them from engaging in social interactions.
- **Participation in Social Events:** Around 30% of parents felt that their children were hesitant to take part in social events

and celebrations, often due to fear of being misunderstood or feelings of inadequacy. This shows that while special education helps develop social skills, more work is needed to build confidence in broader social settings.

- **Use of Hearing Aids:** Hearing aids were another area of concern. While 45% of parents said their children used hearing aids regularly, 20% noted that their children disliked using them because of discomfort or social stigma. This reluctance can limit their participation in both educational and social activities, highlighting the need for more support and encouragement.

4.4 Statistical Validation and Reliability

To make sure our findings were reliable, we validated the data statistically. We used a structured questionnaire and tested its reliability by analyzing responses using the percentage method in Excel. The results showed a high level of consistency, with a reliability score of 0.85, indicating that the data accurately reflects the parents' actual experiences.

4.5 Summary of Key Findings

- **Positive Impacts:** The data confirms that special education positively affects the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students, especially in areas like self-confidence, communication, and social interactions.
- **Ongoing Challenges:** Despite these positive effects, hearing-impaired students still face challenges, such as feelings of inferiority, reluctance to join social events, and issues with using hearing aids.
- **Need for Continued Support:** The findings highlight the need for ongoing support both in special education settings and broader social contexts to fully meet the social and emotional needs of hearing-impaired students.

5.1 Conclusion

This study set out to explore how special education influences the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students. The findings show that specialized educational approaches have a significant positive impact on these students' well-being and social integration. Special education, with its tailored methods and targeted support, plays a vital role in helping hearing-impaired students navigate the unique challenges they face in communication and social interaction.

The analysis highlighted that special education helps improve key aspects of social and emotional development, such as boosting self-

confidence, enhancing communication skills, and encouraging better social interactions. Parents reported noticeable progress in their children's ability to connect with peers, express emotions, and engage in group activities. However, despite these positive outcomes, many hearing-impaired students still struggle with feelings of inferiority, social isolation, and a reluctance to participate in broader social events. These ongoing challenges point to the need for continuous support and targeted efforts to tackle deeper issues related to social stigma and self-esteem.

The study also underscored the importance of early intervention. Early exposure to specialized education programs significantly boosts communication skills and emotional regulation, laying a solid foundation for future social and academic success.

In summary, while special education has made great strides in supporting hearing-impaired students, there is still a lot of work to be done to fully address the challenges these students face. The insights from this study can help shape future educational practices and policies to enhance the quality of life for hearing-impaired students.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are several recommendations to further support the social and emotional development of hearing-impaired students:

1. **Enhanced Social Skills Training:** Schools should incorporate more comprehensive social skills training in special education curricula. These programs should focus not only on communication skills but also on building self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Activities like role-playing, peer interaction exercises, and group work can be very effective.
2. **Parent Involvement and Support:** Parents are crucial to their children's development. Schools should offer workshops and resources to help parents support their children's social and emotional growth at home. Encouraging open communication between parents and educators can ensure that strategies are consistent and effective both at home and at school.
3. **Early Intervention Programs:** Identifying hearing impairment early and starting interventions promptly are essential to reducing related challenges. Schools and healthcare providers should work closely together to ensure

that children with hearing loss are identified early and enrolled in special education programs as soon as possible.

4. **Inclusive Education Initiatives:** To foster social integration, schools should promote inclusive education practices that allow hearing-impaired students to interact with their hearing peers meaningfully. This could include co-curricular activities, peer mentoring programs, and inclusive classrooms where necessary accommodations are provided.
5. **Cultural Competence Training for Educators:** Teachers and special education professionals should receive ongoing training in cultural competence to better understand and address the diverse needs of hearing-impaired students. This training should focus on respecting and incorporating deaf culture and sign language into the learning environment.
6. **Addressing Social Stigma:** Reducing the stigma around hearing impairment is crucial. Schools and communities should conduct awareness campaigns, peer education programs, and promote positive representations of hearing-impaired individuals in media and school activities to change perceptions and foster a more inclusive environment.
7. **Support for Transition to Adulthood:** As hearing-impaired students move from school to adulthood, they face new social and emotional challenges. Special education programs should prepare them for this transition with components like self-advocacy training, career counseling, and social skills development tailored to adult life.
8. **Research and Continuous Improvement:** Ongoing research is necessary to continuously improve special education practices. Schools should collaborate with researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs and develop new strategies to better support hearing-impaired students.

By implementing these recommendations, educators, policymakers, and parents can work together to create a more supportive and inclusive environment, helping hearing-impaired students achieve their full potential socially and emotionally.

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