

Educational Needs of Students with Hearing Impairment in Enugu State

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Abstract

This study investigated the educational needs of students with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with six research questions and three research hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A structured questionnaire titled Hearing Impaired Students Educational Needs Questionnaire` (HISENQ) was developed by the researchers and administered to 30 SS II students with hearing impairment (24 males and 6 females) in Government Secondary School for the Deaf in Ogbete, Enugu state. The data gathered was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions while t-test statistics was used to analyze the hypotheses. The findings were that educational needs of students with hearing impairment in Enugu State include becoming university undergraduates, understanding how to study effectively, and developing good study habits. Also, the findings of this study showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students with hearing impairment in educational needs. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that governments and school authorities should make provisions for professional guidance counsellors in schools. Also, particular attention should be given to educational needs by the school and that boys and girls should be provided by the same guidance and counselling services irrespective of their sex.

Keywords: Educational needs, Hearing impairment.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term hearing impairment has been used to describe all cases of hearing disorders. In view of this, Abang (2005) states that hearing impairment is a generic term that connotes hearing loss that ranges from mild, moderate, severe to profound conditions. It describes a condition or state of an individual who has none or little hearing ability. According to Ugwuanyi (2009), students with hearing impairment are students who due to accident or diseases are either born with hearing loss or develop hearing loss later in life. Alukwu (2011)

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contends that when an individual has a hearing loss, he or she might not detect much sound.

Hearing impairment affects the effective functioning of the total personality no matter the period of onset (Okeke, 2001). Okeke also estimated that about one in every hundred students has some degree of hearing loss and the effect of hearing loss is worse when the disability occurs before birth. Thus, people with hearing loss may differ in their use of language, though has the same intelligence as those without hearing loss. Additional observable characteristics exhibited by persons with hearing impairment as enumerated are: inability to respond when called from a distance, confusing verbal directions, showing no response patterns, complaining of ringing or buzzing sounds in the ear when they sit close to television or radio sets which lead them to turn the volumes so loud that it becomes uncomfortable to other people. They also complain of discharge from their ears and they misarticulate some simple words (Okeke, 2001; Aiyaleso, 2004).

Studies have shown that students with hearing impairment experience series of problems is on their academic performance. Hall (2005) pointed out that students with hearing impairment face more difficulties than their hearing peers because of their need to learn sign language first before they learn other subjects. The subjects offered by these students with hearing impairment seem to be more than what is offered by their hearing counterparts. Apart from the normal subjects in the school curriculum, they must learn how to use sign language and lip reading to enable them understand the normal subjects. This creates a huge problem to these students because learning normal subjects, sign language and lip reading at the same time will not be easy. The possible consequence is that it will lower their academic performance.

The educational problem experienced by students with hearing impairment may be as a result of the inability of the teachers to utilize effective communication methods during learning activities. They find it difficult to participate in school subjects that require language. In view of this, Moores, Kluwin & Mertens (1985) noted that students with hearing impairment usually do better in mathematics than English. This is because mathematics does not require much spoken words but much of calculations. Agreeing with this, Okuoyibo (2006) stated that students with hearing impairment experience difficulty in English language because teaching and learning are done predominantly through language and English language cannot be taught and learnt well without speech. Contributing to their poor performance in English, Hall (2005) observed that as a result of inaccessible communication, students with hearing impairment receive incomplete and inaccurate language input when communicating in English and they often leave out critical language elements needed for comprehension.

The above mentioned problems may result in consistent poor performance of the students in both internal and external examinations. A critical look at the performance of some of the students with hearing impairment from Government Secondary School for the Deaf Ogbete Enugu, in SSCE & NECO examinations 2010, 2011 and 2012 clearly indicate that they perform poorly in almost all school subjects especially those that require the use of language.

An interview with the principal of Government Secondary School for the Deaf Ogbete Enugu revealed that the students' performance in the examination has been very poor in many subjects. None of the students had distinction (A) in English and Science subjects for the 2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic sessions.

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Many of them had lower credits and many failed in almost all subjects. The persistent poor academic performance of the students has been a source of worry to government, parents, educators and students as noted by Aiyaleso, (2004). Some reasons have been attributed to their poor performance. Apart from their difficulty in acquiring language, some authors such as Okuoyibo, (2006) and Hall, (2005) have attributed this to wrong choice of school subjects. School subjects are the subjects offered by the students such as English language, Mathematics, Government, Literature in English., Christian Religious Knowledge just to mention but a few.

Richardson, Long & Foster (2009) found that students who had hearing loss were lower achievers than the students who were not hearing impaired. Farrant in Okeke (2001) revealed that hearing impaired children had retardation in comprehension as was observed in their performance of the tests. Eskay, Onu, Ugwuanyi & Eze (2012) found that gender has no significance influence in the academic performance of pupils with hearing impairment. Furthermore, Obidoa & Onwubolu (2011) posited that there was no significant difference in academic achievement between school types, and classes. But female pupils achieved slightly better than the male.

The current researchers are therefore worried about the fact that students with hearing impairment find it difficult to participate in educationally organized activities. These students have consistent poor educational achievement such as inability to participate in school subjects that require language due to their difficulty in acquiring language, non-effective communication method for interaction, and wrong choice of school subjects which have attributed to their poor performance in both internal and external examinations.

The researchers further suspects that the discouragement may be that the students have not been provided with educational counselling services as they deserved which have adversely affected their education and career development. In addition, the researchers are also motivated to find out the influence of gender on counselling needs of students with hearing impairment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to determine the:

- Educational needs of students with hearing impairment.
- Influence of gender on the educational needs of students with hearing impairment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To guide this study, the following research questions are formulated.

1. What are the educational needs of students with hearing impairment?
2. What is the influence of gender on educational needs of students with hearing impairment?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.5 level of

significance:

H₀₁ There is no significance difference in the mean rating of male and female students with hearing impairment in educational needs as measured by the Hearing Impaired Educational Needs Questionnaire (H I E N Q).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the Study

The research design is a descriptive survey. A descriptive survey design according to Ali (2006) is a study which seeks or uses the sample data in an investigation to document, describe and explain what is in existence or non-existence of the present status of phenomena being investigated. The study used this approach because it aims at all citing information on educational needs of students with hearing impairment in Enugu state of Nigeria.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Enugu state, Nigeria. Specifically, it was conducted in Government Secondary School for the deaf Ogbete in Enugu urban. The area was chosen because the Government Secondary School for the Deaf is the only one secondary school for the deaf functioning in full capacity in Enugu Education Zone of Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The Population of the study comprised all the 30 SS 11 students of Government Secondary School for the Deaf in Ogbete Enugu. SS 11 Students was used for the study because at this advanced stage of senior secondary school programme, they are expected to face the complications and confusion resulting from appropriate career choice, subject selection and accompanying emotional and educational instability.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study comprised 30 senior secondary class 11 students in Government Secondary School for the Hearing impaired Enugu comprising of 24 males and 6 females students. No sampling as the entire population was used for the study since their number is small and manageable.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using a researcher developed questionnaire titled Hearing Impaired Students Educational Needs Questionnaire (H I S E N Q). The instrument was made by the researcher with the help of related literature. HISENQ consists of 12 items. It is on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4- points, Agree (A) 3- points, Disagree (D) 2- points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1- point. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by administering the instrument to

10 students from students who were randomly selected from nearby state. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.84.

The researchers with two trained research assistants who are the teaching staff of the school under study administered the instrument to the respondents. The staff would be educated on the modalities for administering and collection of data. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. Since the scale mean of 4points + 3points + 2points +1point = 10 points divided by 4=2.50, item mean of 2.50 and above was regarded as a positive response while item mean below 2.50 was regarded as a negative response.

The Null hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: **What are the educational needs of students with hearing impairment?**

Table 1: The mean ratings and standard deviations on educational needs of students with hearing impairment

S/N	My educational Needs are how to:	X	SD	D
16	Become university undergraduate one day.	3.06	.94	A
17	Understand how to study effectively.	3.00	.94	A
18	Overcome fear of examinations.	3.03	1.12	A
19	Develop good study habits.	2.96	1.09	A
20	Develop appropriate learning strategies.	2.83	1.05	A
21	Listen carefully to teacher's instructions.	3.10	1.06	A
22	Manage time effectively.	2.96	1.06	A
23	Understand the areas of personal abilities.	2.76	1.10	A
24	Identify educational problems.	3.13	.93	A
25	Acquire academic problem solving skills.	2.76	1.07	A
26	Understand how to manage finance for educational materials.	3.13	.97	A
27	Work hard to obtain good grades in examinations.	3.10	.80	A

Data on Table 1 above, shows the items Mean scores (\bar{X}) and

Standard Deviation (SD) on the educational needs of students with hearing impairment. The mean scores of the students on items 16 – 27 are 3.06, 3.00, 3.03, 2.96, 2.83, 3.10, 2.96, 2.76, 3.13, 2.76, 3.13 and 3.10 with corresponding standard deviations of .94, .94, 1.12, 1.09, 1.05, 1.06, 1.06, 1.10, .93, 1.07, .97 and .80 respectively. This shows that the students agree to have educational needs in all the areas itemized. The standard deviations on the educational needs of the students range from .93 to 1.9. This indicates that the disparities in the opinion of the students on their educational needs are wide.

Table 2: Mean ratings of male and female students with hearing impairment on their educational needs

Sex	N	X	SD
Males	24	2.94	.58
Females	6	3.15	.52

In Table 2, the mean rating of male students with hearing impairment on educational needs is found to be 2.94 while the mean for their female counterpart is 3.15. This suggests that female students have more educational needs than the male students.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal that the educational needs of the students with hearing impairment consist of all the needs itemized in the Table. The highest consensus opinion of the students with hearing impairment on their educational needs is how to: identify educational problems and ability to manage finance for procurement of educational materials with mean scores of 3.13 and 3.13 respectively. Other educational needs of students that has high mean scores are how to: listen and comprehend teacher`s instructions and directions with mean score of 3.10, work hard to obtain good grades in examinations with mean score of 3.10. The least expressed consensus opinion of the students on their educational needs is how to understand their strengths and weakness and how to acquire academic problem solving skills with mean scores of 2.76 and 2.7 respectively.

The findings therefore, reveal that the students with hearing impairment expressed need in all the 12 items making up the cluster. These established facts therefore underscore the need for guidance and counselling services for educational adjustments of students with hearing impairment. In a study conducted by Richardson, Long and Foster (2009) on academic engagement of students with hearing loss in distant education and students without hearing loss also engaged in the same distant education; it was also revealed that students with hearing

loss performed lower than students without hearing loss in distance learning. The poor performance of the students with hearing loss in their study supports the findings of this present study that students with hearing impairment are plagued with numerous educational needs that require guidance and counselling services for appropriate adjustment to enhance their academic performance.

Mean ratings on responses of male and female students with hearing impairment on their educational needs indicated scores of 2.94 and 3.15 respectively. Since the two means in this analysis are both above the table-criterion mean of 2.50, there is clear indication for the acceptability of the male and female students with hearing impairment that they have educational needs as enumerated on Table 2 in this study.

The result of the tested hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students with hearing impairment in their responses to educational needs indicated full acceptability that there is no significance difference.

The result of Ugwuanyi (2009) which indicated that gender has no significant difference on the academic achievement of pupils with hearing impairment seems to support the findings of the recent study. Therefore, based on the evidence available in literature, male and female students with hearing impairment sharing common educational needs should be salvaged by exposing them to guidance and counselling services without gender discrimination or bias.

V. CONCLUSION

The researchers conclude that students with hearing impairment have the educational needs itemized in table 1 of this study; and that there is no significant difference in the educational needs of male and female students with hearing impairment. Therefore, the researchers recommends that particular attention should be paid to educational needs by the students with hearing impairment.

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