

PARENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS ACADEMICS OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research work investigated the parental attitude towards children with hearing impairment. The study was carried out among pupils with hearing impairment at School for the Handicapped, Durbar, Oyo State. Questionnaires were used to elicit data from the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using frequency distribution and simple percentage. The result of the data showed that some parents exhibited positive attitudes towards children with hearing impairment while some other parents did not really care much about such children. This study concluded that parents who previously had negative attitudes towards their children with hearing impairment can develop positive attitudes towards such children.

Introduction

The term hearing impairment and hard of hearing are usually reserved for people who have relative inability to hear sound above the increase in intensity of sound above the visual level necessary before the listener can detect it (Mba, 2001). Hearing impairment is a degree of hearing loss such that a person is unable to understand speech even with amplification. In profound deafness, produced by an audiometer (an instrument used to measure hearing by producing pure tone sounds through a range of frequencies) may not be detected. In total deafness, no sound at all regardless of amplification or method of production are heard (Adedeji, 2005).

Hearing impairment as a disability category is similar to the category of deafness, but it not the same. The official definition of hearing impairment is impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but is not included under the definition of deafness. A hearing loss above 90 decibels is generally considered as deafness which means that a hearing loss below 90 decibels is classified as hearing impairment (Adedeji, 2005).

Hearing impairment is relatively common among children about 1.97% of children have trouble hearing, and permanent hearing loss is found in more than 1 out of

every 1000 children screened for hearing loss, whether or not they have symptoms (Smiths, 2004). Hearing impairment is slightly more common among neither boys nor recognizing and treating impairment can seriously impair a child's ability to speak and understand language. The impairment can lead to failure in school, teaching by peers, social isolation and emotional difficulties hearing loss most commonly results from genetic defects; in newborns and from ear infection or ear wax in older children (Watson, 2012).

Hearing impairment can have profound effect on the social development of young children. An inability to communicate may produce behavioral problems in children with hearing impairment. Extreme frustration in both children and parent both the amount and types of hearing loss are critically important factors in a child's speech development is also influenced by the age of diagnosis and institution of treatment adequacy of amplification, and help provided by parent and education (Mulrow, 2015).

According to Miller (2008), attitude can be seen as a psychological tendency to view a particular object or behavior with a degree of favor or disfavor. It is also an individual's predisposed state of mind reading a value and it is precipitated through a responsive expression toward a person, place, thing or event which in turn influences the individual's thought and action. Attitude has three components – affective, emotional and behavioral components (Miller, 2008). It is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentive and reward.

In addition, an attitude is the target of a person's opinion about whether the behavior is positive or negative. For a parent who has practical knowledge about deafness and has a child stigmatized as "deaf" this can be a shattering experience. According to Adedeji (2001), the first reaction is usually panic, guilt, blame and despair. They strive and struggle to cope with their own emotions resulting in challenges in responses towards the child. These attitudes change in turn may have an adverse effect on the child. For hearing parents, it is a very difficult task to accept the disability. Ones they come to know about the diagnosis of deafness, they are shocked and parents may develop negative attitudes toward such children (Smith, 2004). Hence, as stated by Okeke (2001), parents and family involvement became the indispensable ingredient for engendering optional learning habits in children and for sustaining the accomplishments of enrichment

programs. Many families, including the educated ones may be quite unfamiliar or ignorant about the cause, impact and prognosis of children with disabilities.

Concepts of Hearing Impairment

Different nomenclatures are used in describing people with hearing impairment such as the deaf, adventitiously deaf, and hearing-defective. In the same way, there is no one definition of hearing impairment because professional connected with hearing impairment tends to classify hearing impairment from their specialty viewpoint. The educational classification, for instance is concerned with the time of deafness and the degree of hearing loss sustained while the medical classification of hearing impairment seems to focus on the pathology (Mba, 1995).

Despite these differences in classification, there is universally accepted definition of hearing impairment. One such definition is that advanced by the Committee or Nomenclature of the Conference of Executive of American Schools for the Deaf (2005) the committee defines the deaf as those in whom the sense of hearing is non-functioning for the ordinary purpose of life. The committee also defines the hard of hearing as those in whom the sense of hearing, although defective, is functional with or without hearing aid. This is the after-effect of newer diagnostic and testing methods, which led to reclassification of many who were previously lumped together as totally deaf. Through newer diagnostic and testing methods, persons previously classified as deaf have been reclassified as hard of hearing. The hard of hearing are those who can benefit from wearing hearing aids and from auditory training. This enables them to acquire language naturally (Adedeji, 2007)

The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (2005) defines deafness as a loss of sound/hearing; sensitivity that renders a person's hearing non-functional for day-to-day activities including the reception of speech and language with or without a hearing. The deaf are persons whose auditory channel is sufficiently damaged, rendering the person's sense of hearing non-functional with or without hearing aids for the ordinary purpose of life. Deafness can be either congenital or adventitious. Studies have revealed that the better achievement of hard of hearing pupils in language is attributed to their ability to use their residual hearing in the complex process of language acquisition (Watson, 2012).

Okeke (2001) states that a number of factors can cause hearing loss; these are:

1. Hardened wax or external object blocking the external auditory canal
2. Inflammation of middle ear

3. Infection of middle ear such as sinuses, adenoids, tonsils
4. Heredity
5. Infections such as German measles and small pox
6. Drugs, poisons for example, carbon monoxide, quinine taken by expectant mothers
7. Birth injuries such as prematurity, prolong labour, lack of oxygen
8. Pathological conditions of the fetus for example, erythroblastosis fetalis
9. Developmental anomalies
10. Lack of the right vitamins

Hearing impairment can be very mild or very profound. Children with mild losses can benefit from the regular classroom but with some assistance while those with profound losses need placement in special classes or schools and will need assistance in speech and language training. Whether mild or profound, hearing impairment affects the normal functioning of the child. In line with this, Embrey (2001) studied the effects of a mild hearing loss on educational achievement. He found out that the subject, with mild hearing loss had more difficulty in auditory discrimination than the control groups and did not achieve at the same level as their normal hearing children. O'Neill (2004) found out that hard of hearing children attending regular classes perform worse than their classmates in education achievement.

The Society and Persons with Disabilities

Society's attitude towards people with disabilities historical perspective during the past 40 to 50 years there have been numerous changes in our society with respect to the management and treatment of people with disabilities. In addition, there has been much advancement in medical care as a result most of these individuals reside in the community rather than institutions and depend upon community based private practitioners for oral health care.

Prior to the twentieth Century, societal attitude reflected the view that persons with disabilities were unhealthy, defective and deviant. For centuries, society as a whole treated these people as objects of fear and pity. The prevailing attitudes were that such individuals were incapable of participating in or contributing to society and that they must rely on welfare or charitable organization according to Abosi (2002).

During the 16th century, however, Christians such as Luther and John Calvin indicated that evil spirits possessed the mentally retarded and other persons with disabilities. Thus, these men and other religious leaders of the time often subjected

people with disabilities to mental and physical pains as a means of exercising the spirits (Thomas, 2017). The desire to avoid whatever is associated with evil has affected the society's attitude towards people with disabilities simply because disability is associated with evil. Most of these attitudes are mere misconceptions that stem from lack of proper understanding of disabilities and how they affect functioning. These misconceptions stem directly from the traditional systems of thought, which reflect magical religious philosophies that can safely be called superstition (Abosi, 2002).

Parent and Children with Disabilities

Generally, some parents tend to be over protective. This tends to be even more of when children have a disability. This over-protectiveness and fear from the parents or caregivers is manifested in different ways. One example is when the same parents fears to do everyday chores and tasks for the person with disability rather than allowing him or her to explore the possibility of doing the task on their own, whether their condition permits or not. Unfortunately, this attitude may result in the person with disability becoming dependent on other. In its day to day support to person with disability and their families meets various clients coming from over-protective environments.

They tend to expect tasks to be done for them, because this is what they are accustomed to. However, when given the necessary guidance and support and after a number of attempt, these same individuals are able to complete these tasks either on their own or with minimal support.

Some tasks, such as getting dressed may look difficult to a person with disability in his or her early life, but the same person may overcome it later on in life. However, this situation can be more complicated if the parents and caregivers task complete control over the person's life. The problem escalates when person with disability becomes passive and adopts on attitude of helplessness, which is in term generalized in all areas of life. These include the socialization process, school and education, work and career and even one's general physical and psychological wellbeing (Mulrow, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Several learners with hearing impairment are naturally endowed with talents, and a high level of creativities. Negative parental attitudes towards the children with hearing impairment might be constitute to the naturally endowed talents and as such might not be utilize or developed. The opinion of some parents in the society is that the children with disabilities are possessed and should be abandoned without care (Miller, 2008)

Government of Nigeria has established special needs education, inclusion and integration programs to enable children with hearing impairment gain access to education. However despite these efforts, school enrolment rate is still very low. This may be attributed to a number of factors including attitudes of parents toward children with hearing impairment. Therefore, this study investigate parental attitudes towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State

Purpose of the Study

The study critically investigated parental attitudes toward children with hearing impairment in Oyo State. This study attempted to find out the followings:

- i. The kind of attitudes parents have towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State
- ii. The proportion of parents who have positive attitudes toward their children with hearing impairment in Oyo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated

1. What kinds of attitudes do parents have towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State?
2. What is the percentage of parents who have positive attitudes towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State?

Significance of the Study

This study is of great significant to children with hearing impairment and their parents. Findings from this study can make parent who previously had negative attitude toward their children with hearing impairment to develop positive attitudes towards such children. This can result in such children becoming happier and having greater sense of belonging in their homes. This can also result in this children having better academic achievement.

Scope of the Study

This study investigated parental attitudes towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State. The study was carried out among pupils with hearing impairment at School for the Handicapped, Durbar, Oyo

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study

Population of the Study

The population of the study contains all pupils with hearing impairment at School for the Handicapped, Durbar, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of twenty (20) pupils with hearing impairment at School for the Handicapped, Durbar, Oyo were purposefully selected

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Results

What kinds of attitudes do parents have towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State?

What is the percentage of parents who have positive attitudes towards children with hearing impairment in Oyo State?

Table 1: Significant relationship between parents attitude and children with hearing impairment

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	Pvalue	Remark
Negative	10	13.33	5.32	`	.49	0.96
Positive	10	16.50	1.92			

It is shown in the above table that there is no significant relationship between parents' attitude(negative and positive) and academic performance of students with hearing impairment. It was observed that the relationship between (r = .49; p=0.396) negative and positive on students with hearing impairment not significant, and quite distant, which concludes that positive and negative attitude of parents relate to the academic prowess of children with hearing impairment.

Hence, it was observable that most of the parents have negative attitudes towards their children with hearing impairment

Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that not all parents of children with hearing impairment in Oyo State have positive attitude towards such children. Furthermore, a good number of these parents have negative attitude toward them.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents who have negative attitude toward their children with hearing impairment should develop positive attitude towards them.
2. Parents of children with hearing impairment should love and care for such children
3. Parent of children with hearing impairment should not discriminate against maltreat such children
4. Parent should spend more time with their children with hearing impairment

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