



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Social adjustment of hearing learners in terms of gender in an inclusive setting in secondary schools for the deaf in Kenya

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Magna Scientia Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 11(01), 262–266

Publication history: Received on 23 April 2024; revised on 04 June 2024; accepted on 07 June 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/msarr.2024.11.1.0090>

Abstract

Education is an important factor in the development process of human life. With the help of education, an attempt is made to bring about maximum development of the child. Socialization is the nature of human being. Good adjustment with society makes good personality of a person. This study investigates the social adjustment of hearing learners within inclusive settings in secondary schools for the deaf in Kenya, with a focus on gender differences. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, the research assesses Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) proficiency levels among hearing learners and evaluates their social adjustment. A quantitative approach was employed, surveying 100 hearing learners using the Social Adjustment Scale (SAS-M). Data were collected from 100 hearing learners. The findings indicate that 66% of respondents demonstrate good to excellent proficiency in KSL, with 35% having good proficiency, 31% fair proficiency, and 28% excellent proficiency. However, 6% reported poor proficiency, highlighting the need for additional support. In terms of social adjustment, male students had a mean score of 3.3022, while female students had a higher mean score of 3.7600 on a scale of 5. Although the difference in mean social adjustment scores was not statistically significant, there is slightly higher social adjustment among females. The report emphasizes the importance of tailored support to enhance language proficiency and social adjustment among hearing learners in schools for the deaf, contributing to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Social Adjustment; Hearing Learners; Gender Differences; Secondary Schools for the Deaf

1. Introduction

The concept of inclusive education has grown to be the most popular in the field of education in the world. (Kanapathippilai,2021). The general focus on school inclusion can be traced back to The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education that was crafted in 1994 (UNESCO 1994). Inclusive education is a model wherein students with special needs and disabilities study and spend time with students who do not have special needs or disability.(Pandey,2019). Inclusive education increased students' engaged behavior, particularly active engagement, and promoted social engagement through increased peer interactions, student autonomy, and inclusivity (Jennifer, 2019).

In Kenya, schools for the deaf which enroll and integrate hearing learners are Rev. Muhoro secondary school for the deaf in Nyeri County, St. Angelas School for the deaf in Kakamega County and St. Bridgit School for the deaf in Busia County.

Human beings try to adjust themselves in diverse settings. The concept of adjustment was first given by Darwin who used it as adaptation meaning to survive in the physical world. Human beings are a class of social animals. They need

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the society to live. It is important that they therefore adjust with what is in the society. Learners in school society being included as well. Bhagat (2016) alludes that adjustment has three important areas which are Social Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment and School Adjustment.

This study was limited to social adjustment. Huffines (2002) defines social adjustment as the ability of a student to adapt the rules and regulations while being able to function successfully in the school. Social adjustment is the key for leading happy and fruitful life. (Acharya, 2022). Acharya adds that Social adjustable persons lead a quality life. Schneiders (2010) highlights the traits of good social adjustment are as follows one, having high self-control in dealing with situations or problems, in other words not showing excessive emotional tension. Two, do not show excessive psychological mechanisms, acts naturally in reacting to problems and conflicts encountered as well as being able to process thoughts and feelings well, so as to find the right ways to solve the problem. Third, having the capability of reasonable judgment and self-control, have the basic ability to think and can give consideration to the behavior made to overcome the problems he faces. Four, the competence to learn so that he can develop his qualities, especially in being willing to learn from experience and make good use of the experience, and five the capacity to have a realistic, objective attitude, able to assess situations, problems and inadequacies objectively. When children join school, they adjust to the new environment which is different from home. Polloway, et al. (1994), mentioned that youth spend most of their day in school, and their behavior in school is the crucial element in overall social adjustment. One of the targets of education is to positive attitudes, behavior, values, needs and several other variables which are psychological and behavioral in nature. (Srivastava, 2018). In an inclusive setting the hearing learners will try to adjust to learning and use of sign language so as to interact with their peers as well as staff who are deaf. The world of silence is not their norm. According to (Jain & Jadav, 2018) the environment has a starring role in the progression of a maladjusted to be adjusted. In the field of psychology, adjustment is staying without difficulties with the members of the society. (Bhardwaj & Sharma, 2021). Social adjustment will give an idea to the society and institutions how to tackle the challenges facing the learners and how to help them in their development.

Inclusive education has been noted to be of great importance to Special Educational Needs (Mag et al., 2017). Many studies have been carried out on benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities. But is it also of importance for students who have no impairment? Research have revealed that many participants of Inclusive education have gained. For example, all children, whether or not they have disabilities or special needs, perform better academically when educated in inclusive settings (Szumski et al., 2017). Given this context, the study aims to examine the levels of adjustment among hearing students, with a focus on gender differences, in an inclusive setting within secondary schools for the deaf in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the proficiency levels of Kenyan Sign Language among hearing learners enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya.
- To evaluate the levels of social adjustment among students with hearing in terms of gender enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya.
- To compare social adjustment among students with hearing in terms of gender enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon concepts from Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-determination theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. In the context of inclusive education, hearing learners' sense of autonomy in learning and social interactions, their perceived competence in communicating and interacting within the deaf community, and their sense of relatedness to peers and teachers may influence their social adjustment outcomes.

2. Methodology

Quantitative approach was employed to collect data pertaining to the present investigation. The catchment area were secondary schools for the deaf which admit learners with hearing. The population were learners with hearing admitted in secondary schools for the deaf. Three secondary schools were purposively sampled. Using convenience sampling 100 learners were selected as participants. Social adjustment scale (SAS-M) utilized to know the social adjustment of students. In this study the participants reacted to the subscales of social and leisure activities which has 9 items. Ratings were based on a 5-point Likert scale where the participants indicated how true each statement on social adjustment

issues was (1 = Not at all, 2 = occasionally, 3 = about half the time, 4= most of the time and 5= all the time). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and calculate in mean standard deviation and T-value.

3. Findings

3.1. Proficiency levels of Kenyan Sign Language among hearing learners

Assessing the proficiency levels of Kenyan Sign Language among hearing learners in schools for the deaf is crucial for fostering effective communication, social integration, academic achievement, inclusivity, and empathy. It also provides essential feedback for educators and informs research and policy development, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Proficiency levels of KSL among hearing learners enrolled in schools for the deaf is depicted in table 1.

Table 1 Proficiency levels of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) among hearing learners enrolled in schools for the deaf

Proficiency in Kenyan Sign Language					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Fair	31	31.0	31.0	37.0
	Good	35	35.0	35.0	72.0
	Excellent	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The analysis of proficiency in Kenyan Sign Language among a sample of 100 individuals reveals that the majority exhibit either "Good" (35.0%) or "Fair" (31.0%) proficiency, with a notable 28.0% demonstrating "Excellent" proficiency. Only a small fraction, 6.0%, have "Poor" proficiency. Cumulatively, 37.0% of the sample possess at least "Fair" proficiency, 72.0% have at least "Good" proficiency, and the entirety of the sample is accounted for without any missing data. These findings indicate a strong overall capacity for communication in Kenyan Sign Language within this group, particularly among the 63.0% who are categorized as having "Good" or "Excellent" proficiency. This suggests that most individuals are well-prepared to engage in inclusive educational settings.

3.2. Levels of social adjustment among hearing students in terms of gender in an inclusive setting in secondary schools for the deaf in Kenya

Gender can significantly influence social experiences and adjustment processes. Social adjustment is closely linked to peer relationships. Evaluating gender differences in social adjustment can provide insights into how male and female students interact with their deaf peers and with each other. Table 2 depicts the levels of social adjustment among hearing students, in terms of gender, enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya.

Table 2 Levels of social adjustment among students with hearing in terms of gender enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Social Adjustment of Hearing Learners	Male	50	3.3022	0.56702
	Female	50	3.7600	0.42495

N- Number of participants, Std. Dev- standard deviation

Male students have a mean social adjustment score of 3.3022, falling within the range of average adjustment. Female students have a higher mean social adjustment score of 3.7600, indicating a slightly higher level of social adjustment compared to male students. The standard deviation for male students is 0.56702, while for female students, it is 0.42495. This suggests that there is slightly more variability in social adjustment scores among male students compared to female students. The analysis suggests that, on average, both male and female students with hearing enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya demonstrate social adjustment levels falling within the range of average adjustment. However, female students tend to have slightly higher levels of social adjustment compared to male students. The

standard deviation values indicate that there is more variability in social adjustment scores among male students, implying that while some male students may have lower scores, others may have higher scores, leading to a wider spread of scores among males.

3.3. Social adjustment among students with hearing in terms of gender enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya.

In the context of inclusive education, social adjustment plays a crucial role in the overall development and well-being of students. This is particularly true in secondary schools for the deaf in Kenya, where hearing learners interact with their deaf peers in a unique social and academic environment. Understanding the social adjustment of hearing learners in terms of gender is vital for creating an inclusive and supportive school atmosphere. Table 3 presents a detailed analysis of social adjustment among hearing students enrolled in schools for the deaf, segmented by gender.

Table 3 Social adjustment among students with hearing in terms of gender enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Social Adjustment	Equal variances assumed	-4.392	98	0.000	-0.44444
	Equal variances not assumed	-4.392	90.333	0.000	-0.44444

The t-value is -4.392, indicating a significant difference in social adjustment scores between male and female students. The degrees of freedom (df) are 98 when equal variances are assumed and 90.333 when equal variances are not assumed. The p-value is 0.000 for both scenarios, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a significant difference. The mean difference between male and female students' social adjustment scores is -0.44444. The results of the t-test suggest that there is a significant difference in social adjustment between male and female students enrolled in schools for the deaf in Kenya. The negative mean difference indicates that, on average, female students have higher social adjustment scores compared to male students.

4. Conclusion

The majority of hearing learners demonstrate proficiency in KSL, with 63.0% categorized as having "Good" or "Excellent" proficiency. Only a small fraction, 6.0%, exhibit "Poor" proficiency. These findings suggest that most hearing learners in schools for the deaf are well-prepared to engage in inclusive educational settings and communicate effectively in KSL. Both male and female hearing learners show social adjustment falling within the range of average adjustment. Female students tend to have slightly higher levels of social adjustment compared to male students. There is slightly more variability in social adjustment scores among male students compared to female students. The t-test results indicate a significant difference in social adjustment scores between male and female students. Female students, on average, have higher social adjustment scores compared to male students.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including educators, specialists, community members, and researchers, educational institutions to implement holistic approaches that address the complex challenges faced by hearing learners in schools for the deaf.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

I extend my gratitude to all the participants who took part in this study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

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