LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND COPING MECHANISMS OF GRADE SCHOOL OF HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess and describe the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils in the elementary schools of the Second District of Pampanga for the School Year 2014-2015. It described the profile of the respondents according to age, sex, and grade point average; the learning difficulties of hearing impaired pupils as to lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and academic achievement, and negative attitude and engagement towards learning and the materials to be used in improving the learning difficulties of the pupils; and the measures or coping mechanisms of the hearing impaired pupils in addressing their learning difficulties. The study utilized the descriptive method of research using simple random sampling technique. The study was conducted at the seven (7) public elementary schools in the Second District of Pampanga namely Guagua Elementary School, Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Floridablanca Elementary School, San Isidro Elementary School, Lubao Elementary School, Sto. Tomas Elementary School and Parulog Elementary School during the school year 2014-2015. The respondents of the survey were seven (7) SPED teachers and 60 hearing impaired pupils from the seven (7) public elementary schools in Pampanga. Based from the data collected, the following were concluded: the hearing impaired pupil-respondents are aged 7 years old, females, and having a grade point average of D (75%-79%) and AP (80%-84%); hearing impaired pupils seldom experience difficulties in terms of lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and low academic achievement, and negative attitude and poor engagement towards learning; hearing impaired pupils used pictures as their tools that accompany them in learning; hearing impaired pupils often take measures to help themselves fight the difficulties brought about by their condition and learning difficulties; there were no significant differences on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to age, sex, and grade point average in their learning difficulties; and there is no significant relationship on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils and their SPED teachers in their learning difficulties. Meanwhile, the following were recommended: teachers should provide intervention and mediation programs to sustain the positive outlook of the hearing impaired pupils on their conditions and on their academic performance; teachers should also provide more visual materials to further accompany the hearing impaired pupils on their studies; parents should also take more initiative in engaging themselves in the schooling of their children and collaborated with teachers in providing tutorial type of assistance for the hearing impaired pupils; and the school should also intensify its efforts in sending its teachers, especially the SPED teachers in attending more seminars catering the special needs of the hearing impaired pupils and also outsource more materials to support the Special Education program for the said pupils.
INTRODUCTION

Being hearing impaired is one of the challenges faced by today’s generation of physically challenged learners, especially by those poor but deserving students who are forced to enroll in the public school system, and not in the special school for hearing impaired, due to financial incapacity. This adds to their burden of attaining quality and relevant education and at the same time, understanding and acceptance of their physical condition.

As stated in Republic Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons” hearing impaired individuals should not be denied of dignified and universal rights. As mentioned in Section 32, (h) Educational assistance to person with disability shall be provided for them to pursue primary, secondary, tertiary, post tertiary as well as vocational or technical education, in both public and private schools. Through the provision of scholarships, grants, financial aids subsidies and other incentives to qualified persons with disability including support for books, learning materials and uniform allowance to extent feasible: Provided, that persons with disability shall meet minimum admission requirements. A student with a hearing impairment will learn key concepts from the curriculum, and develop the skills to apply these. Some students with a hearing impairment may exceed year level expectations in subject areas of interest, but then have fewer skills in other areas (The State of Queensland / Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014).

A classroom is not a place for children with sensitive ears. They are bothered by the noise from the other children who speak all at once and move their chairs back and forth because they need to pick up a pencil off the floor or just cannot sit still. The noise adversely affects the level of concentration among the children, a problem which is exacerbated in children who suffer from hearing loss to begin with (Forum BesserHören, 2004). Meanwhile, as differentiated by University of Cambridge (2013), deafness and hearing impairment are terms used to cover the whole range of hearing loss. This includes people who are: deaf, partially deaf/partially hearing, deafened, deaf/blind, hard of hearing, and people with tinnitus. A medical assessment to ascertain the level of impairment may be appropriate. Interestingly, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2014) summed up that it is well recognized that hearing is critical to speech and language development, communication, and learning. Children with listening difficulties due to hearing loss or auditory processing problems continue to be an under-identified and underserved population. The earlier hearing loss occurs in a child’s life, the more serious the effects on the child’s development. Similarly, the earlier the problem is identified and intervention begun, the less serious the ultimate impact. Untreated hearing loss may affect a child’s ability to learn and could influence their grades.

Meanwhile, the study of Nuttaya, Surachai, and Wacheerapan (2011) compared the language achievement of Thai hearing impaired students with the national average scores of Thai language and to predict differences in Thai language skills when they graduate from colleges. The results showed that the hearing impaired students have lower scores than national average scores about 52 to 54 percentages, which is indicated that the hearing impaired students have a very serious problem. This finding is opposite from the most Thai people thinking about the reading ability of the hearing impaired students that they can read Thai as normal students, which is incorrect. Therefore, it should be urgent to the Thai community and, perhaps, other country that it is necessary to improve learning processes and develop proper technologies for hearing impaired students to increase their language skills.

Having connection is the study conducted by Kontra and Csizer (2013) that aimed to point out the relationship between foreign language learning motivation and sign language use among hearing impaired Hungarians. The results supported the notion that sign language use helps foreign language learning. Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is indeed no justification for further neglecting the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people as foreign language learners and that their claim for equal opportunities in language learning is substantiated. In a relative manner, Coppens, et al. (2011) examined the vocabulary knowledge of pupils in grades 3-6, and in particular the relative reading vocabulary disadvantage of hearing-impaired pupils. The results showed that most hearing pupils reached this norm, whereas most hearing-impaired pupils did not. In addition, results showed that hearing-impaired pupils not only knew fewer words, but that they also knew them less well. This lack of deeper knowledge remained even when matching hearing and hearing-impaired children on minimal word knowledge. Additionally, comparison of the two tasks demonstrated the efficacy of the lexical decision task as a measure of lexical semantic knowledge.

Having connection is the study of Ozbic and Kogovsek (2010) that determined the differences in vowel formant values between hearing speakers, severely hearing-impaired speakers, and profoundly hearing impaired speakers, and investigated the influence of perceptual constraints on the contractiveness of spoken vowels in speakers with hearing loss, as these underline the importance of good phonation, articulation, and resonance in speech production. The results suggest that speech rehabilitation should consider specific tasks and training for vowel production, including neuromuscular oral control and self-monitoring, to improve speech intelligibility. The results are also useful for those who are in contact with people with hearing impairment, such as teachers, audiologists, speech and language pathologists, nurses, and researchers in speech and hearing sciences.

Significantly, Avcioglu (2007) determined whether a social skill instruction program, prepared according to the cooperative learning method, is effective for children with hearing disability in learning the basic social skills, starting and continuing a relationship, conducting a work with a group, and the generalization of these skills. Result showed that this program is effective for hearing impaired students who can learn some social skills.
On the other hand, the study of Avcioglu (2007) discussed a certain program that could benefit the hearing impaired learners socially and academically in school. This also coincides to the aim of the present study in highlighting the learning difficulties of hearing impaired learners to help them in their studies. Differences of the previous studies and the present study lie on other variables stipulated as bases of the result. Given the proceeding premises, this study aimed to explore the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils in the elementary schools of the 2nd district of Pampanga. Further, it is also significant to identify specific measures on how they cope with the challenges brought about by their physical limitations.

**FRAMEWORK**

Hearing impairment has been viewed to be disadvantageous on the part of the pupils for this may hamper their performance and capacity of learning and doing things. Untreated hearing loss may affect a child’s ability to learn and could influence their grades. Even children with minimal hearing loss are at risk academically compared to their normal hearing peers. Even minor untreated hearing loss can be problematic in school. This is why it is important to be alert to indications of hearing loss in pupils. But highlighting such challenges encountered by these highly marginalized pupils is an avenue that would make their learning a lot more easy, adaptive, and conducive on their condition. This is why it is important to be alert to indications of hearing loss in pupils and should be given proper help and support. Figure 1represents the schematic diagram of the study. Frame 1 represents the input, and Frame 2 illustrates the output. Frame 1 describes the input which includes the profile of the respondents according to age, sex, and grade point average; the learning difficulties of hearing impaired pupils as to lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and low academic achievement, and negative attitude and poor engagement towards learning and the materials to be used in improving the learning difficulties of the pupils.

**Figure 1:** Schematic Diagram of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profile of the Respondents:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Measures to Address the Learning Difficulties of the Hearing Impaired Pupils</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Age</td>
<td>- Lack of Self-Motivation and Self-Worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sex</td>
<td>- Loss of Effective Communication and Socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grade Point Average</td>
<td>- Inactive Participation and Low Academic Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties of the Hearing Impaired Pupils:</td>
<td>- Negative Attitude and Poor Engagement towards Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures to Address the Learning Difficulties of the Hearing Impaired Pupils</td>
<td>Feedbacks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was conducted to describe and assess the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils in the public elementary schools of the Second District of Pampanga for the School Year 2014-2015.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How is the profile of the pupil - respondents described as to:
   a. Age;
   b. Sex;
   c. Grade Point Average?

2. What are the learning difficulties being encountered by the hearing impaired pupils in terms of:
   a. Lack of Self-Motivation and Self-worth;
   b. Loss of Effective Communication and Socialization;
   c. Inactive Participation and Low Academic Achievement; and
   d. Negative Attitude and Poor Engagement towards Learning?

3. What are the learning materials being used to remedy the difficulties encountered by the hearing impaired pupils?
   a) What measures are to be undertaken to address the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils?
   b) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the pupil-respondents and their learning difficulties?
   c) Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of the hearing impaired pupils and their teachers on the learning difficulties encountered by the former?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The descriptive – survey method was used in gathering data and information to assess and describe the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils. As elaborated by Ary, et al. (2010), descriptive research or survey research permits the researcher to summarize the characteristics of different groups or to measure their attitudes and opinions toward some issue. The questionnaires were the main instruments used to gather data needed in the study. The descriptive approach of research was utilized in detailing, explaining, understanding, expounding, and analyzing the problem at hand. Thus, this method enabled the researcher to infer and conclude the present learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils and enabled the former to set possible solutions to remedy such difficulties.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted at the seven (7) public elementary schools in the second district of Pampanga namely: Guagua Elementary School, Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Floridablanca Elementary School, San Isidro Elementary School, Lubao Elementary School, Sto. Tomas Elementary School and Parulog Elementary School during the school year 2014-2015. The respondents of the survey were seven (7) SPED teachers and 60 hearing impaired pupils.

Instrumental Analysis

The questionnaires were the main instruments used in collecting the data in this study. The related literature and studies were taken from reading of researchers whose works have similar bearing on this study and helped the researcher in the formulation of the questionnaires. As for the purpose of utilizing questionnaire, Jha (2011) stated that a questionnaire is a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses. Generally these questions are factual and designed for securing information about certain knowledge. The questionnaire consists of a series of questions or statements to which individuals are asked to respond. The questions are frequently asked for facts or the opinions, attitudes or preferences of the respondents.

The researcher prepared the following questionnaires:

Students’ questionnaire

The questionnaire contained the demographic profile of respondents which include age, sex, and grade point average; the learning difficulties experienced by the hearing impaired pupils in terms of lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and academic achievement, and negative attitude and engagement towards learning; and the coping mechanism of their hearing impaired pupils in their physical limitation and the materials that can be used to remedy the learning difficulties of the hearing impaired pupils.

Sped teachers’ questionnaire

The questionnaire contained their perceived learning difficulties experienced by their hearing impaired pupils in terms of lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and academic achievement, negative attitude and engagement towards learning; and their perception on the coping mechanism of their hearing impaired pupils with regards to their physical limitation. On analyzing documents, Jha (2011) stipulated that documentary surveys deal with a systematic examination of current records, documents, etc., to gather and classify data and evaluate the content. It may be in the form of critical studies, text book analysis, curriculum analysis, job analysis, and analysis of characteristics of school records and reports. Forms 138 (Report Card) and 137 were used to determine the academic performance of the pupils.
DATA ANALYSIS

In analyzing and interpreting the data gathered, descriptive statistical technique such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, t-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA or F-test) were used. The descriptive ratings on numerical ratings of the learning difficulties and measures taken by the hearing impaired pupils were based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Point Scale</th>
<th>Descriptive Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.51 – 5.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A – Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51 – 4.50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Of – Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51 – 3.50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oc– Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.51 – 2.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S – Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 – 1.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N – Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation analysis through t-test and F-test (ANOVA) were used to address the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Hearing Impaired Pupils

The hearing impaired pupil-respondents are aged seven (7) years old, which is 17% of the respondents with a mean of 13 years; majority of 34 or 57% are females; and have a grade point average of D (75%-79%) and AP (80%-84%), considerably belonged to the passing level.

Learning Difficulties of the Hearing Impaired Pupils

On the summary results of the learning difficulties experienced by the hearing impaired pupils according to lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization, inactive participation and low academic achievement, and negative attitude and poor engagement towards learning, majority of the respondents seldom experience difficulties as reflected by the total average weighted mean of 1.84 described as “Seldom”. This is why it is important to be alert to indications of hearing loss in the pupils. They may not become properly integrated and they tend to keep in the background as they try to avoid standing out from their classmates.

Learning Materials for the Hearing Impaired Pupils

On the learning materials used by the hearing impaired pupils to accompany them in learning, “pictures” are the most widely used learning materials by the respondents garnering a perfect 60 score or 100% used by the respondents. Due to problems with their hearing, the hearing impaired pupils rely much heavily on what they see through pictures.

MEASURES IN ADDRESSING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED PUPILS
On the measures taken by the hearing impaired pupils in addressing learning difficulties, majority of the respondents “Often” take measures to help themselves fight the difficulties brought about by their condition as reflected by the average weighted mean of 3.79 described as “Often.”

**Significant Relationship between the Profile of the Pupil-Respondents and Their Learning Difficulties**

On the test of significant difference on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to age in their learning difficulties, the students’ perceptions do not vary significantly as reflected by the t-value of 1.52 not significant at 0.13, which is not significant at 0.05 level, thus, accepting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference on the learning difficulties experienced by the hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to age.

Meanwhile, on the test significant difference on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to sex in their learning difficulties, the students’ perceptions do not vary significantly as reflected by the t-value of 1.98 not significant at 0.05, which is not significant at 0.05 level, thus, accepting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference on the learning difficulties experienced by the hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to sex.

Lastly, on the test of significant difference of the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to grade point average in their learning difficulties, the students’ perceptions do not vary significantly as reflected by the t-value of 1.50 significant at 0.14, which is not significant at 0.05 level, thus, accepting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference on the learning difficulties experienced by the hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to grade point average. This result deviates from most researches on the effect of hearing impairment on pupils’ academic performance.

On the test of significant relationship on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils and their SPED teachers in their learning difficulties, the pupils’ and teachers’ perceptions vary significantly as reflected by the overall F-value of 0.35 significant at 0.17, which is not significant at 0.05 level, thus, accepting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils and SPED teachers in the learning difficulties they are experiencing.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Based from the summary of the findings, the researcher came out with the following generalizations:
  - The hearing impaired pupils-respondents are aged seven (7) years old, females, and having a grade point average of D (75%-79%) and AP (80%-84%).
  - Hearing impaired pupils “Seldom” experience learning difficulties in terms of lack of self-motivation and self-worth, loss of effective communication and socialization,
  - inactive participation and academic achievement, and negative attitude and engagement towards learning.
  - Hearing impaired pupils used pictures as their learning tools that help them in learning.
  - Hearing impaired pupils “Often” take measures to solve the difficulties brought about by their condition and learning difficulties.
  - There is no significant difference on the perceptions of hearing impaired pupils when grouped according to age, sex, and grade point average in their learning difficulties

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Based from the findings of the study as reflected by the above-cited conclusions, the researcher offers the following recommendations:
  - Parents must be encouraged to send their hearing impaired children starting seven years old so as to equip them with the skills needed for their early childhood education.
  - Teachers may consider the a) provision of intervention and remediation programs to sustain the positive outlook of the hearing impaired pupils on their condition and academic performance, that of, involving them in school activities like dancing, drawing, painting, scouting, camping, among other; and c) encourage hearing impaired pupils to make friends not only with their fellow hearing impaired pupils but as well as with other learners from the regular school;
  - The school should also intensify its efforts in sending SPED Teachers to seminars catering the special needs of the hearing impaired pupils and also outsource more materials to support its program;
  - Parents must do their best to seek and provide their hearing impaired children to have the necessary measures like acquiring hearing aid, cochlear implant to fight the difficulties brought about by their condition. Parents should also take more initiative.
  - to engage and collaborate with teachers in providing tutorial type of assistance for the hearing impaired pupils.
  - Government must provide assistance to the hearing impaired pupils specifically educational and financial to sustain their everyday fare, food and needed school materials.

**REFERENCES**


