

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY SIZE AND PARENTAL EDUCATION ON SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF SCHOOL PUPILS WITH HEARING IMPAREMENT

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the influence of family size and parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment in Enugu state. The study adopted an ex-post facto design. The population of the study comprised all the 18 primary five pupils with hearing impairment in the two primary schools for the hearing impaired persons in Enugu state. The sample size of the study is same with the population. Since the population was so small the researchers made use of the entire population as the sample for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Two instruments (family demographic questionnaire and Social Competence of Hearing Impaired Pupils' Questionnaire (SCHIPQ) were developed, validated and used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and ANOVA to test the hypotheses at 0.05 p value. Results revealed, among others that large, medium and small family sizes had almost equal influence on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. Based on the findings, recommendation was made among others that Government should through the ministry of education organize some intervention programmes (seminars, workshops and symposia) to enlighten the parents on the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

Hearing impairment is a condition of obstruction in the hearing mechanism of an individual which could affect the balance of the individual. It could be seen as deficiency in hearing as a result of physical deficit associated with genetic factor which could come at birth or later in life (Ugwuanyi, 2012). Hearing impairment of any degree is associated with some problems especially in language and communication with others. Evidence-based study highlighted that individuals with hearing impairment find it difficult to make clear statement (s) that can be understood by their hearing peers (Obikeze & Ofojebe, 2000). Apparently, this accounts for why most individuals with

hearing impairment use sign language in their daily communication with others in society.

However, some researchers have somewhat positive view about the characteristics of pupils with hearing impairment. For instance, Richardson & Woodly, (2001) report that pupils with hearing impairment act like hearing pupils in social relationship. Kremeyer, Croke, Drye, Egbert, & Kleimn (2000) are also of the view that pupils with hearing impairment could socialize well with their peers when they are well accepted in social relationship.

Social competence could be referred to as the ability of an individual to interact well with others in a social setting without much manifestation of maladjustments. According to Schneider (1993), social competence is the ability to implement developmentally appropriate social behaviors that enhance one's interpersonal relationship without causing harm to anyone. It is the ability to perform a series of cognitive processes and enact appropriate behaviors in social situations (Knapp, 2001). Rubin & Rose-Krasno, (1992) see social competence as pupils' capacity to interact effectively with their environment. The environment here could be the teacher, co-pupils, parents, siblings, teaching and learning materials among others. Hence, social competence of people with hearing impairment could be seen as their social functioning which is manifested in the ways they accept others and how others accept them in a social milieu.

Measures of the social competence of the pupils include peer status, pro-social behaviours and interpersonal skills (Rydell, Hagekull, Bohlin, 1997). Peer status is the social placement of an individual by the mates. Peers can say whether an individual is social or not social. Pro-social behaviors are characteristics that support social relationship between one person and another. Pupils with hearing impairment are pro-social when they like social relationships with their peers and adults. On the other hand, interpersonal skills are the behaviours that enhance smooth social interaction among people. If a person with hearing impairment has good peer status, pro-social behavior and good interpersonal skills, it could be said that he/ she is socially competent. However, if an individual has poor peer status, anti-social behavior and poor social skills, it could be said that he/she has poor social competence. This explains how the pupils with hearing impairment understand their peers and how their peers understand them in social relationship.

Some pupils with hearing impairment seem to suffer from certain psychological and social problems. Psychological problems are situations of mind uneasiness. Mind uneasiness as a result of lack of language facilities among the hearing impaired individuals increases their frustration and causes them to exhibit temper tantrums (Mindel & Vernon, 2011). Research have

shown that pupils with hearing impairment exhibit psychological depressions and maladjustments in their social interaction (Obikeze & ofojebe, 2000). Accordingly, Meadow (1975) state that pupils with hearing impairment consistently are more rigid, egocentric, impulsive as well as lacking in creativity and empathy. Corroborating this view, Obikeze & Ofojebe, (2000) states that the pupils with hearing impairment consistently have more adjustment problems than the hearing pupils. The researchers further stressed that the pupils are often emotionally insecure in their relationship with others as they are not sure of being understood by others when they are using sign language. A pupil with hearing impairment has difficulties developing relationships with family members, making friends, and participating in social activities (Sass-Lehrer, Benedict & Hutchinson, 2011). In an earlier study, Obikeze & Ofojebe (2000) clearly states that a pupil with hearing impairment is likely to be less mature socially than the hearing pupil of the same age as a result of greater number of frustrations he is subjected to.

Children in this situation most often have social and relationship problems due to communication problem. They are always found in solitary places and they find it difficult to mix and associate freely with peers (Elksnin, 2006). The authors continued that in general education settings they have poorer social relationships than their hearing peers (Cappelli, Daniels, Durieux-Smith, Mc Grath, & Neuss, 2005). Research reported significantly lower likeability, social preference, and acceptance ratings for elementary pupils who are hearing impaired when compared to hearing peers. They noted that these low ratings did not change over time, despite opportunities for peer social interaction (Antia & Kreimeyer, 1996). In some cases hearing impairment may not affect pupils' social competence. Nunes & Pretzlik (2001) found that pupils with hearing impairment were as likely as their hearing peers to be popular or rejected, but were significantly less likely to have friends in their class. However, familiarity with peers can impact social outcomes, specifically quality peer interaction. Antia, Kreimeyer & Eldredge (1994) reported that interaction increases among pupils with and without hearing loss when they participate in activities that promote familiarity.

Similarly, pupils with hearing impairment when involved in structured school social activities could make friends and participate in social activities with hearing peers. Frequency of participation in these activities could improve the social competence of the pupils. Buttressing this view, Wauters & Knoors (2008) found no significant difference in social competence between pupils with and those without hearing impairment. This buttresses the need for the family to be alive to its socializing responsibilities. However, in spite of the expected roles of the family in social competence development, little is

known about the influence of family background variables like family size and parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. It is then pertinent to investigate if family size and parental education influences social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

The family is a natural institution which exists all over the world. It is the basic unit of social relationship (Okolo, 2006). Nam (2004) sees family as a social unit related by blood, marriage and can be described as nuclear (parents and children) or extended (encompassing other relatives). Field & Casper (2001) had earlier stated that family is two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and living in the same residence. It could be seen as a single social group inextricably interwoven with all other systems of society. Burgess & Locke in Akubue (2006) see family as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption, consisting of single households, interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, brother and sister thereby creating a common culture. From the forgoing, family could be seen as the smallest, closest and warmest existing social institution made up of father, mother and children which influences' social competence towards functional living in the society.

The family performs varying roles such as procreation, socialization, psychological function, economic functions and exchange of affection among others (Akubue, 2006). A child born into the family is expected to be equipped with the knowledge of don'ts of the family and those of society. The family also is expected to prepare the child for adulthood through empowering him or her with formal education and any other training that will make the child a functional member of society. The family creates social atmosphere of love and being loved by the members of the family which spans to the larger society. This suggests that family variable could help in social competence development of individuals. According to Brese (2013), the major indicators of family background that could impact pupils' social competence include family size and parents education.

Family size indicates the number of people in a family. It is the number of children a family has (Owuanam & Alowolodu, 2014). A family that has one or two children is a small size family; family with three to four children is medium size family while the family that has five and above number of children is high size family or large family (Fields, & Casper, 2001). The size of the family could influence the amount of care and concern given to the children. When fathers play a visible and nurturing role in their children's lives, the children have better emotional and social outcomes and are more likely to have a stronger coping and adaptation skills, be better

equipped to solve problems, have longer lasting relationship among others (Schor, 2003). Pupils with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention and motivation and thus have more access to resources than children from large families (Omeh, 2010). The additional attention and motivation according to Omeh leads to better school performance. Other researchers have equally shown that families with large number of children could find it difficult to care for the children's well being. For instance, Ogagbolo (2005) states that students from both medium sized families. Following the above statement, this study intends to find out the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

In addition to family size, parental education is another factor that could influence the social competence of children. Parental education is the level of educational attainment of parents which could be Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D), Masters degree (M. Ed, M.Sc. etc), Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Bachelor of Arts (BA) Bachelor of Education (B.ED), Higher National Diploma (HND), Ordinary National Diploma (OND), National Certificate in Education (NCE), West African School Certificate (WASE), first school Living Certificate (FSLC). Some parents may have no formal education. These different educational qualifications could influence the social competence of a child. There are some differences in the opinion of the researchers on the influence of parental education. Some scholars document that parental education influence students' academic achievement (Omeh, 2010; Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012; Machebe, 2012). Other scholars state that there is no relationship between parental education and academic achievement of pupils (Mc Neal, 2001; Jeffery, 2003). However, little or no studies have documented the influence of parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

From the forgoing expositions and the gaps indicated, it is necessary that an investigation be conducted on influence of family background on the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. Hence this study intends to find out the influence of family background on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment in Enugu State.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to determine the influence of family background on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically his study seeks to determine the influence of family size and parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- 1) What is the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.
- 2) What is the influence of parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment;

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.
2. There is no significant influence of parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment;

Method

The research design adopted in this study is Ex post facto design. According to Nworgu (2006) Ex-post facto design is a research design that is concerned with discovering, not only what a phenomenon is like, but if possible, how and why it occurs. Ex post facto was used in this study because the study intended to find out the influence of family background (family size and occupation of parents and parental education) on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

The study was conducted in the primary schools of the pupils with hearing impairment in Enugu State. Enugu state is in the South-East Nigeria. It is a state where people of different family sizes and educational background live. The rural areas of the state are dominated by farmers as well some civil servants and artisans. There are two public primary schools for the pupils with hearing impairment in Enugu State (Enugu State Ministry of Education, 2014). Out of the two primary schools one (1) is in the urban while the other one (1) is in the rural area. The reason for choice of Enugu State is that available literature reveals that research of this nature has not been conducted in the State. Furthermore, Enugu State has two good primary schools for the hearing impaired persons where data for the study can be collected.

The population of the study comprised the 18 primary five pupils with hearing impairment in the two primary schools for the hearing impaired in Enugu State (Enugu State Ministry of Education, 2014). The primary 5 pupils were considered appropriate for use in this study because they have reached the age they can respond to questions on how their family background affects their social interaction with other peers. They would have by their age known how their family size, parents' occupation and parents' education influence

their social competence, hence they can provide answers to questions that test their social competence.

The sample size for the study is 18 primary five pupils with hearing impairment in the two public primary schools of the hearing impaired in Enugu state. There was no sampling since the number is small and the researchers can manage them.

The instruments for data collection were: Pupils' Family Demographic Questionnaire (PFDQ) and Social Competence of Hearing Impaired Pupils' Questionnaire (SCHIPQ). The questionnaire is made up of two clusters. Cluster A deals with family background of the pupils such as family size and parental education. Cluster B deals with the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment and consists of 25 items. It is constructed on a four point rating scale with options of Strongly Agree (SA)-4 points, Agree (A) - 3points, Disagree (D) -2points and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1 point.

The instrument for this study (SCHIPQ) was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Education Foundation (Sociology of Education and Special Education) and one expert from Science Education Department (Measurement and Evaluation) all from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were given the purposes, research questions, hypotheses and the instrument for the study to vet the items in terms of clarity of statements, relevance of contents and total coverage. They were also requested to advice, comment and make suggestions that would enable the researcher improve the quality and suitability of the instrument. The corrections and the contributions of the experts were used to produce the final draft of the instrument for the study.

The instrument was trial tested on seven primary five pupils with hearing impairment in Special Education Centre, Umuchu in Aguata Local Government Council Area, Anambra State. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and a reliability index 0.96 was obtained which guaranteed the suitability of the instrument. The reason for the choice of Cronbach Alpha is that the instrument is polytomously scored. This suggests that the instrument has no yes or no answers.

The researcher with the help of two research assistants made personal visits to the primary schools of the hearing impaired. The instrument was directly administered to the respondents and was collected on the spot to guarantee 100 percent return of the instrument for analysis. The researcher briefed the research assistants on how to administer and retrieve the instrument.

The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses

at 0.05 level of significance. The bench mark for decision taking is 2.50. Any item with mean of 2.50 and above was taken as accepted, while any item whose mean is below 2.50 was rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment

Family Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Large	5	2.61	0.25	Accepted
Medium	6	2.91	0.40	Accepted
Small	7	2.92	0.27	Accepted
Total	18	2.83	0.33	Accepted

Table 1 shows the social competence means of pupils from different family sizes (Large, Medium and Small). It shows that social competence mean of pupils from large family size is 2.61 with standard deviation of 0.25, that of pupils from medium family size is 2.91 with standard deviation of 0.40 while that of pupils from small size family is 2.92 with a standard deviation of 0.27. The total mean scores of the pupils with hearing impairment based on family size is 2.83 with a standard deviation of 0.33. These findings reveal that large, medium and small family sizes have almost equal influence on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment even though there is slight difference in their mean scores. This is because the mean scores of the pupils as indicated in Table 1 are above the bench mark mean of 2.50 for accepting items. However, it could be observed from the Table that the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment increases with decrease in family size. That is the larger the family size the lower the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment but the lower the family size the higher the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the Influence of Family Size on Social Competence of Pupils with Hearing Impairment

	Sum of Df	Mean	F	Sig.	Decision	
Between Groups	.327	2	.164	1.578	.239	S
Within Groups	1.555	15	.104			
Total	1.882	17				

Data in Table 2 show that the probability associated with the calculated value of F (1.578) is 0.239. Since the value of 0.239 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference on the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. This implies that all family sizes could influence the social competence of pupil' with hearing impairment equally.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Pupils with Hearing Impairment on the Influence of Parental Education on their Social Competence

Parents' Level of Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Ph.D	1	3.12	0.22	Accepted
Masters	1	2.94	0.43	Accepted
B. Sc/B.A/B.Ed	7	3.00	0.25	Accepted
WASC	2	2.50	0.36	Accepted
FSLC	3	2.86	0.44	Accepted
No Formal	4	2.70	0.25	Accepted
Total	18	2.83	0.33	Accepted

Table 3 shows that a pupil with hearing impairment whose parents has Ph.D had social competence mean score of 3.12 and standard deviation of 0.22, another pupil whose parents has masters degree had social competence mean score of 2.94 with a standard deviation of 0.43, pupils with hearing impairment whose parents have B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed had social competence mean score of 3.00 and standard deviation of 2-25, those whose parents have WASC had mean score of 2.50 and standard deviation of 0.36, those whose parents have FSLC had mean score of 2.86 with standing deviation of 0.44 while those whose parents do not have formal education had mean score of 2.70 and a standard deviation of 0.25. The total mean and standard deviation scores of pupils with hearing impairment based on the parents' level of education are 2.83 and 0.33 respectively. This implies that social competence mean score of a pupils whose parent has Ph.D is highest, followed by B.Sc/ B.A/B.ED and masters and so on as indicated in Table 3. However, the data on Table 3 above indicate that all the respondents agreed that all the levels of parental education could enhance the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment though there are slight differences in the mean and standard deviation scores of the pupils on the influence of level of parents' education on social competence of pupil with hearing impairment. This is because, the

respondents' mean scores are above 2.50 which is the bench mark mean for decision taking. This finding shows that all parents irrespective of their education level could help promote the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on the Influence of Parental Education on Social Competence of Pupils with Hearing Impairment

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.742	5	.148	1.560	.244
Within Groups	1.141	12	.095		
Total	1.88	17			

The analysis of data in Table 4 reveals that the calculated value of F (1.566) has a probability value of 0.244. For the fact that the probability value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference on the influence of parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. This finding indicates that all the levels of parental education could promote social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that family size influence the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. Large, medium and small family sizes have almost equal influence on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment even though there are slight differences in their mean scores. The findings as well indicate that there is no significant difference on the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. However, it could be observed from the data on Table 1 that the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment increases as the family size decreases. That is, the larger the family size the lower the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment but the smaller the family size, the higher the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. The findings of this study is not in line with Ogagbolo's (2005) study on the influence of family size and type on academic achievement of secondary school students which documents that students from both medium and small sized family performed and achieved better than their counterparts from large sized families.

The findings point to the fact that pupils with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention and motivation (Omeh, 2010). The additional attention and motivation could help improve the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. It again goes to prove the fact that when fathers play a visible and nurturing role in their children's lives, the children have better emotional and social outcomes and are more likely to have a stronger coping and adaptation skills, be better equipped to solve problems, have longer lasting relationships among others (Schor,2003). The implication of the findings of this study is that pupils with hearing impairment can develop good social competence when they relate well in a small closely knit family. Friendly social relationship between the pupil with hearing impairment and the members of the family could enhance their social competence.

The findings also indicated that parents' level of education influences the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment though there are slight differences in their mean and standard deviation scores. The findings showed again that there is no significant difference on the influence of parental education on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. This finding shows that all parents irrespective of their education level could help promote the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. The findings of this study is in agreement with Omeh (2010) which revealed that parents' level of education affects student' academic achievement. The findings of the study is contrary to Ogunshola & Adewale (2012) who found that parental educational background did not have significant influence on the academic performance of the students. In this study, it was found thepupil with hearing impairment whose parents has Ph.D had the highest mean score. Hence the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment does not decrease with increase in education level of the parents. Inference from the above findings is that the parents' education level notwithstanding, parents' ability to bring out time to interact with individuals with hearing impairment could enhance the social competence development of such individuals. Constant parents' relationship with the children with hearing impairment could go a long way transmitting in such individuals good social competence characteristics that world enable them live functionally in the society.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it was concluded that:

1. large, medium and small family sizes have almost equal influence of social competence of pupils with hearing impairment even though there are slight differences in their mean scores.

2. The levels of parental education could enhance the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. Therefore, all parents irrespective of their education level could help promote the social competence of pupils with hearing impairment.
3. There is no significant difference on the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. This implies that all family sizes could influence the social competence of pupils' with hearing impairment equally.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Government should through the Ministry of Education organize some intervention programmes (seminars, workshops and symposium) to enlighten the parents on the influence of family size on social competence of pupils with hearing impairment. This will help the parents to find ways of managing their family sizes to ensure that pupils with hearing impairment are given the attention they need for better social competence.
- Parents should reduce the attention they give to their occupation so that they can have time to interact with their children with hearing impairment. This would help to improve social competence of the group.
- Teachers teaching pupils with hearing impairment should enlighten the pupils on the benefits of social relationship.

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