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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDY TO ASSESS THE COPING STRATEGIES ADOPTED AMONG CHILDREN WITH IMPAIRED HEARING

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ABSTRACT

With a view to assess the coping strategies adopted by children with impaired hearing a qualitative research approach with exploratory survey research design was conducted to assess the coping strategies among children with impaired hearing. Non Probability Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting 100 children of age 10-16 years studying in various deaf schools of Pune city in India who were suffering from varying degree of hearing impairment. Data collection tool included self-structured questionnaire. The results showed that 88 (88%) children were adapted, 11 (11%) children were less adapted, 1 (1%) child was well adapted and none of the children were poorly adapted.

INTRODUCTION

Coping refers to changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person. When we encounter a difficult or stressful life situation, we react in various ways, to try to make the situation better or to decrease the stress and difficult feelings that the situation has created. All of these reactions may be called as coping. The research indicates that children and adults who have a larger repertoire of coping strategies experience fewer negative consequences, in the short and long terms. (Mishara Brian, 2003). Deaf people themselves have to make adjustments and develop coping strategies in the hearing world to protect their self-esteem. They need to counteract the hassles they face every day in a world that is full of communication challenges and, at times, prejudice and discrimination. They are proud of their cultural heritage, but they are also comfortable with pursuing their own individual interests in the majority society. These deaf individuals often have intelligible voices and are coming from a hearing family, which enables them to be more familiar with the norms and values of the majority society and to move comfortably back and forth between the two groups (Jambor and Elliott, 2005). India has a population of just over 1 billion and there are 3 million deaf children in India. Every year 25,000 children are born deaf. Study also reported that only one in ten deaf children go to school in India and 90% of deaf children in school live in urban areas. 50% of deaf children in school dropout were at age of 13 years.

(National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), 2008) Social skills are a necessary component of everyday life, yet when deaf children are mainstreamed, this is one thing they cannot be directly taught. The communication barrier between deaf children and their hearing peers can cause deaf children to develop anxiety or low self-esteem. Teachers and parents can also have a huge impact if they have distorted perceptions of deafness. The evidence suggests that decreased social interaction reduces what a deaf child can achieve in life (Hall Wyatte, 2005).

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the coping strategies adopted by children with impaired hearing.
2. To determine the association between the selected demographic variables and coping strategies of children with impaired hearing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design used was exploratory survey research design to assess the coping strategies adopted by children with impaired hearing. The Non Probability Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting 100 children studying in various deaf schools of Pune city who were suffering from varying degree of hearing impairment. Data collection tool included self-structured questionnaire. 22 experts determined the content validity of the tool.

For generating necessary data a self-structured questionnaire was developed which consisted of two sections:

Section I - It includes the 10 Demographic Variables like Age, Gender, Religion, Type of family, Age of hearing impairment, Level of hearing impairment, Use of hearing aid and level of hearing with and without using hearing aid, etc.

Section II - It consist of 20 items for the assessment of coping strategies. It includes thoughts and feelings about self; interaction with family; interaction with people who cannot hear and interaction with people who can hear.

The reliability of questionnaire was established by the method of split half test and Chronbach's alpha which came out to 0.868. The pilot study was conducted on 10 samples to check the feasibility and practicability of the questionnaire. Based on the objectives, data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics (percentage, frequency and sum). ANOVA test was used to find the association with demographic variables and the coping strategies adopted by children with impaired hearing and the findings was documented in tables and graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship between coping strategies and selected demographic variables of deaf children

Demographic variable	F-statistic	p-value
Age (in years)	1	0.435
Gender	0	0.99
Religion	0.35	0.789
Type of family	1.75	0.188
Were you born with hearing impairment	3.69	0.058
Do you use hearing aid	0.44	0.507
If yes, Since when you are using hearing aid	0.77	0.683
How much can you hear without hearing aid	0.37	0.694
How much can you hear with hearing aid	0.51	0.603

Demographic variable 'Were you born with hearing impairment' shows statistically marginally significant association with coping strategies of children with impaired hearing. In this study it was revealed that 95% of the children were born with hearing impairment.

Adaptation Scores of children with impaired hearing in percentage: 88 (88%) children were adapted, 11 (11%) children were less adapted, 1 (1%) child was well adapted and none of the children were poorly adapted. In section II, analysis of first part indicates that majority of children are having good self-esteem. The study also revealed that there is good support and encouragement by the parents to their children so that they can best adapt and survive in this world.

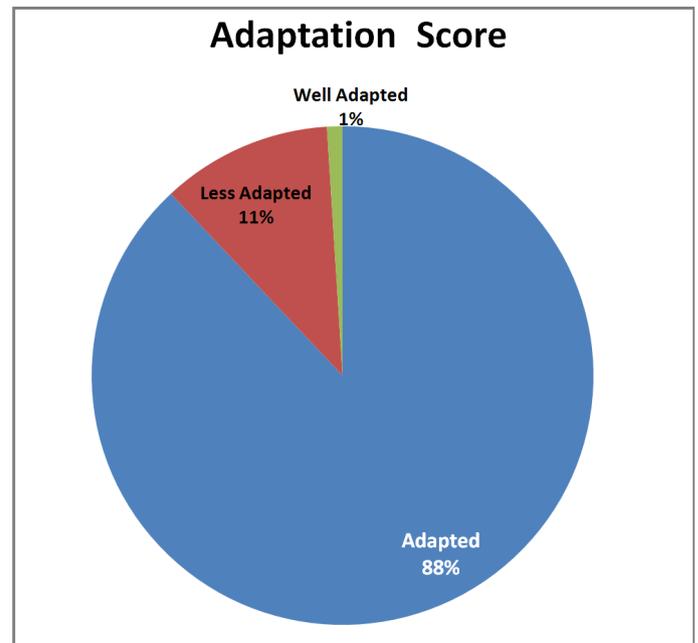


Figure 1. Pie diagram showing adaptation scores of children with impaired hearing in percentage

Conclusion

This study revealed that coping strategies used by children with impaired hearing in this study was that they have accepted this defect and are trying to adjust with the world. The children in this study give importance to deaf community as well as hearing community, so we can conclude that they have developed bicultural skill. Thus more coping strategies should be there so that the children are well adapted to the hearing world.

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