

## A Study on School Adjustment and Aggression among Adolescents with and without Hearing Impairment

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### ABSTRACT


**Background:** Adolescence is a stage with tremendous pressure and stress. The ones with a disability, especially hearing impaired may feel discouraged from exposing themselves to socially challenging situations, thus producing isolation that leads to depression, irritability and feelings of inferiority. Adolescents as such are under constant pressure to perform at every front, the main one being academics. School adjustment is a procedure that brings a person's behaviour in compliance with the norms of the school. It comprises educational, social and emotional adjustment. **Aim:** The present study aims to examine the level of school adjustment and aggression among the adolescent with and without hearing impairment. The gender differences were also examined. **Methods and Materials:** A total of 60 adolescent (girls and boys) aged 14-18 years were selected for the study. Out of which 30 adolescents had a hearing impairment and they were selected from school for deaf and blind and a controlled group of 30 adolescents without hearing impairment were selected from a government school in the same area. They were matched on age and gender. A self-constructed interview schedule was used to collect the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Scales on aggression and Adjustment Inventory for school students were used. **Results:** The results showed that there was no significant difference in school adjustment among adolescents with and without hearing impairment and also no significant gender differences were found. Adolescent children with hearing impairment were more aggressive in compared to the same age group adolescents without hearing impairment. Boys were more aggressive as compared to girls in both groups. **Conclusion:** There is a need to address the issues related to aggression among adolescents with hearing impairment specifically adolescent boys through psychosocial interventions to channelize their energy in a positive direction.

**Keywords:** Aggression, school adjustment, adolescents, hearing impairment

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are children between ten and nineteen years of age<sup>[1]</sup> when physiological changes that take place along with the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics to sexual and reproductive organs.<sup>[2]</sup> It is the transitional phase of development between childhood and adulthood that represents the period during which an individual experience a variety of biological and emotional changes. It is even called a stage of "storm and stress" when conflict arises.<sup>[3]</sup> Biological, psychological and social changes occur, with implication on psychosocial adjustment.<sup>[4]</sup> During this period, adolescents suffer from

various forms of problems and conflicts, which ultimately impairs normal psychosocial development and even aggravates psychosocial problems leading to issues of lack of adjustment and aggression.<sup>[3]</sup> Aggression is an inborn driving force that may be caused due to an individual's own assessment, a feeling to prevent themselves or being excluded by outside factors that emerge when an individual faces obstacles that prevent them from any goal they desire to adhere.<sup>[5]</sup> Adjustment is the process of finding and adopting modes of behaviour suitable to the environment or the changes in the environment.<sup>[6]</sup> School adjustment is the

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the degree of school acculturation needed to maximize the educational fit between students' distinctive feature and the discrete nature of learning environments. It is a process of bringing an individual's behaviour in conformity with the norms of the school setting.<sup>[7]</sup>

Disability is a result of the individual's interaction between health conditions in context with the environment. Environmental adaptations have an impact on how individuals with similar health conditions may not be similarly disabled or even have the same perception of their disability (WHO). As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Crore population, about 2.68 Crore persons are disabled i.e. 2.21% of the total population. In the category of hearing impaired, there are 18% males and 20% females. Loss of the ability to hear sound frequencies in the normal range of hearing is called hearing impairment. A person who has the hearing loss of 60dB or more in the better ear for a conversational range of frequencies.<sup>[8]</sup> Severity in loss of hearing may range from mild to moderate and moderate to profound. An individual may become deaf or hard-of-hearing depending upon the degree of hearing loss. Thus, hearing impaired can be classified into two categories depending on the degree of loss of hearing, the deaf and the hard-of-hearing. The total inability to hear is deafness which includes the ones who, even with the best auditory training, cannot learn to understand speech mainly through hearing. Hearing impairment may be congenital or acquired at any age in life. Abstract thinking is more difficult for hearing impaired population than concrete thinking.<sup>[9]</sup> Auditory deficits lead to difficulties in communication also may affect social, psychological and other aspects of the lives of the adolescents and they may face social and psychological problems.<sup>[10]</sup> Negativities are experienced by the hearing-impaired children when they enter into the socialization process without a chance to choose to differ from their peers. These negativities are considered as unreachable boundaries that might create despair among them and can lead to, aggressive behaviours, low self-esteem, despair, worthlessness and feelings of anger and frustration.<sup>[5]</sup> With this junctures, the present study was intended with the following objectives.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study the school adjustment and the level of aggression among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.
2. To study the gender differences in the school adjustment and level of aggression among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.

## HYPOTHESES

1. School adjustment among adolescents with hearing impairment is lower than the adolescents without hearing impairment.
2. Significant gender differences are likely to be found in the level of school adjustment among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.
3. Aggression among the adolescents with hearing impairment is likely to be higher than the adolescents without hearing impairment.
4. Significant gender differences are likely to be found in the level of aggression among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

In the present study, purposive sampling technique was followed. Thirty adolescents with hearing impairment (AWHI) equal number of boys and girls in the age group of 14-18 years were selected from school for deaf and blind in Patiala, Punjab, India and controlled group of thirty adolescents without hearing impairment (AWOHI) were selected from the government school in the same area, matched on age and gender. In total, sixty adolescents were taken as a sample for the study. The consent for data collection was obtained from the institutions and the respondents. Respondents were given freedom to exclude themselves from participating at any stage of data collection. Tools used for the study were:

**Socio-demographic Profile Sheet:** A self-constructed Interview schedule has been used to study the socio-demographic profile of the adolescents.

**Aggression Scale:** It consists of 55 items for age group 14 plus. It is a Likert type 5 point scale. The total number of answers constitutes the final score. The maximum score is 275 and the minimum is 55. Higher scores show a

higher aggression level. Test-retest reliability of the checklist was found to be .88 in males and .81 in females. Validity is .80 in males and .78 in females.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Adjustment Inventory for School Students:** This inventory seeks to segregate well adjusted secondary school students (age group 14-18 years) from three areas of adjustment - emotional, social and educational. The scale consists of 60 questions. The questions are to be answered as yes and no response. The maximum score which the respondent can obtain for each area of adjustment is 20 and minimum is 1 and the lower score in each area is an indication of better adjustment.<sup>[12]</sup>

## RESULTS

### Socio-demographic Profile

The finding indicates that in the age group 14-15 years 40% of respondents were with hearing impairment and 56.67% without impairment. In the age group of 16-18 years, 60% were with hearing impairment and 43.33% without hearing impairment. In the category of hearing impaired 30% each were boys and girls and there were 43.33% girls and 30%, boys were without hearing impairment. Total income of the family of the respondents with hearing impairment in various groups was: below Rs. 5000 - 3.33%, between 5000 - 10,000 - (3.33%), 10,001-15,000 - 6.67%, above 15,000 - 86.67% The total income of the family of the respondents without hearing impairment in various groups was as follows, below Rs. 5000 were nil, 5000 - 10,000 - 6.67%, 10,001-15,000 - 3.33% and above 15,000 (90%). In the category of hearing impaired, 36.67% respondent's belonged to nuclear families and 63.33% to Joint families. Whereas in the category of one's without hearing impairment 23.33% from nuclear families and 76.67% respondents from joint families.

### School Adjustment

**Table 1: School Adjustment**

Area of School Adjustment	Adolescents	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
Emotional	With HI	10.10	1.94	0.193	0.848
	Without HI	10.20	2.07		
Social	With HI	6.73	1.80	1.137	0.26
	Without HI	7.30	2.05		
Educational	With HI	8.67	2.25	0.019	0.984
	Without HI	8.65	2.19		

HI = hearing impairment

The scores of the table 1 indicated that there were no significant differences in any of the three domains of school adjustment i.e. emotional, social and educational among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.

**Table 2 A: Gender Difference in AWHI**

Area of School Adjustment	Gender	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
Emotional	F	9.93	1.87	0.465	0.645
	M	10.27	2.05		
Social	F	6.60	1.40	0.400	0.692
	M	6.87	2.17		
Educational	F	8.60	2.59	0.160	0.874
	M	8.73	1.94		

**Table 2 B: Gender Difference in (AWOHI)**

Area of School Adjustment	Gender	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
Emotional	F	10.13	2.17	0.173	0.864
	M	10.27	2.05		
Social	F	6.73	1.62	1.547	0.133
	M	7.87	2.33		
Educational	F	8.53	2.47	0.246	0.807
	M	8.73	1.94		

The scores of table 2 A and table 2 B indicated that there were no significant gender differences in school adjustment of the adolescents with and without hearing impairment.

### Aggression

**Table 3: Aggression in Adolescents**

Adolescents	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
AWHI	185.77	22.64	2.049*	0.045
AWOHI	175.37	16.14		

In table 2, the t-test was used to compare the score of aggression of adolescents with and without hearing impairment. The mean values of aggression obtained by adolescents with hearing impairment were  $M = 185.77$  and for those without hearing impairment was  $M = 175.37$  and significant difference in aggression amongst both the groups ( $t = 2.049$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ) was found. Adolescent children with hearing impairment were more aggressive compared to same age group children without hearing impairment

**Table 4: Gender differences in Aggression**

Aggression	Gender	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
Adolescents with Hearing Impairment	F	176.80	20.77	2.329*	0.027
	M	194.73	21.41		
Adolescents without Impairment	F	167.47	14.14	3.037*	0.005
	M	183.27	14.36		

The results of table 4 indicated the mean value of adolescents with hearing impairment ( $F = 176.80$ ,  $M = 194.73$ ) and without hearing impairment ( $F = 167.47$ ,  $M = 183.27$ ). Significant difference were found in both gender groups i.e. adolescents with hearing impairment ( $t = 2.329$ ,  $p = 0.027$ ), without hearing impairment ( $t = 3.037$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Boys were more aggressive compared to girls in both groups.

## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 which stated that school adjustment among adolescents with hearing impairment is likely to be lower than the ones without hearing impairment was not in line with the results of the present study. The score showed no significant differences in any of the three domains of school adjustment i.e. emotional, social and educational among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment. A similar finding was documented by Schloss who found that hearing-impairment does not make them susceptible to difficulties in their social development. Special attention from teachers, parents and peers can result in normal social adjustment for the hearing impaired.<sup>[13]</sup> Even Boekaerts emphasized that the structure of the schools should adopt innovative, appropriate and effective measures in the environment that could facilitate students to achieve their educational goals, and also their social-emotional goals and needs (e.g. being accepted, having harmonious relations with peers, being awarded for investing effort, being respected, offer help to others.<sup>[14]</sup> Though, Bala in a comparative study of mental make-up and educational facilities for physically handicapped and normal children found otherwise, that deaf children are socially, emotionally and educationally less stable.<sup>[15]</sup>

Hypothesis 2 which stated that significant gender differences are likely to be found in the level of school adjustment among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment were also not in line with the present study. Those who have good adjustment ability tend to get more benefit from school. A previous study found similarities in social adjustment and self-image of hearing-impaired boys and girls. In emotional adjustment, girls were

comparatively more stable as compared to boys.<sup>[16]</sup>

Hypothesis 3 which stated that aggression among the adolescents with hearing impairment is likely to be higher than the ones without hearing impairment was in line with the results of the study. Aggression was found to be higher among adolescents with hearing impairment. A similar finding was documented in the study on the effect of age and hearing impairment on total aggressive behaviour of both groups of children i.e. with and without hearing impairment. Children without hearing impairment were bound to have less aggressive behaviour as they grow; however, children with hearing impairment often tend to have more aggressive behaviour as they grow in age. The total aggressiveness in the behaviour of children without hearing impairment decreases with age, whereas it increases in the case of children with hearing impairment. In addition to this, although no difference was found between these two groups in terms of aggressive behaviours until they reached the age of fourteen, the increase in the aggressive behaviours of children with hearing impairment after this age is notable.<sup>[5]</sup> In studies concluded among the children in their adolescence period indicated that hearing impairment is a risk factor of problems such as depression and aggressive behaviour.<sup>[17,18]</sup>

Hypothesis 4, which stated significant gender differences are likely to be found in the level of aggression among the adolescents with and without hearing impairment was in line with the results of the study. In both categories, adolescent boys were higher on aggression than girls. Similar was documented in the study by Singh and Broota on the socio-personal variables and examination anxiety of normal school students, which revealed that girls are more test anxious and apprehensive than the boys, but according to this study on hearing impaired students, boys were found to be more anxious, annoyed, aggressive and defensive in nature. Most of the male hearing-impaired students had a high level of aggression. The study put forth that the tendency of aggression among male students might be the effect of male dominance in society. Their conditioning is such that intentionally or unintentionally they behave like this if their desires, interests or needs are not fulfilled.<sup>[19]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The results of gender differences in school adjustment showed no significant differences. It showed that we have come a long way in the case of disabilities too. Results of the present study reflect on the equal treatment given to adolescents by their parents thus putting away stereotyping or gender discrimination. If gender discrimination was there it was not perceived by the adolescents. It can also be concluded that despite being well adjusted, adolescent boys were found to be high on aggression. Since adjustment is related to interpersonal relationships and an individual may be comfortable with others but may not be comfortable with one's own self. In spite of being adjusted, if the outlet is missing it may give rise to certain psychological issues, which if not addressed may create aggressiveness in an individual's behaviour. Since biologically boys are different thus there is a need to be put in either work oriented routine or in physical activity in order to channelize their energies in a positive direction.

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