

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INCLUSIVE SECONDARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The research centers on determining the attitudes of students towards the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) inclusive secondary education. The study was conducted at La Salle Green Hills Adult Night High School in School Year 2019-2020. The researcher of the study used the purposive sampling technique in choosing its DHH respondents and convenience sampling technique in choosing its hearing students and teacher respondents. This study made use of the descriptive method of research design in the hope of seeking and describing the current status of the variables involved in the study. On the basis of the findings in this study, the researcher concludes that (a) both hearing students and DHH students have a strong positive cognitive attitude towards inclusion, (2) both hearing students and DHH students have a strong positive affective attitude towards inclusion, (3) DHH students have a positive behavioral attitude towards inclusion while hearing students have a strong positive behavioral attitude, and (d) there is no significant difference between the overall attitudes of the respondents toward DHH inclusive secondary classroom. This implies that both respondents have common cognitive, affective, and behavioral actions in an inclusive secondary education. Awareness/orientation programs, faculty development sessions, more collaborative activities between hearing and DHH learners, sign language classes, training for interpreters in the subjects they are assigned to, and involvement of parents and guardians in the program are thought to be needed by the students and teachers of the school.

1. Introduction

Philippines' Department of Education mentions inclusive education as part of its Basic Education Research Agenda. However, published researches on this topic are mostly from overseas. Many studies have been conducted in relation to understanding the threats and challenges teachers face, considering their concerns, their willingness to institute inclusive environments or appraising teachers' confidence levels. However, limited research exists examining the predictors of successful inclusion as viewed by students themselves. It is acknowledged that perceptions of self and others, especially in educational setting, play a foundational role in the effectiveness of social experiences. The need for the ease of access of more current information for mainstream basic education schools are called for to assist schools in the Philippines in providing effective teaching and learning strategies to DHH learners (Dapudong, 2014). It is just fitting that students' perceptions should also be gathered because they spend most of the time together in school.

The study was about the attitudes of students, both hearing and DHH, toward inclusion in secondary education. It was the first to examine formally the attitudes of the learners themselves. The researcher served the institution as Administrative Affairs Coordinator for three

years and is currently the school's Academic Coordinator. Part of his job functions is to ensure that the needs of the students, both hearing and hearing-impaired, are addressed for finer teaching-learning process. The school administration can use the result of the study in decision making for the betterment of its programs and designing new ones. It also aims to encourage school administrators to focus on the next steps for hearing impaired and deaf students in an inclusive classroom to ensure they have equal and appropriate access to the school curriculum in whatever form that may be in their school learning environment.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study determined the attitudes of students towards the deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education at La Salle Green Hills Adult Night High School. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the overall attitude of students toward DHH Inclusive Secondary Education as to:
 - 1.1 cognitive component
 - 1.2 affective component
 - 1.3 behavioral component
2. What is the significant difference between the attitudes of hearing and deaf and hard of hearing toward DHH Inclusive Secondary Education as to:
 - 2.1 cognitive component
 - 2.2 affective component
 - 2.3 behavioral component
3. What do students and teachers recommend regarding this inclusion?
4. What action plan may be formulated to improve the implementation of the DHH Inclusion Program?

3. Literature Review

The hallmark of inclusive education is the teachers' enthusiasm to accept students with special needs. Their attitudes and knowledge about inclusive education are important as these are indicators of such eagerness. Inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing students in public schools is one of the controversial topics in the field. The focus mainly of many authors who study inclusion when writing about the topic was student's access to classroom communication.

Dev and Kumar (2015) concluded in their study that teachers had an overall negative perception towards integrating students with learning disability in the normal class rooms. The analysis of their research work confirmed that the age, gender, educational level of the teachers and awareness about learning disability had a significant influence and consequence on their entire perception about integration process. This study investigated the regular school teacher's ability to handle students with learning disability and their understanding and acceptance level to integrate the students into the regular school set up.

Results from another scholastic work, this time, showed positive perceptions. It suggested that teachers generally held positive view points on inclusive education (Kurniawati et al., 2013). The research proposed that teachers' attitudes play a vital role in triumphant implementation of inclusive education. The research was conducted in Jakarta.

An interesting result came from Schmidt and Cagran's study revealing both positive and negative attitudes in the integration of hearing-impaired children as regard classroom climate. This is a sign that more studies should be done on order to push on the integration of DHH in regular classroom. DHH learners may achieve better results when they are educated in an inclusive environment (Schmidt & Cagran, 2006). DHH can learn at their own course, with classmates at the same standing as themselves, and they can act in response well to the expectations placed on them in a mainstream learning climate. They will better face the challenges of their special needs because they will be encouraged to engage in activities fully alongside hearing counterparts. In addition, overall DHH adolescents can experience positive relationships with their peers and friends notwithstanding their earlier experience of bullying in primary school (Terlektsi et al., 2020).

This hopes to be a new literature that will provide data on students' attitudes relating to the problems confronting them in realizing successful inclusionary practices in schools. Formulation of future policies affecting inclusive education in the country, particularly of integrating deaf and hard of hearing in the classrooms, needs to be addressed. It is high time that positive social change be considered by educators to implement best inclusionary practices in classrooms. Studies are necessary to address the concerns expressed among parents on their child's ability to participate successfully in an inclusive school setting, as well as the level of supports their child would receive (Zaidman-Zait et al., 2019). I encourage researchers to assist the Department of Education's on-going effort in the Philippines to implement inclusive education effectively in the country. Students' perceptions and beliefs should be a main consideration in the implementation of inclusive education.

4. Research Methodology

This study made use of the descriptive method of research design because it hoped to describe the current status of the variables involved in the study. It utilized survey and interview questionnaires to determine the attitudes of students toward deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education. The data gathered on the profile of the students were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics.

The researcher of the study used purposive sampling technique in choosing its deaf and hard of hearing respondents and convenience sampling technique in choosing its hearing and teacher respondents. In particular, 36 out of 38 deaf and hard of hearing students of LSGH ANHS for the school year who have experienced inclusive education participated in the study. Thirty-six hearing students and 17 teachers, who have experienced inclusive classroom structure or set-up with deaf and hard of hearing, were tapped in the study according to convenience.

The main instruments used in this study were survey and interview questionnaires crafted specifically for this study. For content validity purposes, the researcher collaborated with Mrs. Avelina G. Ombao and Miss Rhea M. Namol, both with Master of Arts degree in Special Education and are engaged in deaf education, in crafting the questionnaires. He also sought the assistance of Dr. Marilou C. Asturias of Rizal Technological University Graduate School.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Difference Between the Attitudes of Hearing and DHH Towards Inclusive Education

Cognitive Component

Table 1 presents the difference between the cognitive attitudes of the respondents toward deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education.

Table 1: Difference Between the Cognitive Attitudes of the Respondents Toward Inclusive Secondary Education

COGNITIVE COMPONENT	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
1. DHH students would achieve better academically in an inclusive classroom	0.068	Not Rejected	Insignificant
2. Self-contained classrooms have a negative impact on social and emotional development of DHH students.	0.008	Rejected	Significant
3. Inclusion offers mixed group interaction that will foster understanding and acceptance of difference among us.	0.134	Not Rejected	Insignificant
4. It is unlikely that DHH students exhibit behavior problems in our school.	0.076	Not Rejected	Insignificant
5. DHH can best be served in a mainstream or inclusive school.	0.107	Not Rejected	Insignificant
6. The extra attention given to DHH students is not to the detriment of other students.	0.418	Not Rejected	Insignificant
7. The challenge of being in an inclusive school promotes the academic growth of DHH students.	0.496	Not Rejected	Insignificant
8. Inclusion of DHH students requires significant changes in our classroom procedures.	0.371	Not Rejected	Insignificant
9. The presence of DHH students promotes acceptance of differences on the parts of the students who are hearing.	0.011	Rejected	Significant
10. DHH students probably develop more rapidly in inclusive school than in a special school.	0.051	Not Rejected	Insignificant
11. Inclusion of DHH students promotes their social independence.	0.862	Not Rejected	Insignificant
12. It is not more difficult to maintain order in an inclusive school that contains DHH students than in a school that does not have DHH students.	0.061	Not Rejected	Insignificant
13. The inclusion of DHH students are beneficial for students who are hearing.	0.008	Rejected	Significant
14. The classroom behavior of DHH students does not generally require more patience from our teachers.	0.701	Not Rejected	Insignificant
15. DHH students should be given every opportunity to function in the school when possible.	0.310	Not Rejected	Insignificant

Among the fifteen statements, 12 have p-values higher than 0.05. Three, on the other hand, have less than 0.05. These are statements *self-contained classrooms have a negative impact on social and emotional development of DHH students*, *the presence of DHH students promotes acceptance of differences on the parts of the students who are hearing*, and *expressing inclusion of DHH students are beneficial for students who are hearing*. In these three

statements, we can say that there is a significant difference in their cognitive attitude because of the computed p-values which are 0.008, 0.011 and 0.008, respectively.

Affective Component

Table 2 presents the difference between the affective attitudes of the respondents toward deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education before being part of inclusion.

Table 2: Difference Between the Affective Attitudes of the Respondents Before Being Part of DHH Inclusive Secondary Education

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Comfortable	0.814	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Positive	1.000	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Optimistic	0.626	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Interested	0.562	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Happy	0.107	Not Rejected	Insignificant

Both respondents have the common affective attitude towards inclusive secondary education. This only means that the affective attitudes of the respondents do not differ at all since all domains are insignificant. It can be noted that both respondents are very positive towards inclusive secondary education. On the other hand, being happy has the least p-value though it is not rejected.

Table 3 presents the difference between the affective attitudes of the respondents towards deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education after being part of inclusion.

Table 3: Difference Between the Affective Attitudes of the Respondents After Few Months of Being Part of DHH Inclusive Secondary Education

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Comfortable	0.700	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Positive	0.468	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Optimistic	0.236	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Interested	1.000	Not Rejected	Insignificant
Happy	1.000	Not Rejected	Insignificant

Both respondents still have common affective attitude after being part of a DHH inclusive classroom. Moreover, being happy and interested are the very common attitudes of the respondents with a p-value of 1.000 which means that respondents affective attitudes do not differ at all. However, being optimistic has the lowest p-value of 0.236 which means that this is the least common attitude of the respondents although it does not differ at all.

Behavioral Component

Table 4 presents the difference between the behavioral attitudes of the respondents towards deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education. As seen in the table, behavioral attitudes of the respondents differ on numbers 2 (Learn and/or teach Filipino Sign Language), 8 (Advocate DHH and hearing integration development issues), and 9 (Make use of the strengths of both hearing and DHH in accomplishing school requirements like written works and performance tasks). This implies that they have different levels of coping in inclusive classrooms when it comes to behavior numbers 2, 8 and 9.

Table 4: Difference Between the Behavioral Attitudes of the Respondents Toward Inclusive Secondary Education

Behavioral COMPONENT	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
1. Encourage DHH and hearing classmates to interact and learn together.	0.656	Not Rejected	Insignificant
2. Learn and/or teach Filipino Sign Language.	0.855	Rejected	Significant
3. Adopt new learning styles to match DHH characteristics for better collaboration.	0.412	Not Rejected	Insignificant
4. Avoid using negative labels inside or outside the classroom.	0.003	Rejected	Significant
5. Make use of technology to communicate better with classmates.	0.662	Not Rejected	Insignificant
6. Help in making sure DHH students sit in front lines.	0.249	Not Rejected	Insignificant
7. Take part in DHH associations and/or private forums.	0.879	Not Rejected	Insignificant
8. Advocate DHH and hearing integration development issues.	0.014	Rejected	Significant
9. Make use of the strengths of both hearing and DHH in accomplishing school requirements like written works and performance tasks.	0.045	Rejected	Significant
10. Give equal respect to DHH and hearing classmates.	0.085	Not Rejected	Insignificant

Over-all Difference Between Attitudes

Table 5 presents the over-all difference between the attitudes of the respondents towards deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education.

Table 5: Overall Difference Between the Attitudes of the Respondents Towards Inclusive Secondary Education

GROUP	MEAN	z-value	Df	P-value	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
Hearing	4.40	1.880	70	0.064	Not Rejected	Insignificant
DHH	4.22					

Since the p-value of 0.064 is greater than 0.05, the level of significance, then we do not reject the null hypothesis. Moreover, it has a t-value of 1.880 and degrees of freedom equal to 70. This only means that there is no significant difference between the overall attitudes of the

respondents toward DHH inclusive secondary classroom. This implies that both respondents have common cognitive, affective, and behavioral actions in an inclusive secondary education.

Recommendations of Students and Teachers Regarding Inclusion

The following tables illustrate the recommendations of students and teachers regarding inclusion.

Table 6 summarizes the recommendations of hearing respondents for the DHH inclusion. It shows that the hearing respondents find item #8, *the conduct of orientation/awareness program for deaf and hard of hearing students at the start of the school year*, very much needed with a weighted mean of 4.56. Item #3, *the presence of teaching assistants during classes*, has the least weighted mean of 2.58. This may be due to the school has already sign language interpreters.

Table 6: Summary of Recommendations of Hearing Respondents for the Inclusion Program

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE HEARING STUDENTS	MEAN	V.I.
1. Hearing aids must be readily available for DHH students in a mainstreamed class.	3.28	Might Be Needed
2. Modern visual aids must be designed for DHH learners are provided.	4.14	Needed
3. Teaching assistants must be present during classes.	2.58	Might Be Needed
4. Subject teachers must be trained and certified in Filipino Sign Language.	3.82	Needed
5. There must be a note-taker for DHH learners during classes.	3.25	Might Be Needed
6. A regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.28	Needed
7. A regular teacher-training on inclusion for subject teachers must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.33	Needed
8. An orientation/awareness program for DHH students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.56	Very Much Needed
9. An orientation/awareness program for hearing students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.36	Needed
10. An orientation/awareness program for teachers, especially those who are new, at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.47	Needed
11. There must be a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs for deaf learners.	4.33	Needed
12. There must be student organization/s for the promotion of inclusion.	4.42	Needed
13. Home works and other school requirements must be shifted to ICT-based.	3.97	Needed
14. There must be special classrooms with sound insulation.	2.86	Might Be Needed
15. Curriculum must be modified to accommodate the needs of DHH.	3.83	Needed
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.90	NEEDED

The following recommendations were mentioned by at least one respondent in the course of the interview: (1) bonding activities among hearing and deaf and hard of hearing students, (2) sign language class for all students, and (3) time allotment for group learning among hearing and deaf and hard of hearing students.

Table 7 summarizes the recommendation of deaf and hard of hearing respondents toward DHH inclusion. It shows that the deaf and hard of hearing respondents find item #6, a *regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters as part of the Faculty Development Program*, very much needed with a weighted mean of 4.64. Item #1, *readily available hearing aids for deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstreamed class*, has the least weighted mean of 3.50. At least two deaf and hard of hearing learners said they see hearing aids as some sort of disruption.

Table 7: Summary of Recommendations of DHH Respondents for the Inclusion Program

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DHH STUDENTS	MEAN	V.I.
1. Hearing aids must be readily available for DHH students in a mainstreamed class.	3.50	Needed
2. Modern visual aids must be designed for DHH learners are provided.	4.22	Needed
3. Teaching assistants must be present during classes.	3.67	Needed
4. Subject teachers must be trained and certified in Filipino Sign Language.	4.06	Needed
5. There must be a note-taker for DHH learners during classes.	3.67	Needed
6. A regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.64	Very Much Needed
7. A regular teacher-training on inclusion for subject teachers must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.42	Needed
8. An orientation/awareness program for DHH students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.33	Needed
9. An orientation/awareness program for hearing students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.17	Needed
10. An orientation/awareness program for teachers, especially those who are new, at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.39	Needed
11. There must be a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs for deaf learners.	4.58	Very Much Needed
12. There must be student organization/s for the promotion of inclusion.	4.17	Needed
13. Home works and other school requirements must be shifted to ICT-based.	4.42	Needed
14. There must be special classrooms with sound insulation.	3.61	Needed
15. Curriculum must be modified to accommodate the needs of DHH.	4.11	Needed
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	4.13	NEEDED

The following recommendations were mentioned by a respondent in the course of the interview: (1) Filipino sign language class for hearing students, and (2) more interaction activities among hearing and deaf and hard of hearing students.

Table 8 summarizes the recommendations of teachers for the DHH inclusion program. It shows that teacher respondents find items #8 and 9, an *orientation/awareness program for deaf and hard of hearing students at the start of the school year* and an *orientation/awareness program for hearing students at the start of the school year*, very much needed with a weighted mean of 4.76. Item #1, *readily available hearing aids for deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstreamed class*, also has the least weighted mean of 2.47.

Table 8: Summary of Recommendations of Teacher Respondents for the Inclusion Program

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE TEACHERS	MEAN	V.I.
1. Hearing aids must be readily available for DHH students in a mainstreamed class.	2.47	Not Needed
2. Modern visual aids must be designed for DHH learners are provided.	4.29	Needed
3. Teaching assistants must be present during classes.	3.59	Needed
4. Subject teachers must be trained and certified in Filipino Sign Language.	4.00	Needed
5. There must be a note-taker for DHH learners during classes.	2.76	Might Be Needed
6. A regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.59	Very Much Needed
7. A regular teacher-training on inclusion for subject teachers must be part of the Faculty Development Program.	4.41	Needed
8. An orientation/awareness program for DHH students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.76	Very Much Needed
9. An orientation/awareness program for hearing students at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.76	Very Much Needed
10. An orientation/awareness program for teachers, especially those who are new, at the start of the school year must be conducted.	4.71	Very Much Needed
11. There must be a periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs for deaf learners.	4.53	Very Much Needed
12. There must be student organization/s for the promotion of inclusion.	4.29	Needed
13. Home works and other school requirements must be shifted to ICT-based.	3.94	Needed
14. There must be special classrooms with sound insulation.	2.65	Might Be Needed
15. Curriculum must be modified to accommodate the needs of DHH.	3.88	Needed
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.98	NEEDED

The following recommendations were mentioned by a respondent in the course of the interview: (1) training for interpreters for the subjects they are assigned to, (2) modification of teaching strategies to accommodate the needs of DHH, (3) strengthened partnership with parents, and (4) inclusion of parents/guardians in the creation of the program. It is worth noting that two other recommendations like to involve the parents and guardians in realizing the success of inclusion program in the school.

5.2 Action Plan to Improve the Implementation of the DHH Inclusive Program

In this study, the researcher used the format of La Salle Green Hills Adult Night High School in crafting the action plan so that it can be readily used by the institution. The items in the Action Column were taken from the recommendations both of the students and teachers. The researcher did not include the items in the recommendations which the respondents thought are not needed and might be needed only. He included, however, points that were raised during the interviews. The items excluded were (1) hearing aids are readily available for deaf and hard of hearing students in a mainstreamed class, (2) there is a note-taker for deaf and hard of hearing learners during classes, and (3) there are special classrooms with sound insulation. If the budget of the school does not allow the implementation of most actions, the institution is advised to consider the items strongly recommended by the respondents as reflected in Tables 6, 7 and 8 as priority.

Table 9: Action Plan to Improve the Implementation of the DHH Inclusive Program

Action	Metric/ Target	Lead	Budget/ Resources
Provide modern visual aids designed for DHH learners.	Purchase of at least two additional modern aids	Audio-Visual Center In-Charge	PhP 50,000
Assign teaching assistants during classes.	Hiring of one teaching assistant	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 200,000
Train subject teachers in Filipino Sign Language.	Four FSL sessions for teachers	Academic Coordinator	PhP 5,000
Include a regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters in the Faculty Development Program.	At least one in-house seminar on inclusion for sign language interpreters	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 10,000
Include a regular teacher-training on inclusion for subject teachers in the Faculty Development Program.	At least one in-house seminar on inclusion for subject teachers	Academic Coordinator	PhP 10,000
Conduct an orientation/awareness program for DHH students at the start of the school year	One orientation program for DHH students	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 5,000
Conduct an orientation/awareness program for hearing students at the start of the school year	One orientation program for hearing students	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 5,000
Conduct an orientation/awareness program for teachers, especially those who are new, at the start of the school year	One orientation program for teachers	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 5,000
Evaluate periodically the effectiveness of the programs for deaf learners	Two formal evaluations of the programs	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	None
Create student organization/s for the promotion of inclusion	Creation of at least one student organization	Students Affairs Coordinator	PhP 20,000
Shift home works and other school requirements to ICT-based	At least 25% of requirements are ICT-based	Subject Teachers	None
Consult partners and benchmark with other schools to identify items in the curriculum for modification	One session of curriculum review and revision	Academic Coordinator	None

Conduct sign language classes for hearing students	At least four sessions of FSL for students	Moderator for Program for Deaf Learner	PhP 5,000
Provide interaction activities for hearing and DHH	Weekly collaborative learning strategies	Subject Teachers	None
Train interpreters on the subjects they are assigned to	Four content sessions for interpreters	Academic Coordinator	PhP 10,000
Involve parents and guardians in the inclusion program	One planning session with parents	Principal	PhP 5,000

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concludes the following:

1. Both hearing students and deaf and hard of hearing students have **positive cognitive attitude** and **strongly positive affective attitude** toward deaf and hard of hearing inclusive secondary education. While deaf and hard of hearing students have **positive behavioral attitude**, hearing students have **strongly positive behavioral attitude** toward inclusion.
2. Both hearing students and deaf and hard of hearing students have common cognitive, affective, and behavioral actions in an inclusive secondary education.
3. The students highly recommend the conduct of orientation/awareness program for deaf and hard of hearing students at the start of the school year and regular teacher-training for sign language interpreters as part of the Faculty Development. The teachers think orientation/awareness program both for hearing and deaf and hard of hearing students at the start of the school year the most needed among the recommendations.

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