

Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem among Hearing-Impaired Students

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this paper was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem among hearing-impaired students. Data from 36 hearing-impaired students were collected using simple random sampling at the Federation Special Education National Secondary School Penang, Malaysia. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient: Short (EQ-i: S) instrument, Ryff's psychological well-being and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were utilised to examine emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem. Dimensions of emotional intelligence consist of intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood while psychological well-being dimensions consist of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. Results indicated a moderate level of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem. Significant positive correlations were found between self-esteem and overall emotional intelligence, overall psychological well-being, emotional intelligence dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood) and psychological well-being dimensions (autonomy and environmental mastery). No significant correlation was found between the four dimensions of psychological well-being namely self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery and personal growth. The findings of this study will enable the education authority to direct their special students in a way that best suits the institution and students goals.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Hearing-impaired, Psychological well-being, Self-esteem*

I. INTRODUCTION

The improvement and development of the student in emotional, psychological and social aspect emerge in school as they spend most of their lives there early. The student must be ready in both psychological and emotional aspects to be successful in life. Over the past ten years, studies involving hearing-impaired population grown popularity in Malaysia. There are growing interest in literature that focused on the importance of hearing-impaired education and psychological needs. However, the challenge in issues regarding, their emotion, social, and well-being have been affected with the misconception and ignorance in hearing world. According to Lukomski (2007), emotional, personal and social abilities are the fundamental of emotional intelligence. It involve the ability of an individual to maintain their relationship with others, express and manage their emotions, self-assessment of emotions perception of own self-control, and solving problems in an effective way. Study done by Calderon and Greenberg (2003) identified that the emotional appraisal of hearing-impaired were influenced by their unique developmental paths. They experienced more socio-emotional risks than their hearing peers did. Also, studies have reported that there was a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and behavioural problems (MohdYasin, Bari&Salubin, 2012; Flouri, Mavroveli&Panourgia, 2013). These factors affect the ability of an individual to cope with the environmental pressures and demands (Mayer, Salovey& Caruso, 2004). On the other hand, hearing-impaired students do not develop similarly as compared to normal hearing peers because of their communicative and psychological barriers. According to Khor (2002), a person with a disability was often related with problems of self-esteem and self-efficacy elements. Mitchell and Quittner (1996), Peterson and Slaughter (2006), and Rieffe (2011), stipulate that emotional intelligence and emotion regulation research are less studied in hearing-impaired population.

Based on the literature, social relationships, emotional and psychological well-being played an important role and influenced the hearing-impaired self-esteem. Whereas some studies have described that emotional and psychological well-being of hearing-impaired was significant to their impairment. Apparently, the hearing-impaired can affect various aspects of life in some individuals, their families and society. Moreover, studies done by Hassim, Chu Tee, Abdul Majid, Mohd Jelas and Md Yusof, (2012) and Ataabadi and Moradi, (2013) had signified that emotional intelligence meaningfully associated with self-esteem, self-efficacy and social skills to harmonize with the environment in order to be accepted and appreciated by others. However, research on relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem specifically among hearing-impaired in Malaysia is lacking and further studies are needed to support it. Therefore,

accomplishing this study expands the knowledge of self-esteem, psychological well-being and emotional intelligence as well as hearing disabilities and special education study in Malaysia.

The purpose of this study was to identify the level of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem of students with hearing impairment in special school. The study also aimed to examine the relationships between self-esteem, psychological well-being dimensions and emotional intelligence dimensions. In this study, emotional intelligence was defined based on Bar-On (1997) EQ-i:S instrument. The intrapersonal, is the hearing-impaired self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization. The hearing-impaired interpersonal, includes their empathy, social responsibility, and relationship with others. Meanwhile, their adaptability includes reality testing, flexibility, and problem-solving. Their stress management refers to how they tolerate with stress and impulse control. Finally, hearing-impaired general mood refers to their optimism and happiness thoughts. Meanwhile, the operational definition of hearing-impaired psychological well-being was based on Huppert (2009) psychological well-being, which refers to a connection of healthy emotion and functioning effectively. Finally, in this study, self-esteem operational definition was based on Rosenberg (1979), who defines self-esteem as a person's summary evaluation of their worthiness as a human being.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jambor and Elliot (2005) studied on the determinants of self-esteem of hearing-impaired. The study has stated that hearing-impaired who acquire a higher level of self-esteem have a good relationship in both normal hearing society and the hearing-impaired society. The findings have also revealed that students with hearing impairment have difficulty in building social relationships and handling their own emotions. The findings have reiterated the parents or guardians of hearing-impaired, which plays a vital and crucial role, and contribute toward hearing-impaired emotional development. Lesar and Vitulič (2014) study focuses on the self-esteem of hearing-impaired students from Slovenia. Relative to the norms of normal hearing students, hearing-impaired students achieved moderate scores in each self-esteem dimension. Moreover, hearing-impaired students from special schools had lower self-esteem than those from regular schools.

The psychological well-being and physical well-being of hearing-impaired have been investigated by Keilmann, Limberger and Mann (2007). The study focused on hearing-impaired from a special school and regular school. Hearing-impaired in a special school achieved lower scores of self-acceptance. The study suggested more consideration should be given to the student's placement in appropriate school and classes in order to improve the hearing-impaired psychological well-being.

An interesting study by Fellingner, Holzinger, Sattel and Laucht (2008) compared the quality of life and mental health in a representative sample of hearing-impaired. Results showed that there are differences in hearing-impaired concerning behavioural problems, emotional problems, and peer problems, and less obvious for inattention. The result indicates a quality of life mental health was not related to the level of hearing-impairment. Therefore, to reduce the problem of social isolation, researches recommend a specific training program and concentrate on the improvement of a positive self-concept and social skill.

Hassim et al. (2012) explore the emotional intelligence of hearing-impaired at school. The findings revealed that students with hearing impairments have difficulty in constructing social relationships and managing their own emotions. The study extends to measure hearing-impaired ability on recognizing their own emotions, how they manage emotions, motivation, recognizing the emotions of others, and establishing social relationships. A study on hearing-impaired that investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence social skills and self-esteem with family communications was conducted by Ataabadi et al. (2013). The results showed that family communication construct was significantly associated with hearing-impaired emotional intelligence, self-esteem and social skills. Generally, the family communications construct are improved by increasing emotional intelligence domain.

The stability in hearing-impaired emotion provides better confidence in communication and social interaction. As an outcome of the good social interaction, the potential hearing-impaired would be better served

in leadership, achievement in groups, individual achievement, social relations, and management. In line with this statement, it is imperative to conduct the study focalize on hearing-impaired emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem.

III. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The cross-sectional design was used to examine the relationship between the variables of psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The main reason for choosing a quantitative method for the cross-sectional correlational survey design was due to the required degree of generalization of results. The rationale for this research stems from the fact that the design allows researchers to examine various variables.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of students with hearing impairment over the age of 16 from the Federation Special Education National Secondary School Penang, Malaysia. The participating students were identified as students with hearing disabilities by their school and are currently receiving special education services at their school. The sample consisted of both male and female students. For this study, researcher selected the sample through simple random sampling technique. A random size of 36 samples was taken based on Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) table, from a population size of 40.

3.3 Instrument

To measure emotional intelligence, the Bar-On Emotional Quotient: Short (EQ-i:S), an instrument built by Bar-On in 1997 which was translated by Ahmad Marzuki, Mustaffa, Mat Saad, Muda, Abdullah and Che Din (2006) was utilized. The EQ-i:Sinstrument contains 51 items, which includes five major scales. The scale of the EQi:Sare intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood with cronbach alpha of between 0.67 to 0.80. The instrument used a five-point of likert scale.

To measure psychological well-being, an instrument by Ryff (1989a) was utilized to measure the psychological well-being. The instrument was translated by Mundayat (2013). It consists of 42 items involving six-point likert scale and represents six dimensions to measure the hearing-impaired psychological well-being. The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) of the six well-being dimensions were 0.62, 0.61, 0.63, 0.60, 0.60, 0.66 for autonomy, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth, respectively.

The Rosenberg self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), which comprised of 10 items with four pointslikert scale with the Cronbach's alpha 0.68 was utilised in this study to measure self-esteem of the hearing impaired. In this study, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale has been translated by Yaacob (2006).

3.4 Data Analysis

Statistical analyses through SPSS Statistic version 20 was utilized to analyse the data, which involve the inferential and descriptive analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive analysis of the emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem level

Table 1.1 shows the level of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem. As can be seen, hearing-impaired students achieve the mean of 3.19, 4.08 and 2.79 for emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem. In this study, students in special school appeared to demonstrate a moderate level of self-esteem, psychological well-being and emotional intelligence.

Table 1.1 Level of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem.

Varaible	Level	Mean
Emotional Intelligence	Moderate	3.19
Psychological Well-Being	Moderate	4.08
Self-Esteem	Moderate	2.79

However, research done by Ahmad Marzuki, Mustaffa, Mat Saad, Muda, Abdullah and Che Din, (2012) found that more than half of students have low scores in emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, the current findings are supported by Lesar and Vitulic (2014) which found hearing-impaired students achieving moderate scores of self-esteem. Likewise, Keilmann et.al (2007) has found that hearing-impaired students in special school obtain a low score of psychological well-being. In this study, the moderate score of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem achieved by students may be due to their barriers in speech which lead to communication barriers with hearing people. According to Lukomski (2007) hearing-impaired students confront everyday challenge with the hearing world where they are ignored and misconception arises, which affect their emotion, well-being and sociability.

4.2 Emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

Table 1.2 shows the significant correlation between hearing-impaired student emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Self-esteem was positively correlated with overall emotional intelligence, intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood. The analysis found that highly emotional intelligence students are likely to experience self-esteem at a higher level than students who are in low self-esteem.

Table 1.2 Correlation between Emotional intelligence dimensions and Self-esteem

Variables	r
Emotional Intelligence (overall)	.48 **
Intrapersonal	.53 **
Interpersonal	.47 **
Adaptability	.37 *
Stress Management	.41 **
General Mood	.40 **

*p<.05, ** p<.01

The above findings supported Marquez, Martin and Brackett (2006) study that emotional intelligence was positively correlated with student’s self-esteem. Students in special school were using sign language to communicate with each other. This skill may help them to express their emotion, feeling and building a relationship with other peers and teachers at school, thus enhancing their self-esteem. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence consists of appraisal of emotion in the self and others, expression of emotion, regulation of emotion in the self and others, and utilization of emotion in solving problems. Therefore, to flourish hearing-impaired self-esteem, education authority and family need to enhance emotional intelligence elements.

4.3 Psychological well-being and self-esteem.

Table 1.3 shows the significant correlation between psychological well-being and self-esteem of hearing-impaired students. Result shows that the overall psychological well-being and two dimensions of psychological well-being which are autonomy and environmental mastery have a positive correlation with self-esteem. However, the self-acceptance, positive relation with others, purpose in life and personal growth are not correlated with self-esteem.

Table 1.3 Correlation between psychological well-being dimensions and self-esteem

Variables	r
Psychological well-being (overall)	.40**
Autonomy	.38 *
Self-acceptance	.28
Positive relations with others	.21
Environmental mastery	.48**
Purpose in Life	.23
Personal growth	.12

* p<.05, **p<.01

Study done by Meyer and Kashubeck (2011) found that self-esteem was positively correlated with overall psychological well-being. In this study, the psychological well-being of hearing-impaired students at special school was influenced by the special education system. Students are encouraged to interact with peers through activities in classroom and curriculum activities outside classroom. This may lead them to participate in a group and adapted with social environment, thus enhance their autonomy and increase the ability to manage their life and surrounding. According to self-esteem theory, social environment affects the individual assessment of themselves and individual behaviour is influenced by community around them. Therefore, if normal hearing people’s goal is to help hearing impaired students develop, improve and enhance their self-esteem; increasing psychological well-being may result in better and higher self-esteem.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem of hearing-impaired students at special school in Penang were found to be at the moderate level. The study also found that the overall psychological well-being, overall emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood) were positively correlated with self-esteem. Thus, a few suggestions are recommended to increase the level of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem. Activities which involved hearing-impaired student’s family and community to

strengthen the relationship between hearing-impaired students and normal hearing community should be emphasized. The activities will enhance the knowledge and understanding about hearing-impaired world, thus, eliminating the barriers between normal hearing person and hearing-impaired person. Finally, the exposure to normal hearing community and hearing-impaired community may leads to a supportive environment and make them feel equally with others. Relevant education authorities should take necessary steps in improving the hearing impaired students' capabilities by enhancing emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and self-esteem.

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