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Exploring The Efficacy Of Self-Concept And Psychosocial Skill Enhancement Interventions In Hearing-Impaired Children: A Comparative Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This comparative study aimed to measure the impact of social skills training on the self-perception and psychosocial challenges experienced by school children with hearing impairment. The participants were divided into two groups: one received social skills training, and other was a control group, and self-report measures were used to evaluate their self-concept and psychosocial problems before and after the training. The outcomes displayed a significant upgrading in self-concep[1]t scores and a decline in psychosocial problem scores following the training. Gender differences were observed, with girls go through greater self-concept improvement, while boys displayed higher psychosocial problem scores post-training. In addition, a multivariate analysis proved a significant relation between gender and treatment group, suggesting potential gender-specific effects of social skills training. Conversely, the study was subject to certain limitations, including a small sample size and reliance on self-report measures. Future research should address these limitations and investigate the mechanisms and long-term effects of social skills training in hearing-impaired children, while considering gender-specific factors. Overall, this study contributes valuable insights to the existing literature on the effectiveness of social skills training in enhancing the well-being of hearing-impaired school children.

Keywords: *Social skills training, Hearing-impaired, Psychosocial problems, Self-concept.*

INTRODUCTION

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Around the globe children are prone to mental health challenges, as many factors contribute to mental health issues i.e. genetic predispositions, family dynamics, bullying, traumatic experiences, academic stress, social pressures, and physical disabilities. Children are in their transient phase, develop through interaction and observation from the immediate family member and peers (Hussain et al,. 2023). Children with hearing loss lacks critical element to learn from the environment, their psychosocial growth and sense of self-worth are critical factors in their general welfare and social integration. Children with hearing impairment have particular difficulties that can have a big influence on their emotional health, social interactions, and sense of self. Problems including social stigma, communication difficulties, and feelings of loneliness might impede the development of these kids' positive self-concept and psychosocial abilities. Fostering their confidence, self-worth, and social competency addressing these issues with focused treatments.

Children with hearing impairments may benefit from social skills training as a viable solution to address these issues and improve their quality of life. Their academic performance will be improved, their communication skills will be strengthened, and they will be better able to collaborate with peers (Alanazi, 2021). Previous studies have demonstrated the critical role that communication skills have in the formation and upkeep of self-concept, which in turn affects an individual's psychosocial and emotional behaviour (Nasir & Lin, 2012). Low self-concept and self-esteem have been known as risk factors for numerous mental health issues, poor interpersonal relationships, and limited problem-solving skills (Hussain et al,. 2023). Additionally, a person's behaviour in both academic and socioemotional development is adversely affected by hearing impairment (Heward, 2000). A person's self-concept, which increases awareness of their accomplishments, weaknesses, and strengths, has a substantial impact on their overall social and psychological well-being (Sheridam, 2001). Research has shown that children with hearing impairments have different self-concepts from their classmates, particularly when it comes to general self-perception, reading ability, parent-child connections, and overall school experiences (Mekonnen et al., 2016).

Using indigenous scales and standardised measurements, the study will compare social behaviours and self-assessment before and after the intervention, contributing to the body of knowledge currently accessible on the topic (Pettala & Rajaguru, 2016).

Significance

Examining the effects of social skills training on the psychosocial development and self-concept of children with hearing impairments, this study hopes to shed light on therapists and other professionals who work with this particular population. It is anticipated that the research findings will offer significant insights for the development of targeted interventions that enhance the general well-being of school-aged children with hearing impairments and foster positive self-perception.

METHOD

The methodology of the study involved exploring and applying social skills training interventions for hearing-impaired children with the aim of minimizing psychosocial difficulties associated with their impairment. The interventions were conducted in a group setting, aiming to improve socialization skills and social integration.

Inclusion criteria

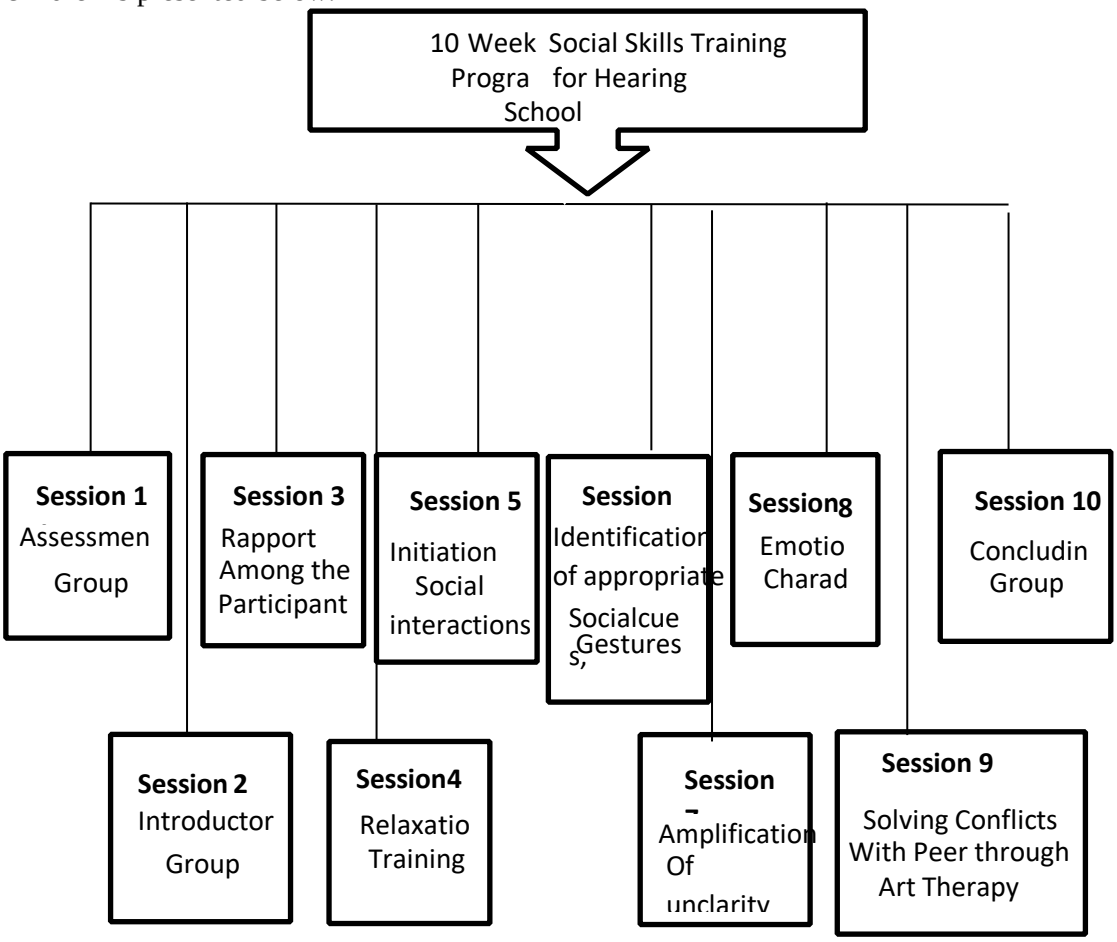
The participants were carefully chosen based on precise criteria, comprising mild hearing loss, student of 8th class, and having family members with hearing impairment. The study comprised a total of twenty school children from hearing impaired government school. (ten

boys, ten girls) from a government school in Multan, and the group therapy sessions were conducted jointly for both boys and girls.

Intervention sessions

The study entailed of multiple sessions planned to address different aspects of social skills training. First session was a pre-intervention session where the investigators and a sign language translator discussed the strategies and activities of the upcoming sessions. The second session served as an introductory group to explain the participants with the structure and notion of the group sessions and encourage collaboration skills. The third session focused on building rapport among the group members and to put emphasis on the importance of friendships and social support. Preceding sessions included relaxation training to give a grounding in coping strategies, initiation of social exchanges through activities, identification of suitable social clues through animated cartoon videos, amplification of un-clarity to encourage seeking clarification from peers, emotion imitation to express and identify emotions, solving conflicts with peers through art therapy, and a concluding group session where participants expressed gratitude and formed a memory tree by praising each other.

Figure 1. A flow chart summarizing the sessions conducted for hearing-impaired school children is presented below:



Measures

Pre- assessment and post-assessment was conducted using scales to quantity the psychosocial issues and self-concept of the hearing-impaired school children. The study utilized

indigenous scales and standardized measures to assess the outcomes of the social skills training interventions.

Result

Table 1 Paired Sample Pre-test Post-test Analysis for Self-concept and Psychosocial Problems of children with Hearing-Impairment (N=20).

Variables	Pretest		Posttest			95% CI for Differences in Mean			
	M	SD	M	SD	N	LL	UL	T	Df
Self-concept	39.2	5.8	26.3	13.5	20	6.7	19.1	4.4**	19
Psychosocial problems	43.3	9.3	22.9	16.4	20	12.6	28.2	5.5**	19

Note. LL= lower limit, UP= upper limit, M= mean, SD= standard deviation, ** p< .01

The results of the paired-samples t-test in Table 1 showed a noteworthy difference in the mean scores of Self-concept before (M = 39.2, SD = 5.8) and after (M = 26.3, SD = 13.5) social skill training at the .01 level of significance (t = 4.4, df = 19, n = 20, p < .01, 95% CI for difference in mean 6.7 to 19.1). On average, the Self-concept scores were 12.9 points lower after the social skill training, indicating an improvement in the Self-concept of hearing-impaired students. Similarly, the mean scores of Psychosocial problems also revealed a significant difference before (M = 43.3, SD = 9.3) and after (M = 22.9, SD = 16.4) social skill training at the .01 level of significance (t = 5.5, df = 19, n = 20, p < .01, 95% CI for difference in mean 12.6 to 28.2). On average, the Psychosocial problem scores were 20.4 points lower after the social skill training, indicating a decrease in psychosocial problems among hearing-impaired students.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics along with Results of Paired Sample t Test for Mean Differences in Pre and Post Scores of Experimental Group on Self-concept and Psychosocial Issues scale
(n=20)

Measures	Pre Score		Post Score				95% CL		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD	T	p<	LL	UL	
Self Concept_FT	40.03	8.57	21.50	6.90	4.93	.0001***	10.17	27.42	2.38
Psychological issues_FT	45.80	8.44	15.60	10.54	6.43	.001***	19.58	40.81	4.35

Note. p<.001***, M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, CI=Confidence Interval

The statistics in Table 2 showed a noteworthy reduction in the post scores of self-concept, implying that the intervention had a positive impact on enhancing the self-concept of hearing-impaired school children. Furthermore, the lower post scores of psychosocial issues indicated that the intervention successfully alleviated the psychosocial challenges faced by these children due to their hearing impairment.

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Concept and Psychosocial Problems as a

Function of Gender and Treatment Groups (N=20).

	Gender	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
		Social skill training	19.0	2.3	5
		Control group	17.8	4.4	5
		Total	18.4	3.4	10
		Social skill training	3.8	14.8	5
		Control group	9.6	15.9	5
	Girl				
Self-concept	Boy				
		Total	6.7	14.8	10
		Social skill training	11.4	12.8	10
		Control group	13.7	11.8	10
	Total				
		Total	12.5	12.1	20
	Girl	Social skill training	29.2	5.3	5
		Control group	26.8	6.3	5
		Total	28.0	5.6	10
		Social skill training	13.8	24.8	5
		Control group	11.8	18.2	5
		Total	12.8	20.6	10
Psychosocial Problems	Boy				
		Social skill training	21.5	18.8	10
		Control group	19.3	15.1	10
	Total				
		Total	20.4	16.6	20

Note: N= sample size, M= Mean and SD= Standard deviation

In the table above descriptive statistics obtained from the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) are given.

The results showed that, in comparison to females in the control group (M = 17.8, SD = 4.4), girls who got social skills training had higher self-concept scores (M = 19.0, SD = 2.3). On the other hand, boys in the social skills training group scored lower on self-concept (M = 3.8, SD = 14) than boys in the control group (M = 9.6, SD = 15.9). These results imply that social skills training benefits hearing-impaired boys more than hearing-impaired girls in terms of enhancing self-concept. Effective social skills training is indicated by a reduced self-concept scale score.

When analysing gender differences based on mean and standard deviation, girls who got social skills training scored higher (M = 29.2, SD = 5.3) than girls in the control group (M = 26.8, SD = 6.3) on the psychosocial difficulties of hearing-impaired children. On the other hand, boys who underwent social skills training had higher scores (M = 13.8, SD = 24.8) on social skill training than boys in the control group (M = 11.8, SD = 18.2). Generally, these

statistics indicate that social skills training is beneficial for both hearing-impaired boys and girls, as their mean values are higher than those of the control group.

Table 4 Multivariate Analysis of Variance MANOVA for Gender and Treatment groups on Self-
Concept and Psychosocial Problems of School Children with Hearing-Impairment (N= 20)

Source	Depen	Df	MS	F	η^2	p
	Sel	1	684.5	5.4	.03*	.255
f-concept Gender						
Psychosocial problems		1	1155.2	4.5	.04*	.221
		1	26.5	.21	.02*	.013
Self-concept Treatment Group						
Psychosocial problems		1	24.2	.09	.04*	.006
		1	61.3	.49	.05*	.030
Self-concept Gender * Treatment Group						
Psychosocial problems		1	.20	.001	.04*	.001
		16	124.8			
Self-concept Error						
Psychosocial problems		16	254.9			

Note: N= sample size, M= Mean and SD= Standard deviation

The Table 4 shows a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) that was conducted to examine the effects of different treatment groups (social skill training and control group) on self-concept and psychosocial problems of girls and boys with hearing-impairment, as well as to explore the interaction between gender and treatment groups. The study ensured that the observations were independent and that the variances/co-variances were homogeneous by conducting relevant checks. Additionally, bivariate scatter plots were carefully examined to assess the presence of multivariate normality.

The results indicated a statistically meaningful interaction between gender and treatment group for self-concept ($F (1, 16) = 0.49$, $p = 0.05$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.030$) and psychosocial problems ($F (1, 16) = 0.001$, $p = 0.04$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.000$). Moreover, the impact of gender on self-concept was observed to be statistically significant. ($F (1, 16) = 5.4$, $p = 0.03$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.255$) and psychosocial problems ($F (1, 16) = 4.5$, $p = 0.04$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.211$). These results indicate that the linear composite of self-concept and psychosocial problems differs between hearing-impaired girls and boys.

Furthermore, the main effect of treatment groups was also statistically significant for self-concept ($F (1, 16) = 0.21$, $p = 0.02$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.013$) and psychosocial problems ($F (1, 16) = 0.09$, $p = 0.04$, multivariate $\eta2 = 0.000$). This indicates that the linear composite differs across the various treatment groups.

Summary

The study demonstrated that social skills training had a positive impact on hearing-impaired school children, improving their self-concept and reducing psychosocial problems. Girls

showed greater improvement in self-concept, while boys had a greater decrease in self-concept scores but higher psychosocial problem scores. The multivariate analysis confirmed significant interactions between gender and treatment group, as well as significant main effects for both factors. These findings emphasize the effectiveness of social skills training in enhancing the well-being of hearing-impaired children, with gender influencing the outcomes.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the effects of social skills training on self-concept and psychosocial problems in school children with hearing-impairment. The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of social skills training for this specific population.

Consistent with previous research Edwards & Crocker (2008), the results indicate that hearing-impaired children may face challenges in developing a multifaceted self-concept. Language deficiencies and communication difficulties experienced by these children may hinder their understanding of emotions and their awareness of others' experiences. This, in turn, can affect their self-concept development. The study by Knoors and Marschark (2014) also revealed that hearing-impaired children struggle with emotional vocabulary, which can hinder the development of their self-concept. The authors highlighted that language and communication difficulties in these children can limit their understanding of others' experiences and subsequently impact their own emotional understanding.

Furthermore, the study revealed gender differences in the outcomes of social skills training. Girls who received social skills training demonstrated higher self-concept scores compared to girls in the control group, while boys who underwent training had lower self-concept scores but higher scores on psychosocial problems compared to boys in the control group. These findings align with previous literature (Edwards & Crocker, 2008; Mejstad, Heiling, and Svedin, 2009) and suggest that the impact of social skills training may vary based on gender in hearing-impaired children. It is essential to consider gender-specific factors when designing and implementing interventions targeting self-concept and psychosocial problems in this population.

Moreover, the findings from the paired-samples t-test yielded strong support for the effectiveness of social skills training in improving self-concept and reducing psychosocial problems. The post-training scores for self-concept and psychosocial problems significantly differed from the pre-training scores, indicating positive changes following the intervention. These conclusions are consistent with earlier research highlighting the positive impact of social skills training on the well-being of hearing-impaired children (Mejstad, Heiling, & Svedin, 2009; Netten et al., 2015).

Conclusion

The current study adds to the existing literature on the efficacy of social skills training for hearing-impaired school children, emphasizing the significance of addressing self-concept and psychosocial problems in this population. It underscores the potential of social skills training as an intervention to enhance their overall well-being. Future research should delve into the underlying mechanisms and lasting outcomes of such training, by taking into account communication skills development and language proficiency. By advancing our knowledge of effective interventions, we can provide better support for the distinctive needs of hearing-impaired children and foster their psychosocial well-being.

Limitations

This study on the impact of social skills training on self-concept and psychosocial problems of school children with hearing-impairment had several limitations. These include a

comparatively small sample size, which could have restricted the capacity to detect smaller but meaningful differences and generalize the findings to a larger population. The reliance on self-report measures introduced potential biases and subjective interpretations. Additionally, the study design did not account for confounding variables or individual differences that could have influenced the results. Future research with larger samples, objective assessments, and comprehensive study designs is needed to enhance the understanding of social skills training in this population.

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