

The Development of Self-Concept in Hearing-Impaired Children

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Abstract: *Self-concept has been recognized as a key factor in motivational, social, and emotional development. Groups of subjects without any physical or psychological disability are relatively prone to develop positive self-concepts, but those with one or the other disability are negatively affected, especially in children with hearing impairment compared to hearing children where significant differences may exist.*

Keywords: *self-concept; hearing impairment; mental health*

1. Introduction

Self-concept is considered a key factor in motivational, social, and emotional development and is important in establishing a multidimensional development of self-concept early in life. Subject groups without any physical or psychological disabilities are relatively prone to develop a positive self-concept, but those with one or the other disability have a negative self-concept, and there may be significant differences, especially in children with hearing impairment compared to children who are hearing^[1-3].

Several earlier studies have shown that lack of communication between parents and children with hearing impairment often produces emotions such as anxiety, confusion, depression, and sadness^[4], and this emotional response can severely affect the social and emotional development of children with hearing impairment. The unique needs of children with hearing impairment are not met, which leads to social-emotional disadvantage, social encouragement, low self-concept, and low self-esteem^[5-6].

2. What is self-concept

Self-concept is an important dimension of psychological development that includes socio-emotional, cognitive, communicative, and linguistic interactions, and is defined simply as a response to the question "Who am I?" that reflects detailed information about how an individual views himself or herself. Piers-Harris & Herzberg (2002, p3) define the concept of self as "..... a relatively stable set of attitudes that reflect descriptions and evaluations of one's behavior, including the objective self and the subjective self". Where the objective self includes personal qualities, knowledge, and skills; the subjective self is the individual as a subject who evaluates her or himself positively or negatively^[7]. The more negative evaluations the person has, the lower his/her self-worth is^[8]. This means that the self-concept includes one's observation of the self^[9-10] or the evaluation of one's self-esteem^[11].

Marsh^[12-13] noted that once established, self-concepts tend to persist throughout an individual's life and can be learned from one's observations of the self. Early research found that as a person grows from a child to an adult, the self-concept evolves into a more complex system^[14] and becomes more stable. As Marsh^[12-13] noted, once a self-concept is established, it tends to persist throughout a child's life and can be learned from one's observations of the self, which are important for a variety of purposes.

3. Self-concept of children with hearing impairment

Earlier research^[15] has shown that hearing-impaired children have more negative self-concepts in communication and social skills than hearing children due to developmental delays caused by early language deprivation. Other studies have compared the self-concept of hearing-impaired children with

their hearing-impaired peers, with inconsistent results. Some studies have confirmed that individuals with hearing impairment have a higher incidence of low self-concept than individuals with normal hearing^[16], while no difference was found in other populations^[17]. It has also been argued that this complex phenomenon must be studied more closely to understand how the hearing impairment affects self-concept and self-esteem^[2,18]. Most studies in this area have focused on the communication challenges that hearing-impaired individuals face in developing positive self-concepts, noting that early beneficial communication conditions and related receiving experiences are important factors in the development of self-concepts.

Several researchers have found that children with hearing impairment whose parents are hearing impaired show better self-concept than children with hearing impairment whose parents are hearing normal^[18]. Parents set positive role models for their children with a shared identity, culture, and language; therefore, children are more likely to develop similar conceptions of others and the self. However, approximately 90-95% of hearing-impaired children are born to hearing parents who often have no experience working with hearing-impaired individuals and therefore face significant challenges in raising hearing-impaired children in a world where the majority of people around them have normal hearing. In addition, despite the progressive development of cochlear implants, the ability of children with hearing impairments to learn spoken language remains highly limited^[19,20]. Van Gent et al.^[1] administered the Hart Self-Concept Scale to 68 adolescents with hearing impairments and found that social demographic variables were strongly associated with self-concept. Theunissen et al.^[21] measured the self-esteem of 123 children with hearing impairment and 129 children with normal hearing and found that children with hearing impairment had lower levels of self-esteem in social settings. Warner et al.^[17] found in their study that children with hearing impairment were at risk for low self-esteem due to a low level of self-esteem with hearing normal peers in terms of differences in communication skills, appearance, and social maturity.

To be able to provide appropriate learning environments for students with hearing impairments, there is a need to study the socio-emotional and academic impact of the educational environment on students with hearing impairments. Self-concept is considered an important construct in education because it is related to students' motivation, achievement, confidence, and psychological well-being^[22]. Many studies on self-concept have involved the academic domain. This may be due to the relationship between students' academic self-concept, academic achievement, and academic behavior^[23,24].

4. Conclusion

However, previous studies have found significant differences between the self-concept of hearing-impaired people and those with normal hearing and examined the adverse consequences of such differences. However, it is a pity that no research has investigated the development rules of self-concept of hearing-impaired children at each age, and the factors influencing the development of self-concept of hearing-impaired children at each age. Therefore, future research should use a cross-sectional research method to investigate the development and influencing factors of self-concept in hearing-impaired children, and further find ways to improve the mental health development of hearing-impaired children. We hope to find out the development rules of self-concept in hearing-impaired children and lay a foundation for future research in this direction. To explore the content of self-concept development of hearing-impaired children at each age, to cultivate the population to produce more positive self-concept; It can put forward some ways to improve the self-concept and mental health education framework of hearing-impaired children, expand the mental health education of hearing-impaired people and establish correct self-concept to improve mental health status.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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